

**European Association  
of Establishments for Veterinary Education**



**RE-VISITATION REPORT**

**on the Stage 1 Re-Visitation to Alfonso X El Sabio University (UAX)**

**On 13-15 December 2017**

By the Re-visitation Team:

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## **Introduction**

The Alfonso X El Sabio University is a private university situated in the autonomic community of Madrid, Spain, offering a veterinary degree since 2002.

In December 2017 the Faculty of Veterinary Medicine, The Alfonso X El Sabio University (VFUAX) was revisited to evaluate the progress done in correcting the 3 major deficiencies and several minor deficiencies identified during the November 2014 Stage 1 evaluation.

The decision by ECOVE May 2015 following the 2014-visit was: NON-APPROVAL with three (3) major deficiencies and ten (10) minor deficiencies.

## **STAGE 1 (2014 visitation)**

Three **Major Deficiencies** were reported:

1. *Lack of clinical and hands-on training (including 24H emergency service) under the supervision of academic staff in food-producing animals.*
2. *Lack of strategy, funding and available time for research activities, with as a result a negative impact on research-based teaching and education to research.*
3. *Inadequate SER (errors, inaccuracies, lack of key data).*

The following **Minor Deficiencies** were reported:

1. *Lack of a students' organisation in order to propose their representatives in the relevant committees.*
2. *Too much descriptive Anatomy and not enough topographical one*
3. *Lack of agronomy teaching*
4. *Low caseload in most species (both in clinic and necropsy)*
5. *Lack of obligatory practical training in ante- and post-mortem meat inspection*
6. *Not enough veterinary e-books & e-journals available on the Intranet for students*
7. *Lack of formal training for the teachers*
8. *Too many part-time teachers and too many teachers without PhD*
9. *Lack of official residency programs approved by the relevant European Colleges*
10. *Lack of publications in international peer review journals in most disciplines.*

Prior to the 2017 revisit, the Team received detailed information about the original SER, the ECOVE decision, suggested timetable for the revisit program, professional advice on travelling etc.

Further to this a 17 pages report named

**UAX Veterinary Faculty, Re-Visitation, Self Evaluation Report, 2017**

and a 79 pages re-written report named

**UAX Veterinary Faculty, Self Evaluation Report, Revisit Petition**

were presented to the revisit team and to the EAEVE office in due time.

Based on this report and during its 3 day stay 13 - 15 December 2017 the present revisit report was generated.

**Introduction to the revisit and the generated site visit report**

During its stay, the team was guided through a program specifically designed to demonstrate the improvements that had been made since 2014.

Everything was very well prepared and organised and the reception of the team was professional and catering for the needs of the team at all times.

The visit started Wednesday late afternoon with a dinner with the Dean, the Vice-Rector for International Affairs and the Liaison Officer:

- Prof. Fernando Vázquez Fernández, Dean
- Prof. Iris Núñez Trébol, Vice Rector for International Affairs
- Prof. Isabel Rodríguez Hurtado, Liaison Officer

and the remit of the revisit was presented to the Faculty.

The team stayed together during the well prepared program.

The Re-visitation program was performed in agreement with the ESEVT 2012 (Budapest) SOP with frequent discussions of the Uppsala 2016 SOP.

**1. Correction of the major deficiencies**

**1. Lack of clinical and hands-on training (including 24H emergency service) under the supervision of academic staff in food-producing animals.**

**1.1. Findings**

The Establishment has:

1. implemented case-based lectures and obligatory practical teaching hours,
2. increased the number of teachers for food-producing animal (FPA) clinics,

3. improved facilities and number of clinical cases at the Veterinary Teaching Hospital (VTH).

1) FPA case-based lectures and obligatory practical teaching hours (ruminants) have been increased in clinical subjects such as medical pathology (internal medicine), surgical pathology (surgery), and anesthesia for 4<sup>th</sup> year students. The distribution of the new number of hours of obligatory practical training (60 hours) is depicted in Table 1 of Stage 1 R-SER.

Senior year students (4<sup>th</sup> & 5<sup>th</sup> year) are involved in treatment and management of FPA during after-hour/emergency duties throughout the year. The number of emergency hours has been increased for large animal rotations (from 12h to 72h), therefore increasing the exposure to hospitalized and emergency food-producing animal cases.

A total of 4 clinical/case-based seminars on FPA were provided in 2016 as additional compulsory training.

Fifth-year students perform pre-clinical practical activities and participate in clinical case management outside the VTH (mainly dairy cattle), through the subject of Reproduction and Obstetrics (30 hours/student). Agreement with private companies (IGEA and Africama - a dairy cattle association) and in the final clinical extramural rotations. Extramural practical training (3 farms visited by 3-students/group) with FPA practitioners (1 for swine and 5 for ruminants) have been greatly increased compared to the previous visitation. Practitioners do not receive any training or guidelines on teaching methods and student evaluation.

During farm visitation, the students have access to the data (digital or register) concerning herd health management.

There is neither a log-book nor a report about extramural activities. Number of FPA seen extramurally is estimated on the basis of case-load reported by practitioners.

Intra-mural FPA clinical/practical teaching under the supervision of academic staff has been implemented, even if the case-load is still low (5 cattle, 42 sheep and 7 pigs in 2016). Two new clinicians/teachers has been hired as responsible for the FPA Service that includes 24 hours emergency service, and two clinicians/ teachers assist with hospitalization of these species (4-6 students/week), but there is not an ambulatory clinic.

There is in not a vehicle for mobile clinic activities and the students are transported in practitioners' private cars.

A new FPA treatment area has been established in the VTH. Two stalls have been reconditioned for ruminant hospitalization.

Two hundreds hours for practical clinical training are now compulsory, but the students can choose the species (about 30% indicates FPA)

## **1.2. Comments**

During the Re-visitation, the team recognized that the Establishment has actively improved the training and hands-on opportunities on FPA under the supervision of academic staff and practitioners.

The establishment has considered EAEVE recommendations given during the first visit and increased the case-load especially implementing extra-mural activities. Collaboration with practitioners and private companies covered the lack of FPA for pre-clinical and clinical practical training.

However, there is not a well planned procedure to harmonize the activities conducted with practitioners and academic staff. And students do not have a logbook. In this way it is not easy to evaluate if students acquire the competencies indicated in the syllabus.

The cooperation with sanctuaries (mostly sheep and goats) improved the caseload for hands-on training (including 24H emergency service) in FPA, especially small ruminants, but the number is still low.

Agreement with private companies and farms increased the number of healthy and diseased animals for pre-clinical and clinical practical work.

Hours dedicated to FTA clinical training have been increased in the following subjects: Propaedeutics; Medicine, Surgery and Anesthesia; Obstetrics; Extra-mural practical training.

## **1.3.Suggestions**

- At least one permanent, full time, research position for the clinic in FPA should be considered
- All practitioners involved in clinical practical activities must be trained by the academic staff to harmonize procedures and student evaluation
- Ambulatory Clinics service should be implemented

## **1.4. Decision**

The Major Deficiency “Lack of clinical and hands-on training (including 24H emergency service) under the supervision of academic staff in food-producing animals” has been only partially rectified due to the number of students increased.

## **2.Lack of strategy, funding and available time for research activities, with as a result a negative impact on research-based teaching and education to research.**

### **2.1. Findings**

Appointment of a Head of Research for the VFUAX, Dr. Javier García-Castro (biologist), at the end of 2016.

He has developed a strategic plan including time allowance for research activities, construction of research facilities (a new 500 m<sup>2</sup> research laboratory), inclusion of students in research activities and designation of funding. The strategic plan did not include a time schedule for its implementation.

**The suggested main research areas to be established would be:**

- Microbiology (focus on One Health and AB resistance) led by Rosario Baquero (not a veterinarian) from the human hospital Ramón Y Cajal
- Regenerative Medicine (focus on advanced therapy) led by Isabel Rodriguez (DVM)
- Oncology (focus - “a clear application to the human clinic”) led by Javier Garcia-Castro (biologist)
- Group of Primatology (focus on ethology of mammals with a special interest in primates) led by Lara Carrasco (DVM)
- Group of Ichthyology (focus on zebrafish) led by Pablo Torrea (DVM)

A study on R&D positioning of the UAX in the national and regional context, a SWOT analysis on the current situation and on the scientific production in UAX during the last 5 years (see Annex II of R-SER) was presented.

The Establishment produced a total of 14 publications covering all areas in the veterinary Faculty in 2016.

A third year elective subject “experimental animals” has been redesigned and a new coordinator appointed to improve education in research.

Funding for research at VFUAX is provided by the coalition of the UAX Foundation and Santander Bank through small research grants totalling the VFUAX in 2016 for research is € 129,337.14 €.

The PhD students may publish their research results after defending their thesis. The examples of PhD-theses presented to the team were generally written in Spanish and did not include published or accepted peer reviewed papers in international journals.

**2.2. Comments**

The number of publications is low for a university environment but understandable with a staff mostly composed of part time employees. Even the newly appointed head of veterinary research is part time employed.

The funding is not sufficient to establish research groups within the veterinary Establishment and there is a lack of focus on veterinary research areas. The above mentioned research strategy was not produced based on input from the rather limited amount of veterinary staff members trained to do research (as a minimum a PhD-degree and a proven record of publication activity in international, peer reviewed journals).

Only few staff members are research qualified due to the system of part time employment of clinicians without any research background (formal or informal training).

There is not a permanent Commission for R&D composed of veterinary staff members from the different areas (Basic Sciences, Animal Production, Clinics and Food Hygiene) to establish a strategy for research within the VFUAX and also with a focus on training of veterinary students to participate in and be employed within future research areas.

There is not an operational plan to stimulate the Academic Staff to dedicate time to research.

There is not a generally accepted distribution of time allocated to research versus clinical/teaching activities.

The proposed 5 research topics involve only few veterinary staff members and e.g. the microbiology area would be covered by primary material processed at the Hospital Ramón y Cajal.

The proposed research topics are generally in line with translational medicine and e.g. production animal research is not mentioned (Spain is the largest pig producer within EU).

Student involvement in research (courses and project for graduation) is elective.

### **2.3. Suggestions**

- A true research strategy with a clear focus on veterinary research aimed at supporting the veterinary program and problems of veterinary importance must be established involving all the research active veterinary staff members of the VFUAX.
- A permanent commission for R & D including strongly research oriented, full time employed veterinarians must be established.
- Funding for research must be increased considerably.
- A substantial number of PhD positions focused on research must be established.
- Publication of 2-3 papers in peer-reviewed, international journals must be a minimum requirement for the defence of PhD-theses irrespective of Spanish or local tradition.

### **2.4 Decision**

The Major Deficiency “Lack of strategy, funding and available time for research activities, with as a result a negative impact on research-based teaching and education to research” has not been rectified.

## **3. Correction of the Major Deficiency: Inadequate SER (errors, inaccuracies, lack of key data).**

### **3.1. Findings**

The SER has been rewritten according to Budapest (2012) SOP, but indicators of Uppsala SOP (2016) have been used.

### **3.2. Comments**

None.

### **3.3. Suggestions**

None.

### **3.4. Decision**

The Major Deficiency “Inadequate SER (errors, inaccuracies, lack of key data)” has not been rectified due to lack of key data regarding finances.

## **2. Correction of the Minor Deficiencies**

As described within the RSER (Interim Report) and also observed on site by the visiting team, several of the suggestions for improvement documented by the previous Visitation Team have now been implemented. However, some of the minor deficiencies have not been addressed properly. Below the team has made its comments for each of the minor deficiencies in the same order as they appear in the 2014 Final Report.

### **1. Lack of a students’ organisation in order to propose their representatives in the relevant committees**

#### **1.1 Findings**

Students are not involved in all relevant Committees.

#### **1.2 Comment**

None.

#### **1.3 Suggestion**

- The students must be part of relevant Committees of the Establishment

#### **1.4. Decision**

The minor deficiency “Lack of a students’ organisation in order to propose their representatives in the relevant committees” has not been rectified.

### **2. Too much descriptive Anatomy and not enough topographical one**

#### **2.1 Findings**

There has been an increase in the hours dedicated to topographical anatomy. A new teacher appointed to be responsible for the subject and a redistribution of hours enabling clinicians to actively participate in the teaching of anatomy from a clinical standpoint.

## **2.2 Comment**

The teacher appointed is a part time practitioner without research experience.

## **2.3 Suggestion**

None

## **2.4 Decision**

The minor deficiency “Too much descriptive Anatomy and not enough topographical one” has been rectified.

## **3. Lack of agronomy teaching**

### **3.1 Findings**

Agronomy is taught in the first semester of the second year with 4 ECTS. It was wrongfully not presented to the evaluation committee on the first visit, but the curriculum has been revised and updated.

### **3.2 Comment**

None

### **3.3 Suggestion**

None

### **3.4 Decision**

The minor deficiency “Lack of agronomy teaching” has been rectified.

## **4. Low caseload in most species (both in clinic and necropsy)**

### **4.1 Findings**

Changes in case-load designed to attend EAEVE recommendations: case-load in most species has improved since the last visitation and is improving greatly in small animals and equine. VFUAX has implemented measures to improve the number of food-producing animal cases (mentioned in major deficiencies).

### **4.2 Comment**

Caseload for necropsies is still low and although the case load has increased the number of students admitted each year has also increased considerably.

#### **4.3 Suggestion**

- Implement agreements with farms (for poultry and rabbit) and slaughterhouses (for ruminants and pigs).
- Bring pathology material back to the pathology department instead of doing on the site necropsies.

#### **4.4 Decision**

The minor deficiency “Low caseload in most species (both in clinic and necropsy)” has been partly rectified.

### **5. Lack of obligatory practical training in ante- and post-mortem meat inspection**

#### **5.1 Findings**

Curricular hours have been increased for obligatory practical training in ante- and post-mortem meat inspection. A part time Official Meat Inspector has been enrolled.

#### **5.2 Comment**

None.

#### **5.3 Suggestion**

None.

#### **5.4 Decision**

The minor deficiency “Lack of obligatory practical training in ante- and post-mortem meat inspection” has been rectified.

### **6. Not enough veterinary e-books & e-journals available on the Intranet for students**

#### **6.1 Findings**

Veterinary e-books & e-journals have been increased and the library has gained access to new resources such as CLINICALKEY and Pro Quest central.

#### **6.2 Comment**

None.

#### **6.3 Suggestion**

None.

#### **6.4 Decision**

The minor deficiency “Not enough veterinary e-books & e-journals available on the Intranet for students” has been rectified.

## **7. Lack of formal training for the teachers**

### **7.1 Findings**

About 50% of the teachers received training in different teaching computer applications (such as Blackboard, Flipboard, Moodle, ALF or ABP), including online courses provided by UAX.

There is not a strategy for practitioners' training.

### **7.2 Comment**

Continuous education for the academic staff and training of practitioners have to be implemented.

### **7.3 Suggestion**

- Mandatory courses for the staff must be organized.

### **7.4 Decision**

The minor deficiency "Lack of formal training for the teachers" has not been rectified.

## **8. Too many part-time teachers and too many teachers without PhD**

### **8.1 Findings**

The number of part-time teacher has been reduced, and the percentage of teachers with a PhD degree has been increased.

### **8.2 Comment**

The number of part time teachers and staff without PhD is still high also taking into consideration that the number of undergraduate students has risen (# of enrolled students increased from 672 (2014) to 1113 (2016)).

### **8.3 Suggestion**

- Financial resources for full time research oriented staff with a PhD must be implemented.

### **8.4 Decision**

The minor deficiency "Too many part-time teachers and too many teachers without PhD" has not been rectified.

## **9. Lack of official residency programs approved by the relevant European Colleges**

### **9.1 Findings**

There are only 2 official residency programmes, but many local residency programmes.

## **9.2 Comment**

The increase in case-load will improve the ability to offer approved residencies in the future. So far official residency programmes have been denied due to a low case-load.

The relevant number of Diplomates actively work to obtain approved residencies.

## **9.3 Suggestion**

- VFUAX should support veterinary Diplomates to improve the quality of academic staff.

## **9.4 Decision**

The minor deficiency “Lack of official residency programs approved by the relevant European Colleges” has not been rectified.

## **10. Lack of publications in international peer review journals in most disciplines.**

### **10.1 Findings**

The number of publications in international peer reviewed journals was 14 in 2016.

### **10.2 Comment**

The increase in case-load will improve the ability to offer approved residencies in the future.

### **10.3 Suggestion**

See Major Deficiency.

### **10.4 Decision**

The minor deficiency “Lack of publications in international peer review journals in most disciplines” has not been rectified.

Name of the Establishment: Alfonso X El Sabio University - Veterinary Faculty					
Date of the form filling: 11.10.2017					
Calculated Indicators from raw data		Establishment	Median	Minimal	Balance <sup>3</sup>
		value:	values <sup>1</sup>	values <sup>2</sup>	
11	n° of FIE academic staff involved in veterinary training / n° of undergraduate students	0,128	0,16	0,13	0,002
12	n° of FIE veterinarians involved in veterinary training / n° of students graduating annually	0,742	0,87	0,59	0,152
13	n° of FIE support staff involved in veterinary training / n° of students graduating annually	0,601	0,94	0,57	0,035
14	n° of hours of practical (non-clinical) training	1184,667	905,67	595,00	589,667
15	n° of hours of clinical training	751,000	932,92	670,00	81,000
16	n° of hours of FSQ & VPH training	623,333	287,00	174,40	448,933
17	n° of hours of extra-curricular practical training in FSQ & VPH	78,000	68,00	28,80	49,200
18	n° of companion animal patients seen intra-curricularly / n° of students graduating annually	55,631	70,48	42,01	13,622
19	n° of ruminant and pig patients seen intra-curricularly / n° of students graduating annually	0,366	2,69	0,46	-0,098
110	n° of equine patients seen intra-curricularly / n° of students graduating annually	2,840	5,05	1,30	1,542
111	n° of rabbit, rodent, bird and exotic seen intra-curricularly / n° of students graduating annually	0,826	3,35	1,55	-0,719
112	n° of companion animal patients seen extra-curricularly / n° of students graduating annually	12,571	6,80	0,22	12,348
113	n° of individual ruminant and pig patients seen extra-curricularly / n° of students graduating annually	14,857	15,95	6,29	8,562
114	n° of equine patients seen extra-curricularly / n° of students graduating annually	3,714	2,11	0,60	3,119
115	n° of visits to ruminant and pig herds / n° of students graduating annually	3,214	1,33	0,55	2,667
116	n° of visits of poultry and farmed rabbit units / n° of students graduating annually	0,043	0,12	0,04	-0,002
117	n° of companion animal necropsies / n° of students graduating annually	1,577	2,07	1,40	0,177
118	n° of ruminant and pig necropsies / n° of students graduating annually	0,460	2,32	0,97	-0,510
119	n° of equine necropsies / n° of students graduating annually	0,251	0,30	0,09	0,159
120	n° of rabbit, rodent, bird and exotic pet necropsies / n° of students graduating annually	0,886	2,05	0,69	0,176
121*	n° of FIE specialised veterinarians involved in veterinary training / n° of students graduating annually	0,046	0,20	0,06	-0,017
122*	n° of FIE graduating annually / n° of students graduating annually	0,046	0,15	0,09	-0,042
1	Median values defined by data from Establishments with Approval status in April 2016				
2	Recommended minimal values calculated as the 20th percentile of data from Establishments with Approval status in April 2016				
3	A negative balance indicates that the indicator is below the recommended minimal value				
*	Indicators used only for statistical purpose.				

#### 4. Conclusion

The VFUAX has not corrected the three major deficiencies..

## **Decision of ECOVE**

The Committee concluded that the Major Deficiencies, identified in 2014, have not been rectified.

- The Major Deficiency “Lack of clinical and hands-on training (including 24H emergency service) under the supervision of academic staff in food-producing animals” has been only partially rectified due to the number of students increased.
- The Major Deficiency “Lack of strategy, funding and available time for research activities, with as a result a negative impact on research-based teaching and education to research” has not been rectified.
- The Major Deficiency “Inadequate SER (errors, inaccuracies, lack of key data)” has not been rectified due to lack of key data regarding finances.

The ‘Faculty of Veterinary Medicine, Alfonso X El Sabio University (VFUAX)’ is therefore classified as holding the status of: **NON-APPROVAL**.