

***Report of the External Review of
The European Association of Establishments for
Veterinary Education (EAEVE)***

September 2013

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1. Executive summary

This is the report of the review of the European Association of Establishments for Veterinary Education (EAEVE), undertaken in June 2013, for the purpose of determining whether the agency meets the criteria for Associate membership of the European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education (ENQA).

EAEVE was founded in 1988 when The European Union Commission's Advisory Committee on Veterinary Training installed a permanent evaluation system of veterinary teaching establishments and recognised EAEVE as the evaluating agency. In 1993 it mandated EAEVE and the Federation of Veterinarians of Europe to independently manage the European evaluation system of veterinary teaching establishments. Now EAEVE is an independent membership organisation formed by veterinary higher education institutions. Veterinary medicine is the only field within the EU regulated professions with a European wide quality assessment/accreditation, and EAEVE is the only international accrediting organisation for this field in Europe.

EAEVE consists of General Assembly, Executive Committee, Committee on Internal Quality Assessment, and European Committee on Veterinary Education. The latter is the main decision making body regarding approvals and/or accreditations.

EAEVE currently performs two kinds of evaluations, the first one is called Stage 1 and it is directed at checking the compliance of veterinary faculties with the demands of the EU directive. The second is called Stage 2 and it covers the quality assurance systems of faculties. Stage 2 was initiated in 2008 and it is still in its developmental phase. It is also not obligatory for the EAEVE members. Stage 1 has a longer tradition and is well developed with clear procedures and critical mass, based on European directives and regulations. The organisation thus has to balance between following strict and rigid external standards on the one hand and caring for quality culture and empowering higher education institutions on the other. It is indeed a great future challenge for EAEVE.

This ENQA review of EAEVE had the sole purpose of examining whether it meets requirement of ENQA membership ("type A review"). The Panel felt it had received sufficient documentation prior to the visit, and naturally the *in situ* visit itself, including a tour and discussions with the staff at the Vienna Veterinary University, provided useful information.

EAEVE has managed to set up a sustainable and efficient accreditation system also with sufficient financial and expert resources. However, as EAEVE developed before the quality assurance system endorsed by the Bologna Process, there are some discrepancies between the systems. Thus the Panel found the EAEVE activities not fully compliant with the European Standards and Guidelines and proposes several recommendations in the light of further development of EAEVE.

2. Glossary

ACVT

The European Union Commission's Advisory Committee on Veterinary Training

CIQA

EAEVE's Committee on Internal Quality Assessment

DG MARKT

Directorate General Internal Market and Services of the European Commission

DG SANCO

Directorate General for Health and Consumers of the European Commission

EAEVE

The European Association of Establishments for Veterinary Education

ECOVE

European Committee on Veterinary Education

ECTS

European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System

EHEA

European Higher Education Area

ENQA

The European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education

ESG

Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area

ESEVT

European System of Evaluation of Veterinary Training

EQAR

The European Quality Assurance Register for Higher Education

EU

The European Union

ExCom

EAEVE's Executive Committee

FVE
Federation of Veterinarians of Europe

GA
EAEVE's General Assembly

HE
Higher education

HEI
Higher Education Institution

SOP
Standard Operating Procedures

QA
Quality Assurance

3. Introduction

This is the report of the ENQA review of EAEVE, undertaken in June 2013 for the purpose of determining whether the agency meets the criteria for Associate Membership in ENQA.

3.1 BACKGROUND OF THE REVIEW PROCESS

The Statutes of ENQA require all member agencies to undergo an external cyclical review, at least once every five years, in order to verify that they fulfil the membership provisions.

In November 2004, the General Assembly of ENQA agreed that the third part of the Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area (ESG) should be incorporated into the membership provisions of its (then) regulations (now statutes). Substantial compliance with the ESG thus became the principal criterion for membership of ENQA. The ESG were subsequently adopted at the Bergen ministerial meeting of the Bologna Process in 2005.

The third part of the ESG covers the cyclical external review of quality assurance and accreditation agencies.

The review of EAEVE was a type A review, as defined in the Guidelines for external reviews of quality assurance agencies in the European Higher Education Area. It evaluated the way in which and to what extent EAEVE fulfils the criteria for the ENQA membership and thus of the Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area (ESG). Consequently, the review also provides information to the ENQA Board to aid its consideration of whether EAEVE should be granted full membership of ENQA.

The external review of EAEVE was conducted in line with the process described in Guidelines for external reviews of quality assurance agencies in the European Higher Education Area and in accordance with the timeline set out in the Terms of Reference. The Review Panel for the external review of EAEVE was composed of the following members:

- Ossi V. Lindqvist, Professor, International Consultant in higher education development, University of Eastern Finland, Finland (Chairman)
- Janja Komljenovič, Head of unit for quality, analysis and reporting at the University of Ljubljana, Slovenia (Secretary)
- Adrian Lungu, Professor, Vice-rector of "Dunarea de Jos" University of Galati, Romania
- Marcel Crochet, Emeritus Honorary Rector of Université Catholique de Louvain, Belgium
- Anouk Platteel, PhD student at Utrecht University, the Netherlands

EAEVE produced a self-evaluation report that provided a substantial portion of the evidence that the Panel used to form its conclusions. The Panel conducted a site-visit to validate fully the self-evaluation and clarify any points at issue. Finally, the Review Panel produced the present final report on the basis of the self-evaluation report, site-visit and its findings. In doing so, it provided an

opportunity for EAEVE to comment on the factual accuracy of the draft report. The Review Panel confirms that it was given access to all pertinent documents and to the persons it wished to consult throughout the review.

3.2 THE REVIEW PROCESS

The review was performed in line with ENQA's guidelines and the Code of Conduct. However, this is a different kind of review as EAEVE is not a national agency such as those which have so far been the object of ENQA evaluation. The Review Panel noted a number of different procedures and challenges that EAEVE is facing compared to national agencies.

In advance, the Review Panel received EAEVE's self-evaluation report for careful analysis. The Panel also checked the other available documents of EAEVE and its web page, which was found informative. EAEVE has a policy of publishing the relevant documents online, and the Panel was able to analyse them before the visit. Among others, these included: mission and vision, the statutes, structure of EAEVE's bodies, names of the representatives in EAEVE's bodies, list of HEIs that EAEVE approved or accredited, guidelines for evaluations, templates for reports, support documents for evaluation, list of experts etc. The Panel also read the evaluation reports prepared and published by EAEVE. It appeared that some of the EAEVE's reports were removed from public domain on the web for some days before the Panel's visit, but the Panel members were provided with the needed passwords. This issue was discussed at the visit, and as of now the reports are public and available. This event was apparently caused by some technical reasons.

The Panel found the EAEVE self-evaluation report to be very informative, well structured, and clear. The report, however, missed the 2nd part of the ESG. Still the Panel could find or deduce the information relevant for the 2nd part of the ESG in other parts of the report and the web page.

The Panel had a briefing call with ENQA representative on 22 May to discuss the visit as well as any other open issues. The Panel Secretary had prepared a 'pre-draft' report based on the findings from the EAEVE's self-evaluation report and other relevant documents. This document helped the Panel to focus and reflect on the open issues throughout the visit.

The site visit took place from 10 to 12 June 2013. The Panel met the first day for a briefing meeting. The second day it had interviews in the EAEVE's office. On the third day, in addition to interviews the Panel was taken to a tour of the University of Veterinary Medicine, Vienna. This university recently underwent an EAEVE evaluation, both Stage 1 and Stage 2. Thus the Panel not only witnessed the EAEVE's environment, but also got an opportunity to talk with staff who were recent targets of an EAEVE evaluation.

Throughout the visit and in the evenings the Panel had meetings during which it discussed the findings, added information to the 'pre-draft' report, and went through the ESG with regards to

EAEVE. On the third day of the visit the Panel held a short debriefing meeting, with the EAEVE representatives present.

After the visit a first draft of the report was written based on the 'pre-draft', new evidence and discussions of the Panel. It was then circulated between the Panel Members who gave their comments and contributions. After that the draft was prepared and sent to the EAEVE to check for factual errors, on 7 August 2013.

EAEVE sent its comments for factual corrections on 20 September 2013, which were taken into account where appropriate. The finalized report was then sent to both ENQA and EAEVE.

3.3 CONTEXT OF THE REVIEW

The establishment of EAEVE

In 1985 EU initiated and financed a three-year cross-national peer review system for veterinary training; EAEVE was founded in 1988 when ACVT installed a permanent evaluation system of veterinary teaching establishments (hereafter: veterinary HEIs) and recognised EAEVE as the evaluating agency. In 1993 ACVT gave mandate to EAEVE and FVE to independently manage the European evaluation system of veterinary HEIs, and the EU Commission withdrew its financial support. It appears that the member institutions of EAEVE fully recognise the added value of these European wide evaluations, which they support via membership and evaluation fees.

Veterinary Medicine is the only field within the EU regulated professions with a European wide quality assessment/accreditation, and EAEVE is the only international accrediting organisation for this field in Europe. Recently EAEVE has also expanded to cover veterinary institutions outside Europe.

Legal framework

Veterinary medicine is one of the seven regulated professions in EU. The Directive 2005/36/EC that came into force in 2007 lays down the minimum training requirements¹ that should be harmonised throughout EU. Consequently veterinary education falls under a system of automatic recognition of professional qualifications in EU. In other words, as it is assumed that all veterinary HEIs in the EU provide equivalent level of training, automatic recognition of qualifications in EU is possible.

However, the EAEVE Stage 1 evaluations show an interesting finding that not all veterinary HEIs in EU fulfil the minimum requirements, i.e. 16 establishments in 9 EU member states are found to deliver substandard training programmes that are thus incompatible with the EU directive. To be more specific, there are 74 veterinary HEIs in EU, and they are all members of EAEVE. Out of those 74 HEIs, 49 meet the requirements of the Directive, 2 are conditionally approved, 7 were not evaluated or are waiting to be evaluated, and as mentioned before, 16 of them do not meet the requirements of the Directive.

¹ The requirements refer to: the conditions for admission to the training, the minimum duration of the training, and the elements of knowledge and skills veterinary graduates have to acquire in the course of training.

The responsibility for compliance with the Directive rests with the competent authorities of the EU member states. Only some countries have decided to include the EAEVE evaluations in their legal systems in the sense that the EAEVE decisions would have national consequence equal or comparable to a decision of the national QA agency. E.g. if a veterinary HEI is not accredited by EAEVE it cannot enrol first year students in Italy. In general the EU system of mutual recognition of veterinary medicine qualifications is independent from the EAEVE or any other kinds of such evaluations. The efforts of veterinary HEIs to improve their quality and to follow the EAEVE recommendations after evaluations are thus largely voluntary.

Still the EAEVE evaluation system is endorsed by EU; e.g. DG MARKT and DG SANCO encourage cooperation of the national higher education quality assurance agencies with EAEVE as well as recognition of EAEVE accreditation by national authorities.

Veterinary training in EU

The Directive 2005/36/EC requires a minimum of 5 years of full-time study for veterinary surgeons (300 ECTS), and lists the required study subjects, expected competencies and skills of graduates.

The degree structure and practice of the veterinary profession vary between the EU member states. In some states a diploma is sufficient to practice the profession, in others a doctoral degree is mandatory; in some states a doctor's degree is issued without a thesis, in others with a thesis that requires additional studies of substantial length. The Bologna degree structure is applied in less than half of the 74 EU veterinary HEIs.

Quality assurance (i.e. the competent authorities responsible for quality of veterinary HEIs) and the authority to issue the degrees vary between states as well. Generally the governmental structures issue degrees (universities or ministries) and the permission to practice the profession is granted by a national professional organisation in most states. Communication between these two authorities at the national level apparently is often weak.

As veterinary HEIs are universities or comparable institutions, they have the power to decide about the contents of the curricula and the methods of teaching within the frame of their academic autonomy. In some states the governmental authorities endorse or approve curricula, but the quality assurance mechanisms differ or are even non-existent. Normally the quality assurance is fitted into the general national framework for quality assurance of higher education at large (e.g. by national quality assurance agencies). Cooperation between these national agencies and EAEVE is not tight, but is improving, e.g., in Austria, Italy and Hungary EAEVE accreditations are accepted by the national quality assurance agencies. EAEVE believes that such cooperation will be promoted also by the European Commission in other member states in the future.

EAEVE membership and cooperation

EAEVE is composed of members that are veterinary HEIs and which lead to an academic degree, permitting the use of a professional status and practice of veterinary medicine.

EAEVE membership is voluntary. The current situation is as follows:

	EU	Non-EU	All
Members	74	24 (Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Macedonia, Serbia, Switzerland, Norway, Turkey, Israel, Jordan)	98
Admission	A request	A screening procedure including a consultative site visit with positive outcome	All new members are encouraged to undergo a full on-site visitation and evaluation within 3 years of admission

Establishments are to apply for membership to the ExCom (while the HEIs from non-EU countries have to agree to undergo a preliminary on-site visit). After admittance by the ExCom, they are invited to present themselves in front of the GA. The right to vote is restricted to the establishments which have paid their annual membership fees before 1st of April of each year, and have been approved or conditionally approved by EAEVE. Non-approved HEIs in good standing have restricted voting rights limited to certain issues (as specified in the article 4 of the Statutes).

Currently EAEVE consists of 98 members, including 54 establishments which are approved/ accredited, 3 conditionally approved, and 41 are not approved (the status of 'approved' refers to the Stage 1 evaluation as explained later).

EAEVE is also actively involved in the quality assurance/accreditation process beyond EU borders. Most veterinary HEIs both in the Balkan states are also EAEVE members as well as some veterinary faculties in Turkey, Israel and Jordan. Likewise, the institution of Ulaanbaatar (Mongolia) is a candidate for membership. Collaboration with the Hong-Kong Board for Accreditation of Academic and Vocational Qualifications has been established to evaluate Chinese veterinary schools using the EAEVE evaluation scheme. Also EAEVE involvement in the North African region is anticipated. The newly founded "Network of Establishments for Veterinary Education in the Mediterranean Region" (REEV-Med) received and continues to receive EAEVE input with the goal of quality assessment and with improvement applying international standards.

Agencies or organisations that would act as accrediting agencies and/or licensing bodies at the same time are rare in Europe with the exception of the Anglo-Saxon area. In other parts of the world such structures exist (the American Veterinary Medical Association, the Australasian Veterinary Boards Council and the South African Veterinary Council). EAEVE cooperates with these structures and participates in the International Accreditors' Working Group that is formed by these organisations and aiming at harmonising global accreditation standards for veterinary medicine.

As EAEVE is adjusting to globalisation it has supplemented its SOP by a "limited approval status". That is to allow veterinary HEIs outside the EU to be quality assessed under well-defined circumstances despite an *a priori* incompatibility in one major area: for instance, the lack of adequate

teaching in the porcine species or teaching only slaughter procedures not commonly used in Europe. In this category, insufficiency in only one area may be acceptable, whereas all other quality parameters will be evaluated by the complete EAEVE standards (SOP). As a guideline, any incompatibility area will be clearly defined and graduates originating from foreign faculties with "limited approval" would have to complete additional training in a specific field should they apply for recognition of their degree within EU.

EAEVE organisational structure

EAEVE has the following bodies:

- The General Assembly (GA)
- The Executive Committee (ExCom)
- ECOVE (independent entity)
- Committee on Internal Quality Assessment (CIQA)

The GA is the main decision making body with such tasks as *electing the President and Vice-Presidents, confirming the ExCom members, defining the responsibilities of the ExCom, adopting the rules of procedures for EAEVE's bodies, adopting the statutes, creating working groups, and adopting the budget*. It is composed of the Deans (or their nominated representatives) of EAEVE's members. Each member has one vote. The GA meets once a year and the quorum is reached if half of the members are present.

The ExCom is responsible for running the organisation. It is composed of the President and representatives of 8 geographical area groups. These members are nominated by representatives of geographical areas and they have to be veterinarians employed by teaching establishments that are approved or conditionally approved by EAEVE. The roles of ExCom are: *representation of the region in the ExCom, keeping contact with the teaching establishments, providing information to them, initiating discussions among teaching establishments, attending the ExCom meetings, participating in working groups and promoting EAEVE*.

ECOVE is a decision making body of ESEVT. It consists of seven members, four of whom are appointed by ExCom of EAEVE, and three are nominated by the Board of FVE. The Chairperson is elected among the members of ECOVE. All ECOVE members had to be acting as experts of at least two on-site visits of veterinary HEIs within the past 5 years before taking office. While serving on ECOVE members cannot act as evaluation team members which however does not stand in case of re-visits or consultative site visits. EAEVE and FVE each nominate one alternate member who will be called upon in case of conflict of interest of a full member. ECOVE makes decisions based on SOP, the visitation report and a Skype discussion with the chairman of the visit at the ECOVE meeting. The competences of ECOVE are the following: *approving the visitation programme, approving the evaluation teams, making the final decisions based on visitation reports - "Approval", "Conditional Approval" or "Non-Approval" for Stage 1 or "Accreditation", "Conditional Accreditation" or "Non-Accreditation" for Stage 2*. ECOVE meets at least twice a year. The office of ECOVE is hosted by EAEVE.

CIQA was established in 2009 and consists of three members not involved in other EAEVE bodies. CIQA is responsible for internal quality which is further described in the following chapter of this report (ENQA CRITERION 7 / ESG 3.8: ACCOUNTABILITY PROCEDURES).

EAEVE office is based in Vienna, Austria. The staff is small and includes an Office Manager, which is a part-time employee and an Assistant to the management. Until June 2013 it had an Executive Director whose contract was not prolonged; thus his tasks were distributed between the other two office staff and the President. The office handles the planning of the visits, the timetables, the proposing of visiting teams, also it accompanies some of the visiting teams as rapporteurs, and oversees the preparation of the evaluation reports. Moreover, it handles the everyday administrative tasks (accounting, budgeting, communication, etc).

EAEVE procedures

EAEVE performs two stages of evaluations with different approaches and aims although the steps are said to be similar. The two 'stages' are not sequential or automatically following each other. They are rather two separate processes with different foci and aims as well as of different structures, different evaluation teams and process duration.

The **Stage 1 evaluation** checks whether a veterinary HEI conforms to Directive 2005/36/EC regarding the training of veterinary surgeons (Chapter III, Section 5, Article 38 and Annex V). It thus covers the academic standards. A positive outcome renders a HEI an "approved" status; a partially positive outcome (one single deficiency) renders a "conditionally approved" status. If there are more deficiencies, the decision is "not approved".

The **Stage 2 evaluation** covers the quality assurance and management system of a HEI. It thus checks whether a HEI is providing quality learning/teaching, services and administration and how it is caring for such quality. In other words, the Stage 2 checks whether a HEI has relevant methods for monitoring quality of training, assessment and learning opportunities, a suitable system for QA, and a plan for quality enhancement. The decisions are: accreditation, conditional accreditation, or no accreditation.

HEIs are free to choose between evaluations for Stage 1 or Stage 2, or a combined visit for both stages provided that the HEI has passed Stage 1 on a previous evaluation. If a HEI decides for Stage 2 evaluation, it is in practice conducted at the same time with Stage 1. EAEVE is planning to merge these two stages in the future for which it has already taken a decision at the recent GA meeting (May 2013).

4. PANEL'S GENERAL NOTE ON EAEVE

Because of the specific nature of EAEVE within the European HE evaluation system, a few additional explanations may be warranted.

EAEVE started to work as a peer review system to check the standards and demands of the EU directive regarding veterinary education. In the past few years it has had a rapid development corresponding to the changing HE environment. Examples are, among others, introduction of the 'Stage 2' evaluations as EAEVE learned that checking the standards of veterinary education is no longer enough and that HEIs need to focus on quality improvement. Then in 2009 it introduced CIQA, an internal body caring for its own quality processes, and recently it also introduced a student member in the evaluation teams for Stage 2.

EAEVE has a 25 years' of history and tradition in caring for quality of veterinary HEIs. It has started based on an EU initiative and received financial support from EU. When EU finished financing the EAEVE activities, the member institutions stepped in and continued to support it financially, also noting the many benefits that emanate to them from the EAEVE activities, including the new demands from the Bologna process. EAEVE is thus an established and strong player in the EHEA. European countries have established and strengthened their QA agencies in the past two decades. These national agencies normally evaluate or accredit the HEIs in their national territory (though lately more also in other countries) with particularly focusing on the internal QA of HEIs. Generally, the ESG and the QA processes are not specific for any particular HE discipline, and the national agencies follow their general criteria and regulations. Veterinary HEIs are specific in many regards, but the most specific feature is the EU regulation on the contents of veterinary education. EAEVE has fulfilled this role and consequently had a good impact on harmonisation of higher education in veterinary medicine, contributed to the common standards in Europe, and was a source of motivation for veterinary HEIs to 'upgrade' and improve their functions. The impact is e.g. seen in the ERASMUS mobility programme as EAEVE approved HEIs decide often to send their students only to other approved veterinary HEIs. It seems that EAEVE has successfully adjusted to the new times of HE market, first by creating a platform of building trust between veterinary HEIs and stakeholders; and second, by further developing its system towards 'Stage 2' evaluations. These evaluations are really reaching towards Quality Assurance, beyond mere checking for the technical standards given.

What is interesting in the European system is that some veterinary institutions are faculties of universities and some others are independent universities by themselves e.g., the one in Vienna. If a veterinary HEI is a faculty of a university it has to adhere to the general internal QA system of the entire university. It is thus already a part of QA mechanisms that are checked and regulated above the faculty level, and they are a part of broader QA policy and strategy of the university. In this case a Stage 2 evaluation done by EAEVE covers either the same procedures as the university is already doing or is covering systems beyond its competence (i.e. broader university QA systems which extends the QA of veterinary HEI). If a veterinary HEI is a university by itself then a Stage 2 evaluation seems more pertinent as it can provide good external view on the QA procedures. Even in this case the common European arrangement of national QA agency evaluating such a university remains. This will be discussed further in this report.

The Panel feels that the Stage 1 evaluation is well developed, and it fulfils its purpose well. The main aim is to check the standards laid down in the EU Directive. EAEVE has developed proper procedures, a critical mass of evaluators and a functioning system to accomplish this purpose. Furthermore, the

procedures and the support system are well developed, e.g. there are templates and examples for evaluators as well as HEIs. Consistency of decisions appears high. The reports are clear, professional and informative.

Stage 2, however, still needs to be further developed to meet better the requirements set in the ESG. Though EAEVE is planning to merge the two stages, some critical questions remain which will be discussed later.

The Panel noted that CIQA provides important added value to EAEVE. CIQA was established in 2009 with three members who were elected by GA for a mandate of 2 years. One of them resigned shortly after the election and ExCom nominated a new member. Since then CIQA has done an important job, as it initiated the update of SOP, the procedures for Stage 2 evaluations and guidelines for forming the evaluation teams; it analysed the evaluations and made suggestions for improvements. It also suggested the merging of Stage 1 and Stage 2, which was confirmed at the GA meeting in May 2013. The EAEVE members appear motivated and dedicated to improve the quality of EAEVE's operations. Recently it was found that EAEVE is not strictly following its own rules, e.g. the mandate of CIQA members already expired before GA elected new members. ExCom realised this fact before the last GA meeting in May 2013 and suggested the GA to prolong the mandate with the current composition until the new GA meets next year (2014). This was confirmed by GA.

EAEVE decided to include student members in the evaluation process some years ago, which certainly was an appropriate measure. However, there are some caveats for real student involvement. Regarding the student evaluators the Panel found that there are different rules for nominating them in the evaluation teams compared to other members; students are not a part of the EAEVE expert pool. Secondly, EAEVE has so far not included students as stakeholders when discussing SOP or other procedures. Finally, students are not members of ECOVE, the main decision making body.

It appears that the Veterinary Medicine sector in Europe is rather small, which also means that the key people are interlinked, and thus clear conflict of interest policies are necessary. Apparently EAEVE has paid special attention to this issue. Yet it was felt that a small circle of people is serving multiple functions or is constantly rotating in different EAEVE roles. However, formally only the EAEVE President and the ExCom members can have overlapping functions at the same time, i.e. the President is a member of the ExCom; and the ExCom members can be members of evaluation teams. In addition, in terms of evaluations and QA processes the Veterinary Medicine is not open to outside disciplines. This might be somewhat understandable for Stage 1 evaluations as they cover the 'technical' compliance towards the EU Directive. Yet it would be highly recommendable, in order also to avoid disciplinary inbreeding, that especially Stage 2 evaluations are opened for outside experts and disciplines; in fact, Veterinary Medicine has but few differences with Human Medicine, Pharmacy, Toxicology, etc., even in technical terms, and in many cases the practical and scientific problems are shared. As already mentioned above, the QA processes in Europe are not that discipline-specific.

Shortly, EAEVE has already made a good impact on the development of the Veterinary field in Europe, but it is also facing several future challenges.

5. Findings

4.1 ENQA CRITERION 1 / ESG PART 2: EXTERNAL QUALITY ASSURANCE PROCESSES

ESG 2.1 USE OF INTERNAL QUALITY ASSURANCE PROCEDURES

STANDARD

External quality assurance procedures should take into account the effectiveness of the internal quality assurance processes described in Part 1 of the European Standards and Guidelines.

GUIDELINES

The standards for internal quality assurance contained in Part 1 provide a valuable basis for the external quality assessment process. It is important that the institutions' own internal policies and procedures are carefully evaluated in the course of external procedures, to determine the extent to which the standards are being met. If higher education institutions are to be able to demonstrate the effectiveness of their own internal quality assurance processes, and if those processes properly assure quality and standards, then external processes might be less intensive than otherwise.

Evidence and analysis

Stage 2 evaluations performed by EAEVE are specifically designed to check the internal quality assurance of veterinary HEIs. The EAEVE evaluation rules require that the HEIs first prepare a self-evaluation report that describes the policies and procedures used to assure high academic standards and the provision of adequate learning opportunities, as well as a description of the quality improvement strategy. The structure and expected contents are prescribed in advance by EAEVE and they have to provide information on:

- Policy statement;
- Assessment of students, post graduate education, student welfare;
 - o Undergraduate education;
 - o Post-graduate student education; academic track;
 - o Post-graduate student education; professional track;
 - o Student welfare.
- Assessment of teaching staff;
- Assessment of learning opportunities;
- Assessment of training programmes and the award of the title of Veterinary Surgeon;
- Assessment of quality assurance for clinics, laboratories and farm;
- Assessment of continuing education;
- Assessment of research;
- Assessment of internationalisation of education and research;
- Assessment of cooperation with stakeholders and society.

After this step, the site visit follows that lasts two days and involves reviewing the written evidence and meetings with the staff responsible for quality assurance and learning environment at the HEI.

There is good evidence that 'Stage 2 evaluations' take into account the Part 1 of the ESG; in other words, EAEVE's criteria for Stage 2 evaluations also overlap with the Part 1 of the ESG to a great extent.

Even though Stage 2 was introduced in 2008 it has not been applied in too many cases. Only few Veterinary HEIs decided to choose this option, and only 5 have been accredited. The main activity of EAEVE is still focused on Stage 1 evaluations. In this case the standards from the EU directive are the sole objects of evaluation and they do not cover the entire part or spirit of ESG Part 1. EAEVE does check teaching methods, examination procedures, library and educational resources, admission and enrolment, staff and even research and gives opinions/recommendations about those issues. But it does not focus on the quality culture as it was envisaged in the ESG Part 1.

Moreover, the Panel has reservations regarding Stage 2 compliance to ESG. The evaluation teams for Stage 2 comprise of QA experts only from other veterinary HEIs, which effectively eliminates cross-fertilisation from other academic fields or from the QA processes at large. Students are mandatory members of the teams, but their full inclusion in the entire process has to be developed further. In addition, the Stage 2 evaluation appears narrow in focusing strictly on the QA process only in its strictest sense, including the QA documents provided by the HEI, and also at aiming at meetings of the QA personnel of the HEI only. Thus there is no general review of the HEI, and no involvement of the stakeholders for interviews, etc. Thus the QA process itself appears too narrow, with also neglecting the general and strategic features of the HEI, and thus avoiding the questions related to the issue of 'fit-for purpose'.

Conclusion: Partially compliant.

Recommendation: The Panel recommends for EAEVE to immediately consider revising both the evaluation methodology and the site-visit agenda for Stage 2 evaluations in order to include a general review of the HEI and not just QA documents and not just meeting the people responsible for quality assurance. Furthermore, we suggest developing the pool of students and their full inclusion in the evaluation process.

ESG 2.2 DEVELOPMENT OF EXTERNAL QUALITY ASSURANCE PROCESSES

STANDARD

The aims and objectives of quality assurance processes should be determined before the processes themselves are developed, by all those responsible (including higher education institutions) and should be published with a description of the procedures to be used.

GUIDELINES

In order to ensure clarity of purpose and transparency of procedures, external quality assurance methods should be designed and developed through a process involving key stakeholders, including higher education institutions. The procedures that are finally agreed should be published and should contain explicit statements of the aims and objectives of the processes as well as a description of the procedures to be used. As external quality assurance makes demands on the institutions involved, a preliminary impact assessment should be undertaken to ensure that the procedures to be adopted are appropriate and do not interfere more than necessary with the normal work of higher education institutions.

Evidence and analysis

The original ACVT evaluation system was governed by the EU Commission Document III/D/5056/5/89, which became the first working paper of EAEVE. Under ACVT it was amended and published as SOP in EU Doc XV/E/8488/2/98. Following the dissolution of ACVT in 2000, this SOP document was adopted by EAEVE and applied exclusively as of 2002. Since then, the SOP has been thoroughly revised and progressively updated under approval of the respective annual GA meetings. Important amendments to the SOP were the adaptation to EU Directive 2005/36/EC and the introduction of Stage 2 visitations.

The present SOP document thus allows a two-stage system for approval/accreditation of veterinary HEIs and provides a detailed description of the principles and methods of evaluation, requirements and instructions. SOP is supplemented by a collection of published Guidelines which are updated on a regular basis. They are all available on the EAEVE homepage.

There is a dilemma regarding the ESG 2.2 where we need to differentiate between the two stages. Regarding Stage 1, stakeholders (including HEIs) are not involved in the development of evaluation methods and criteria used by EAEVE. Moreover, the criteria for 'approval' are not widely discussed within the professional field (e.g. among veterinary HEIs or FVE). This might be understandable as the criteria are laid down in the EU directive resulting in EAEVE's dependence on that document. Still, EAEVE is adjusting its approach for Stage 1 evaluations (e.g. the composition of the panels, improving visitation agendas and similar). Such adjustments do not seem to be prepared in wide discussions. The GA meetings are the only fora where such consultations actively take place; however, this is already at the final stage of the process, just before the formal adoption. Before placing them to the GA they are prepared by a small group of people who are members of the ExCom or CIQA. This part could be improved so that stakeholders (FVE, students, HEIs at large) could contribute to drafts of the proposals, policies or have other open forum for ideas. Then the documents could be placed on the GA agenda to be discussed and adopted.

Regarding the Stage 2, the Panel found that the external quality assurance methods have been designed and developed by EAEVE bodies and then applied via GA.

Conclusion: Partially compliant

Recommendation: It is suggested that EAEVE still strengthens its relations with its internal and external stakeholders, regarding policies, procedures, criteria and the entire evaluation system, in a systematic way. This would apply in particular to the process of producing periodic summary analyses as part of the strategy of EAEVE. Cooperation with FVE appears good but could be strengthened in the future. In addition, student members seem to be only handpicked as participants in evaluations, also using somewhat vague and inconsistent criteria. Apparently there is no general cooperation with the student representative bodies like the International Veterinary Students' Association (IVSA).

ESG 2.3 CRITERIA FOR DECISIONS

STANDARD

Any formal decisions made as a result of an external quality assurance activity should be based on explicit published criteria that are applied consistently.

GUIDELINES

Formal decisions made by quality assurance agencies have a significant impact on the institutions and programmes that are judged. In the interests of equity and reliability, decisions should be based on published criteria and interpreted in a consistent manner. Conclusions should be based on recorded evidence and agencies should have in place ways of moderating conclusions, if necessary.

Evidence and analysis

EAEVE has a clear system where:

- Criteria for both Stage 1 and Stage 2 evaluations are clear, known and available in advance and published;
- Experts who are members of evaluation teams appear to be competent; the teams are also mixed in a way that the first-time novices are accompanied by experts who have participated in evaluations before,
- The Coordinators who assist in evaluations are generally the same people and they ensure continuity (there are four coordinators),
- CIQA checks decisions of ECOVE and reports on its findings.

The visits for Stage 1 and Stage 2 are done at the same time if a HEI decides for Stage 2, but it seems that the processes are run in parallel instead of being integrated.

Conclusion: Fully compliant.

Recommendation: A future challenge might be the possible merging of Stage 1 and Stage 2 evaluations so that the processes and criteria also meet the requirements of ESG.

ESG 2.4 PROCESSES FIT FOR PURPOSE

STANDARD

All external quality assurance processes should be designed specifically to ensure their fitness to achieve the aims and objectives set for them.

GUIDELINES

Quality assurance agencies within the EHEA undertake different external processes for different purposes and in different ways. It is of the first importance that agencies should operate procedures which are fit for their own defined and published purposes. Experience has shown, however, that there are some widely-used elements of external review processes which not only help to ensure their validity, reliability and usefulness, but also provide a basis for the European dimension to quality assurance. Amongst these elements the following are particularly noteworthy:

- insistence that the experts undertaking the external quality assurance activity have appropriate skills and are competent to perform their task;
- the exercise of care in the selection of experts;
- the provision of appropriate briefing or training for experts;
- the use of international experts;
- participation of students;

- ensuring that the review procedures used are sufficient to provide adequate evidence to support the findings and conclusions reached;
- the use of the self-evaluation/site visit/draft report/published report/follow-up model of review;
- recognition of the importance of institutional improvement and enhancement;
- policies as a fundamental element in the assurance of quality.

Evidence and analysis

In the Stage 1 evaluations EAEVE checks the conformity of veterinary HEIs against the EU Directive (approved/conditionally approved/non-approved), and Stage 2 covers internal quality assurance, learning environment and services (accredited/conditionally accredited/non-accredited). The evaluation steps are similar for both stages:

- Application by the veterinary HEI;
- Agreeing on terms of reference of the evaluation;
- Nomination of the evaluation team;
- Preparation of the self-evaluation report by the HEI;
- Site-visit;
- Preparation of the evaluation report;
- Decision by ECOVE.

The Office Manager of EAEVE proposes the evaluation teams for evaluations of HEIs, including a visitation plan that is approved by ECOVE. In this process, CIQA is also consulted. The teams include a student representative who is picked by the Chair of the evaluation team and is normally from the Chair's own institution. EAEVE keeps and publishes a continuously updated list of experts that are included in evaluation teams. EAEVE does not include students in its experts' pool.

The EAEVE self-evaluation report indicates that the experts undergo training if necessary. At the visit the Panel found that there is no targeted training as such. The experts receive all the material to help them with the evaluation before the visit (guidelines, templates, examples of reports) and then they meet the first day of evaluation. It is more of a peer learning activity as the teams never have more than two people who are doing evaluation for the first time. The student members do not receive any specific training for evaluations.

The evaluation teams for Stage 1 consist of 6 members; four of them are peers in the disciplinary sectors², one practicing veterinarian (FVE proposed), one student, and a coordinator. The student member should be in a final year of undergraduate study or graduated in the last 12 months. At the site visit the Panel found that this condition can be violated, i.e. people who are already professionals and employed by a university but are in parallel PhD students can act as student representatives. The coordinator specifically looks after the monitoring of the 13 evaluation standards and respecting the SOP. He/she does not have voting rights in the team and is not directly involved in decision-making, instead he/she provides consulting, advising and assuring that the team is following the given criteria and rules. Chairperson of the teams must have extensive experience in the evaluation processes, and

² Basic Subjects and Sciences, Clinical science subjects, Animal production, Food Hygiene

must have successfully participated in at least three visitations in the past, and having had a positive internal evaluation. The Chairperson is usually one who holds, or who has recently held, a senior academic position with documented and ample experience in undergraduate teaching.

Chair of the evaluation team carries an important and crucial role. He or she can speak to the Dean before the visit, and is responsible for the whole report also with the help of the coordinator. After the visit the Chair is interviewed at an ECOVE session.

EAEVE has produced specific guidelines for the composition of the evaluations teams:

- No expert from the same country as the visited veterinary HEI;
- Previous experience of the expert in the evaluation system, with positive/not negative post-visit feedback (based on questionnaires filled in by the Dean, the Chairman and the Coordinator);
- No more than two first-time experts in any team, to guarantee sufficient cumulative experience;
- At least one female expert per team;
- Experts from at least three officially recognized geographical groups;
- At least one practitioner or official veterinarian as nominated by FVE;
- Rotation amongst listed experts, in general no more than one visit/year;
- Of the two experts in Clinical Sciences, one is to be expert in companion animals and the other one in farm animals or horses;
- No conflict of interest (no direct connection to personal interest in the establishment to be visited; not having studied at or having been employed by the establishment; none of the close family are studying at or being employed by the establishment; that the expert has neither received nor having been promised any gifts or benefits of any nature by the establishment; that the expert is not a citizen of the country where the school to be visited is situated in);
- The participating student shall be a final year undergraduate student or has graduated within the last 12 months.

Moreover, academic team members have to be active veterinarians employed at 'approved' or 'conditionally approved' veterinary HEIs as well as have acknowledged CV and list of publications. All applications to join the EAEVE expert pool from academic members have to be sent via the Dean's office and applications from veterinary practitioners have to be sent via FVE. This might contribute to a closed system in the sense that a rather small group of people nominates experts who are then evaluating the HEIs of such small circle.

The evaluation teams of Stage 2 must include at least two quality management experts. There are no specific rules on how these experts are selected or what are the necessary competences to qualify them for this task. They do not receive any training besides the above mentioned models (guidelines, templates and examples). These teams do not have student members.

The follow up process is not clear. After the approval or accreditation the next visit is only in ten years, and in between there is no checking on what happens with implementation of the suggestions of the evaluation team. In case of conditional approval or accreditation there is a shorter time (maximum of 5 years) during which the HEI has to work out the deficiencies and they have to report annually on the progress. If a HEI decides that it will not go for full approval, there are no follow up procedures.

Conclusion: Partially compliant.

Recommendation: We recommend EAEVE to take measures so that all members of evaluation teams undergo an adequate training. Moreover, we advise EAEVE to consider that all members of the evaluation teams are nominated through the same processes, including the student as well as suggested more openly, e.g. beyond the Dean's office.

ESG 2.5 REPORTING

STANDARD

Reports should be published and should be written in a style that is clear and readily accessible to its intended readership. Any decisions, commendations or recommendations contained in reports should be easy for a reader to find.

GUIDELINES

In order to ensure maximum benefit from external quality assurance processes, it is important that reports should meet the identified needs of the intended readership. Reports are sometimes intended for different readership groups and this will require careful attention to structure, content, style and tone. In general, reports should be structured to cover description, analysis (including relevant evidence), conclusions, commendations, and recommendations. There should be sufficient preliminary explanation to enable a lay reader to understand the purposes of the review, its form, and the criteria used in making decisions. Key findings, conclusions and recommendations should be easily locatable by readers. Reports should be published in a readily accessible form and there should be opportunities for readers and users of the reports (both within the relevant institution and outside it) to comment on their usefulness.

Evidence and analysis

The evaluation visits and evaluation reports are pre-structured, i.e. EAEVE has clear guidelines and templates on visits and reports:

- Visitation Schedule Stage 1;
- Visitation Schedule Stage 2;
- Guiding Notes on the Preparation of a Visitation Report for Stage 1;
- General Template Stage 2;
- Guiding Notes on the Preparation of a Visitation Report for Stage 2.

These guidelines are useful and precise, and they provide effective tools for the evaluation teams.

Evaluation reports take into account self-evaluation reports by HEI (references can be made in order to avoid duplication of information). The reports describe the current situation, but future plans are not supposed to influence the evaluation team. After the site visit a draft report is written, circulated

among the team members and checked by the coordinator for consistency and congruence. It is then sent to the veterinary HEI that can make only factual corrections. It is in discretion of the Chair of the panel or the coordinator to decide to which extent these corrections are taken into account in the final version of the report. The final report is a basis for decision making by ECOVE.

The Panel Members were able to read a good number of the existing reports and they all appear indeed very clear, transparent, useful, and professionally consistent.

Conclusion: Fully compliant.

Recommendation: EAEVE should ensure that its evaluation reports are constantly available and public on its web site.

ESG 2.6 FOLLOW-UP PROCEDURES

STANDARD		
Quality assurance processes which contain recommendations for action or which require a subsequent action plan, should have a predetermined follow-up procedure that is implemented consistently.		
GUIDELINES		
Quality assurance is not principally about individual external scrutiny events: It should be about continuously trying to do a better job. External quality assurance does not end with the publication of the report and should include a structured follow-up procedure to ensure that recommendations are dealt with appropriately and any required action plans drawn up and implemented. This may involve further meetings with institutional or programme representatives. The objective is to ensure that areas identified for improvement are dealt with speedily and that further enhancement is encouraged.		

Evidence and analysis

As already described in the previous chapter there is no legal obligation for veterinary HEIs to follow EAEVE recommendations or findings. Their responses to the recommendations are thus only kind of voluntary. However, EAEVE has a system in place for the follow-up of its decisions as follows:

Stage 1 evaluations	If conditionally approved (not more than 1 major deficiency is found)	HEI provides information on corrections or measures annually and the deficiency has to be solved in maximum 5 years
	If non-approved	HEI provides information on corrections or measures in 3 years
Stage 2 evaluations	If conditionally accredited or not accredited	HEI applies for re-evaluation after 2 years

EAEVE also provides consultative visits for veterinary HEIs that request advice on their improvement measures or status.

In case of full approval or accreditation the period for a re-visit is very long (i.e. 10 years) and there is no follow up in between.

Conclusion: Partially compliant.

Recommendation: It is advisable that EAEVE takes steps towards a continuous and effective system of follow-ups after institutional evaluations/accreditations, according to the guidelines in ESG 2.6. Admittedly, the situation is not fully in the control of EAEVE as it is dependent also on national policies, but also on the voluntary nature of the entire evaluation/accreditation system which also complicates the matter.

ESG 2.7 PERIODIC REVIEWS

STANDARD

External quality assurance of institutions and/or programmes should be undertaken on a cyclical basis. The length of the cycle and the review procedures to be used should be clearly defined and published in advance.

GUIDELINES

Quality assurance is not static but a dynamic process. It should be continuous and not “once in a lifetime”. It does not end with the first review or with the completion of the formal follow-up procedure. It has to be periodically renewed. Subsequent external reviews should take into account progress that has been made since the previous event. The process to be used in all external reviews should be clearly defined by the external quality assurance agency and its demands on institutions should not be greater than are necessary for the achievement of its objectives.

Evidence and analysis

The veterinary HEIs approved by EAEVE have to undergo a mandatory full re-evaluation every 10 years. EAEVE plans to update its SOP so that re-evaluations would be done every 7 years. If not approved or only conditionally approved, the follow-up processes are explained in more detail in ESG 2.7 above.

Conclusion: Substantially compliant.

Recommendation: EAEVE is advised to shorten the periodic reviews, as a decade is clearly a too long an interval for reviews in the dynamic environment where also veterinary HEIs now have to function. The periods of reviews for the conditionally approved or non-approved HEIs should also be adjusted accordingly for clear policy targets.

ESG 2.8 SYSTEM-WIDE ANALYSES

STANDARD

Quality assurance agencies should produce from time to time summary reports describing and analysing the general findings of their reviews, evaluations, assessments, etc.

GUIDELINES

All external quality assurance agencies collect a wealth of information about individual programmes and/or institutions and this provides material for structured analyses across whole higher education systems. Such analyses can provide very useful

information about developments, trends, emerging good practice and areas of persistent difficulty or weakness and can become useful tools for policy development and quality enhancement. Agencies should consider including a research and development function within their activities, to help them extract maximum benefit from their work.

Evidence and analysis

The list of the so-called major deficiencies referring to the most common areas of weaknesses found by the teams in the HEIs evaluated/accredited is published on the EAEVE homepage. This document is a list of weaknesses or deficiencies that are found on evaluation. It does not provide analyses on how common these deficiencies are, what are the reasons, their impacts, or possible recommendations given. In its own self-evaluation report EAEVE only shortly indicates e.g., that 17 HEIs in 9 EU states provide substandard programmes.

EAEVE is not conducting any system-wide analyses or meta-analyses of the veterinary training and education in Europe, nor are there any other analyses or reviews of the possible general environments and trends of the Higher Education in Europe, including veterinary sciences and the related fields. The results and implications of the EAEVE evaluations are poorly if not at all critically analysed, also in terms of Quality Assurance, and thus one gets a sense of a closed and a relatively passive system. However, what is done is that specific findings from evaluations are discussed at the ExCom and GA meetings and sometimes such issues are included in the GA documents.

Conclusion: Not compliant.

Recommendation: It is advised that EAEVE develops a policy of periodic system-wide analyses of the veterinary education in Europe. These analyses could be important and even crucial tools in developing the veterinary field in Europe at large (and even outside Europe), and also a way of developing the evaluation/accreditation processes and practices of EAEVE itself, including its own long-term strategy and mission.

ENQA CRITERION 1 / ESG 3.1, 3.3: ACTIVITIES

STANDARD 3.1

The external quality assurance agencies should take into account the presence and effectiveness of the external quality assurance procedures described in Part 2 of the European Standard and Guidelines.

GUIDELINES 3.1

The standards for external quality assurance contained in Part 2 provide a valuable basis for the external quality assessment process. The standards reflect best practices and experiences gained through the development of external quality assurance in Europe since the early 1990s. It is therefore important that these standards are integrated into the processes applied by external quality assurance agencies towards the higher education institutions. The standards for external quality assurance should together with the standards for external quality assurance agencies constitute the basis for professional and credible external quality assurance of higher education institutions.

STANDARD 3.3

Agencies should undertake external quality assurance activities (at institutional or programme level) on a regular basis.

GUIDELINES 3.3

These may involve evaluation, review, audit, assessment, accreditation or other similar activities and should be part of the core functions of the agency.

Evidence and analysis

EAEVE compliance with ESG Part 2 has been addressed in the text above (ESG 2.1 – 2.8).

Conclusion: Partially compliant.

Recommendation: Particular recommendations are given above at each ESG criteria.

4.2 ENQA CRITERION 2 / ESG 3.2: OFFICIAL STATUS

STANDARD

Agencies should be formally recognised by competent public authorities in the European Higher Education Area as agencies with responsibilities for external quality assurance and should have an established legal basis. They should comply with any requirements of the legislative jurisdictions within which they operate.

Evidence and analysis

EAEVE is a non-profit organisation registered under the French law (as its first office was situated in France). It has more than 20 years' tradition, and originally it was established with the support of EU. When ACVT was dissolved in 2000, EAEVE was assigned the sole responsibility for evaluations of veterinary HEIs within EU.

EAEVE has thus grown out of a EU initiative. Some national authorities in Europe recognise EAEVE decisions and act accordingly (e.g. in Italy, the veterinary HEIs that are not accredited by EAEVE may not enrol first year students). Recently, EAEVE cooperates also with other national quality assurance agencies in order to contribute to the quality of the national HE systems. EAEVE has stated a purpose of even more such cooperation with national authorities in the future.

Conclusion: Partially compliant.

Recommendation: The results and recommendations of EAEVE evaluations may not be 'binding' in a number of European countries, and it appears that it is mostly up to the individual HEIs to react (or not to react) to them. This is all dependent on national policies, over which EAEVE itself does not have any direct power, except maybe through publicity and by keeping its findings as public and accessible as possible.

4.3 ENQA CRITERION 3 / ESG 3.4: RESOURCES

STANDARD

Agencies should have adequate and proportional resources, both human and financial, to enable them to organise and run their external quality assurance process(es) in an effective and efficient manner, with appropriate provision for the development of their processes and procedures.

Evidence and analysis

EAEVE is financially self-sustaining. Currently each member pays an annual membership fee of 1.500€, and for each Stage 1 evaluation 8.000 €, and for the Stage 2 evaluation € 4.000 (€ 11.000 € when combined), and for each re-visit 2.000 to 4.000 €. The HEIs themselves cover all travel and local expenses of the evaluation teams. Team members are volunteers and working free of charge. Membership fees and the on-site visits (over 10 per year) cover all the expenses accrued such as office costs and any committee business of EAEVE.

The office personnel EAEVE employs consisted of an Executive Director, an Office Manager as well as an Assistant to Management. After the last GA in May 2013 it was decided that the contract of the Executive Director will not be continued, and his tasks were divided between the Office Manager, the Assistant and the President. It seems that the office management is running smoothly despite the very small number of personnel.

Regular organisational duties are fulfilled by the President, Vice-President, the Treasurer and members of the ExCom, ECOVE, CIQA, and by appointment of working groups. All committee members are volunteers, and only travel and accommodation expenses connected with their activities are reimbursed.

The Treasurer controls the financial matters together with the President. The day-to-day financial matters are managed by the EAEVE office. A detailed financial report is presented to the ExCom and GA. The financial activities are controlled by the auditors elected by GA, and they report to GA.

It was found that a small circle of people is serving in multiple functions or is constantly rotating in different roles. Thus the human resource base of EAEVE is rather small not only in terms of office staff but also in terms of active participation. However, formally only the President and the ExCom members can have overlapping functions at the same time, i.e. the President is a member of the ExCom; and the ExCom members can be members of evaluation teams.

It was observed that the office and infrastructure resources of EAEVE are appropriate, and the financial resources are adequate for the current tasks.

Conclusion: Substantially compliant.

Recommendation: It appears that EAEVE is managed adequately with the current human and financial resources. Its financial basis rests solely on the membership fees, and apparently the members appreciate greatly the membership and the benefits they obtain. There have been no member dropouts so far. But to continue this, it should be necessary that EAEVE keeps opening up not only within the veterinary medicine field itself but also more towards other related academic fields, also and especially in terms of quality assurance.

4.4 ENQA CRITERION 4 / ESG 3.5: MISSION STATEMENT

STANDARD

Agencies should have clear and explicit goals and objectives for their work, contained in a publicly available statement.

GUIDELINES

These statements should describe the goals and objectives of agencies' quality assurance processes, the division of labour with relevant stakeholders in higher education, especially the higher education institutions, and the cultural and historical context of their work. The statements should make clear that the external quality assurance process is a major activity of the agency and that there exists a systematic approach to achieving its goals and objectives. There should also be documentation to demonstrate how the statements are translated into a clear policy and management plan.

Evidence and analysis

The stated **vision** of EAEVE is to be the official accreditation authority for veterinary education establishments within Europe.

The stated **mission** of EAEVE is to evaluate, promote and further develop the quality and standards of veterinary medical establishments and their teaching within, but not limited to, the member states of the European Union (EU).

The EAEVE/FVE evaluation system aims to give assurance to:

- The public – to know they can trust the quality of graduating veterinary surgeons and the service they deliver;
- Veterinary students – to know their education reaches agreed and acceptable standards;
- Veterinary establishments – to know that their curricula and school reach agreed benchmarked levels.

Objectives: The primary objective is to monitor the harmonization of the minimum standards set down in the study programme for veterinary surgeons in EU Directive 2005/36/EC.

This is enacted through the European System of Evaluation of Veterinary Training (ESEVT), which is managed by the EAEVE in cooperation with FVE. A list of Evaluated and Approved Institutions is maintained.

Other objectives are to reinforce cooperation between member establishments and to act as a forum for discussion in order to improve and harmonize veterinary education. Additional tasks are the facilitation of information exchange, staff exchange, student exchange and teaching materials exchange between members.

However, the Review Panel observed certain discrepancies between the vision, mission, and the objectives of EAEVE. The main tension comes from the need to follow strictly the EU objective as opposed to the care for the quality culture. The fact that most institutions limit the reviewing process to Stage 1 is a clear indication of the problem. EAEVE on the one hand wishes to focus on quality and care for enhancement approaches, but on the other hand wishes to become the official accreditation

authority for veterinary HEIs within Europe. This would be possible if all EU member states change their legislation, and provide such powers to EAEVE.

Conclusion: Partially compliant.

Recommendation: The Review Panel suggests that EAEVE will discuss both internally and externally its role and revises its mission and vision accordingly. Actually this should also be a continuation of the ESG 2.8 (above).

4.5 ENQA CRITERION 5 / ESG 3.6: INDEPENDENCE

STANDARD

Agencies should be independent to the extent both that they have autonomous responsibility for their operations, and that the conclusions and recommendations made in their reports cannot be influenced by third parties such as higher education institutions, ministries or other stakeholders.

GUIDELINES

An agency will need to demonstrate its independence through measures, such as:

- its operational independence from higher education institutions and governments
- is guaranteed in official documentation (e.g. instruments of governance or legislative acts);
- the definition and operation of its procedures and methods, the nomination and appointment of external experts and the determination of the outcomes of its quality assurance processes are undertaken autonomously and independently from governments, higher education institutions, and organs of political influence;
- while relevant stakeholders in higher education, particularly students/learners, are consulted in the course of quality assurance processes, the final outcomes of the quality assurance processes remain the responsibility of the agency.

Evidence and analysis

As stated, EAEVE is an international and autonomous organisation, not influenced by governments or other stakeholders. It is a membership organisation (consisting of veterinary HEIs), however, members do not influence work of any committees and especially of ECOVE which is the decision making body for accreditations.

EAEVE has rules and documents in place that determine competences and responsibilities of all its bodies.

It appears that EAEVE carefully selects the experts who are appointed to participate in the evaluation teams. It has open calls several times a year – academic experts have to be nominated through the Deans offices, veterinarians through FVE, and the student member is nominated by each Chair of the evaluation panel. All nominations are screened by the EAEVE office and the director, and then confirmed by ECOVE.

The final outcome of the quality assurance processes is the sole responsibility of EAEVE, and the final decision is made by ECOVE; the final evaluation report remains the property of EAEVE and the HEI involved. The veterinary HEIs visited have to publish their self-evaluation report and the final

evaluation report on their website, and they must agree in the visitation contract that the entire evaluation report is being published also on the EAEVE website.

The Review Panel obtained the impression that although EAEVE fulfils the formal requirements of being independent and autonomous regarding its decision-making, it still has something else that might undermine its 'independence'. The stakeholders' role has been already discussed above, and apparently their role is too weak in the evaluation process. It appears that the accreditation and the QA system is developed by a rather small circle of people, and then confirmed by GA. The Deans are the only persons who are able to nominate people to the evaluation expert pool, which could contribute to shunning by a number of dedicated and motivated experts. The same narrow approach applies also to the selection of the student members. Thus it appears that the evaluation and accreditation processes are run by a rather small circle of people who in fact are in turn also assessing the same circle.

Conclusion: Partially compliant.

Recommendation: It is recommended that EAEVE opens up more its evaluation and accreditation processes and procedures, involving also stakeholders, and also relying on experts who come from outside the veterinary field, especially in matters related to Quality Assurance. It would strengthen the credibility of EAEVE's evaluation/accreditation work despite the fact that it formally is autonomous and independent in its decision-making.

4.6 ENQA CRITERION 6 / ESG 3.7: EXTERNAL QUALITY ASSURANCE CRITERIA AND PROCESSES USED BY THE MEMBERS

<p>STANDARD</p> <p>The processes, criteria and procedures used by agencies should be pre-defined and publicly available. These processes will normally be expected to include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• a self-assessment or equivalent procedure by the subject of the quality assurance process;• an external assessment by a group of experts, including, as appropriate, (a) student member(s), and site visits as decided by the agency;• publication of a report, including any decisions, recommendations or other formal outcomes;• a follow-up procedure to review actions taken by the subject of the quality assurance process in the light of any recommendations contained in the report. <p>GUIDELINES</p> <p>Agencies may develop and use other processes and procedures for particular purposes. Agencies should pay careful attention to their declared principles at all times, and ensure both that their requirements and processes are managed professionally and that their conclusions and decisions are reached in a consistent manner, even though the decisions are formed by groups of different people. Agencies that make formal quality assurance decisions or conclusions that have formal consequences should have an appeals procedure. The nature and form of the appeals procedure should be determined in the light of the constitution of each agency.</p>

Evidence and analysis

A large part of the procedures is already explained above (in particular under the ESG 2.4). To sum up, EAEVE has clear and publicly available evaluation criteria and procedures (SOP) as well as guidelines and manuals, and tools to help HEIs and experts of the evaluation teams.

First, HEIs have to do self-evaluation and provide a self-evaluation report. Then follows the site-visit; for Stage 1 evaluation it consists of seven members (one of whom is a student and one coordinator without full voting rights). The team receives the self-evaluation report two months before the site visit. The Chair assigns and distributes the team's main responsibilities for each of the 13 evaluation chapters. The on-site visit dates are agreed usually one year in advance. The visit takes 5 working days and involves meetings with senior and junior teaching staff, administrative and support staff and students, together with a detailed visitation/evaluation of the facilities and equipment.

For Stage 2 evaluations the procedure is similar, but involves only two experts in quality assessment/management and a coordinator, for a visit of two and a half days.

Stage 1 and 2 evaluations may be done separately or in parallel, however, positive outcome of the Stage 1 evaluation ("approved status") is a prerequisite for a Stage 2 accreditation.

During the site visit a draft of evaluation report is generated by each expert covering their assigned chapters; the layout of the report is standardised. The findings, comments and suggestions are discussed and agreed by the team. A first complete draft of the report is edited by the Chair, formatted and completed by the coordinator and again circulated to the team for final corrections. Each chapter ends with a paragraph of "Suggestions" in which any deficiencies are specifically analysed and highlighted. The final draft report is then sent to the Dean of the evaluated veterinary HEI for factual corrections. The Chair and the coordinator decide whether corrections, if any, are relevant and justified. The final report of the visiting team is then forwarded to ECOVE for evaluation and deliberation. This process includes an interview of the Chair. ECOVE bases its decision on the HEI's self-evaluation report, the report of the evaluation team and the interview of the Chair. Evaluation outcome is transmitted to the veterinary HEI within hours.

The follow-up procedures are described above.

Conclusion: Substantially compliant.

Recommendation: The Stage 1 and Stage 2 evaluations differ in many ways and also by their purposes, and especially in terms of the QA process (mostly Stage 2) there exist features that do not fully conform to the ESG procedures, including also the follow-up practice. Possible merging of the two stages will be a challenge for EAEVE, first by addressing the EU Directive and then conforming fully to ESG.

4.7 ENQA CRITERION 7 / ESG 3.8: ACCOUNTABILITY PROCEDURES

STANDARD

Agencies should have in place procedures for their own accountability.

GUIDELINES

These procedures are expected to include the following:

1. A published policy for the assurance of the quality of the agency itself, made available on its website;
2. Documentation that demonstrates that:
 - the agency's processes and results reflect its mission and goals of quality assurance;
 - the agency has in place, and enforces, a no-conflict-of-interest mechanism in the work of its external experts;
 - the agency has reliable mechanisms that ensure the quality of any activities and material produced by subcontractors, if some or all of the elements in its quality assurance procedure are subcontracted to other parties;
 - the agency has in place internal quality assurance procedures which include an internal feedback mechanism (i.e. means to collect feedback from its own staff and council/board); an internal reflection mechanism (i.e. means to react to internal and external recommendations for improvement); and an external feedback mechanism (i.e. means to collect feedback from experts and reviewed institutions for future development) in order to inform and underpin its own development and improvement.
3. A mandatory cyclical external review of the agency's activities at least once every five years.

Evidence and analysis

CIQA was established in 2009 and it consists of three members not involved in other EAEVE bodies. CIQA covers for internal quality of EAEVE based on the following responsibilities:

- To direct the development, implementation, revision and improvement of quality in the ESEVT;
- To present to the EAEVE GA an annual report on the fulfilment of the policies and objectives of quality, the follow up the system and the proposals for improvement;
- To control the effective management of the office;
- To control the effective management of the post-on-site-visit questionnaire;
- To perform a critical review on the development, results and personnel involved in all the steps of the annual evaluation processes, including the final decisions taken by ECOVE, looking for the equal application of the system to all the members without any type of discrimination, and controlling absence of conflict of interest. The review should include as a minimum an evaluation of the procedures followed at
 - o the site visits
 - o the composition and quality of the site visit reports
 - o the quality assurance feed-back from faculties and team members
- To meet at least twice a year;
- To inform the ExCom, the EAEVE Executive Director and the EAEVE President about the outcomes of the meetings;
- To evaluate the composition of the visiting expert groups.

In addition, questionnaires to be filled in both by the visited HEIs and the members of the team are designed to act as quality assurance tools. The questionnaire involves critique of the team, individuals and procedures, and invites the establishment visited to suggest improvements. All evaluation forms are forwarded to and collected by the EAEVE office for analysis (internal feedback mechanism) and final evaluation by CIQA. Then CIQA in turn reports of the outcomes and makes suggestions for changes and improvements and checks their actual effect (internal reflection

mechanism). An online feedback evaluation system has been implemented and is used on a regular basis.

Recommendations and statements of CIQA are thoroughly discussed by ExCom and at GA. As a rule, the improvements suggested are implemented without delay.

EAEVE has a strict rule of no-conflict of interest. For ECOVE members EAEVE and FVE each nominate one alternate member who will be called upon in case of conflict of interest of a full member. Where conflict of interest arise e.g. in discussions of evaluation reports with one of the members being a national of the country in which the establishment in question is located or currently working in that country or having worked or studied at the establishment in question for a significant period of time, the member in question must not participate in the evaluation, has no voting rights and shall leave the room. He/she shall then be replaced by an alternate member.

CIQA *de facto* works for a year and in that time it made an important progress for EAEVE (introduction of guidelines for panel composition, evaluation of site visits, suggesting merging Stage 1 and Stage 2 etc.). Surprisingly, however, it was observed that CIQA was not much involved in the preparation of the EAEVE self-evaluation report.

EAEVE does not have a system-wide Code of Conduct for its activities.

Conclusion: Fully compliant.

Recommendation: It is advisable that EAEVE develops a clear and consistent Code of Conduct, for use in all its evaluation/accreditation processes.

4.8 ENQA CRITERION 8: CONSISTENCY OF JUDGEMENTS, APPEALS SYSTEM AND CONTRIBUTIONS TO AIMS OF ENQA

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| <p>I. The agency pays careful attention to its declared principles at all times, and ensures both that its requirements and processes are managed professionally and that its judgements and decisions are reached in consistent manner, even if the judgements are formed by different groups;</p> <p>II. If the agency makes formal quality assurance decisions, or conclusions that have formal consequences, it should have an appeals procedure. The nature and form of the appeals procedure should be determined in the light of the constitution of each agency.</p> <p>III. The agency is willing to contribute actively to the aims of ENQA.</p> |
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Evidence and analysis

It appears that EAEVE has several mechanisms to assure consistency of its judgements as described above in this report.

Even though EAEVE decisions do not have direct legal consequences, an appeals procedure exists. It is published in SOP Annex VIII. In short, the HEI notifies the coordinator and the Chair of ECOVE of the appeal in writing, within 8 weeks of the receipt of the ECOVE decision. The first stage of the appeals process involves reconsideration by the ECOVE. The group of visiting experts or individual members of the group of visiting experts may be asked to participate in the reconsideration process. The appeal may be accepted or dismissed.

If the ECOVE dismisses the appeal, and the HEI does not accept it, an independent appeals panel is called upon. The panel comprises of three members, all of whom should preferably have chaired an evaluation visit. One member each is appointed by EAEVE and FVE, respectively, with the appealing HEI having the right to nominate the third member. The panel selects its own Chair. None of the three members shall be nationals of, or working in the country of the establishment in question. If a decision cannot be reached by correspondence, the Chair of the appeal panel may consider an on-site visit of the whole team. Once the appeal panel has reached a decision (by majority vote), it is final.

EAEVE has indicated that it is fully committed and motivated to contribute to the aims of ENQA.

Conclusion: Fully compliant.

Recommendation: No specific recommendations.

6. Conclusions and recommendations

EAEVE has been involved in evaluations of teaching establishments in Veterinary Medicine since 1988, and thus it has been one of the European HE forerunners in this field. Virtually all European veterinary HEIs are its members. It is performing two kinds of evaluations/accreditations, namely Stage 1 which is mostly concerned with the compliance of the EU Directive, and Stage 2 which mostly deals with issues related to Quality Assurance and management, among others. So far, EAEVE has done only relatively few Stage 2 evaluations. Admittedly, EAEVE has had a considerable impact on harmonisation of the veterinary field in Europe, it has contributed to the common standards, and apparently it has also been a motivational factor towards further development.

Yet in terms of meeting the criteria of ESG and ENQA membership, EAEVE is still facing a number of challenges, though it already has taken many good steps in the right direction.

The main findings are the following:

- In relation to the ESG criteria, it is apparent that EAEVE needs to strengthen its links with the internal and external stakeholders, also in their involvement in the preparatory phase of the evaluation process and in the formulation of the periodic summary reports and analyses for the long-term strategy of EAEVE.
- The selection of the experts by EAEVE for the evaluation teams is confined to the veterinarians only, and the student members are rather hand-picked than elected by their representative bodies. The impression of the Review Panel was that the evaluation system is rather closed, and operates within the veterinary sciences only, and there is clear need to open it to include outside partners, and not only to related academic fields but to the European HE system at large.
- There is virtually no training for the team members, and the system rather is based on-the-job training.
- The follow-up system is still under development, though the evaluation reports themselves are clear and professional, and also forward-looking.
- A clear and transparent Code of Conduct is needed for all EAEVE functions.
- Although EAEVE evaluations aim at including the developmental or enhancement aspects, a serious missing point is that EAEVE is not conducting any summary reports or analyses of its evaluations and activities, which would serve it to develop its overall policies and contribute to quality enhancement at large in Europe in the veterinary field.

Financially EAEVE appears to be a rather solid organisation. EAEVE itself and its member HEIs clearly recognise the value of QA for their future, and there seems to be strong motivation to work towards that goal. Also, it became apparent that EAEVE is committed to become a member of ENQA, sooner or later.

The Review Panel is of the opinion that EAEVE does not yet meet the ESG criteria for full compliance for the membership of ENQA.

7. Annexes

7.1 PROGRAM OF THE ENQA VISITATION TO THE HEAD OFFICE OF THE EUROPEAN ASSOCIATION OF ESTABLISHMENTS FOR VETERINARY EDUCATION, IN VIENNA

10th June, 2013 Monday

Time	Program	EAEVE participants
Until 16.00	Arrival of panel members at <u>Parkhotel Schönbrunn</u>	-
16.00-19.00	Meeting of the review panel at the hotel cafeteria	-
19.00	Meet ENQA/EAEVE representatives at the hotel cafeteria	Fodor, L., Deimel, U., Nagy, Zs.
19.30	Dinner at <u>Mario`s</u>	-

11th June, 2013 Tuesday

Time	Program	EAEVE participants
9.00-9.50	Meeting with members of the EAEVE Executive Committee (ExCom)	Fodor, L., Braun, J., Pijpers, A.
9.50-10.00	Private meeting of the panel	-
10.00-10.50	Meeting with EAEVE office staff	Fodor, L., Deimel, U., Nagy, Zs.
10.50-11.00	Private meeting of the panel	-
11.00-11.50	Meeting with representatives of the stakeholders	Buhot, Ch., Jorna, T., Duffus, P.
11.50-12.00	Private meeting of the panel	-
12.00-12.50	Meeting with members of the EAEVE Committee of Internal Quality Assurance (CIQA)	Rossi, L., Horin, P.
12.50-13.00	Private meeting of the panel	-
13.00-14.00	Lunch	-
14.00-14.50	Meeting with members of the European Committee on Veterinary	Lekeux, P., Moe, L., Fodor, L.

	Education (ECOVE)	
14.50-15.00	Private meeting of the panel	-
15.00-15.50	Meeting with rectors, deans	Winter P., Necas, A., Braun J., Horin P.
15.50-16.00	Private meeting of the panel	-
16.00-16.50	Meeting with students and graduates	Sant`Ana, M., Schnierer, M.
16.50-17.00	Private meeting of the panel	-
19.00	Dinner at <u>Plachutta</u>	-

12th June, 2013 Wednesday

Time	Program	EAEVE participants
8.00	Meeting at Parkhotel Schönbrunn	
8.00-9.00	Travel to the University of Veterinary Medicine in Vienna	Fodor, L., Deimel, U., Nagy, Zs.
9.00	Welcome at the University Rectorate	
	Visit the Campus of the University of Veterinary Medicine, Vienna	
9.15-9.40	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Institute of Virology • Institute of Meat Hygiene, Meat Technology and Food Science 	Rümenapf, H.T., Möstl, K.
9.40-10.05	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clinical Unit of Internal Medicine Small Animals • Clinical Unit of Poultry Medicine 	Smulders, F.
10.05-10.35	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Round Table with Staff Members Involved in the Stage 1 and 2 Audits of the University of Veterinary Medicine in Vienna 	Thalhammer, J.G.
10.35-11.00		Hess, M.
11.00-12.30		<p><i>For Stage 1:</i></p> <p>Winter., P., Khol, L., Rümenapf, H.T, Smulders, F., Winkler, M.</p> <p><i>For Stage 2:</i></p> <p>Doblhoff-Dier, O., Plail, R., Willmann, I.</p>

12.30-13.15	Travel to the Head Office of EAEVE	Fodor, L., Deimel, U., Nagy, Zs.
13.15-13.50	Lunch	-
13.50-14.40	Meeting with experts	Rossi, L., Horin, P., Willmann, I., Schnierer, M.
14.40-14.50	Private meeting of the panel	-
14.50-15:20	Debriefing, closing remarks	Fodor, L., Deimel, U., Nagy, Zs., Rossi, L., Horin, P., Willmann, I.,
15:20-16.45	Private meeting of the panel	-

PARTICIPANTS

Name	Position in EAEVE	Title	Position, Affiliation
Braun, Joachim	Vice President, ExCom Member	DVM, Professor Dipl. ECAR	Dean, Veterinary Faculty Munich, Germany
Buhot, Christophe	FVE President	DVM	President Federation of Veterinarians of Europe (FVE)
Deimel, Uschi	Office Manager	Dr.	EAEVE Head Office, Vienna, Austria
Duffus, Philip	Chair of Visiting Teams	BVSc, PhD, MA(Cantab), MRCVS, Professor	Professor of Veterinary Medicine, Bristol University, UK Chair of RCVS Visiting Teams
Fodor, László	EAEVE President	DVM, PhD, Professor	Formal Dean, Head of Microbiology and Infectious Diseases Department, Faculty of Veterinary Science, Budapest Szent Istvan University, Hungary
Hammerschmid, Sonja	Rector	Dr.	Rector, University of Veterinary Medicine, Vienna, Austria
Horin, Petr	CIQA Member	Prof. RNDr. MVDr. PhD.	Formal Dean, Faculty of Veterinary Medicine, University of Veterinary and Pharmaceutical Sciences, Brno, Czech Republic
Jorna, Tjeerd	Formal ECOVE Member	DVM, PhD	Past President of World Veterinary Association (WVA),

			Formal President of FVE
Lekeux, Pierre	ECOVE Member	DVM, PhD, Professor	Formal Dean, Faculty of Veterinary Medicine, ULg University of Liège, Belgium
Moe, Lars	ECOVE Member	DVM, PhD, Dr. scient., Professor	Formal Dean, Department of Companion Animal Clinical Sciences, Norwegian School of Veterinary Science, Oslo, Norway
Nagy, Zsuzsanna	Assistant to Management	BSc.	EAEVE Head Office, Vienna, Austria
Necas, Alois	Formal ExCom Member	MVDr. PhD, MBA, Professor	Dean, Faculty of Veterinary Medicine University of Veterinary and Pharmaceutical Sciences Brno, Czech Republic
Pijpers, Anton	ExCom Member	DVM, PhD, Professor	Dean, Faculty of Veterinary Medicine, Utrecht, The Netherlands
Rossi, Luca	Chair of CIQA	Professor, Dipl. EVPC	Professor in Parasitic Diseases of Animals, Faculty of Veterinary Medicine, University of Turin, Italy
Sant`Ana, Manuel	PhD Student	DVM	Institute of Biomedical Sciences Abel Salazar, University of Porto, Portugal
Schnierer, Marlies	Student		University of Veterinary Medicine, Vienna, Austria
Willmann, Ilse	Visiting Expert	DVM, PhD	Quality assurance expert, University of Veterinary Medicine, Vienna, Austria

University of Veterinary Medicine, Vienna (Vetmeduni Vienna)

Name	Position	Position, Affiliation
Doblhoff-Dier, Otto	Ao.Univ.Prof.Dr	Vice-Rector for Research and International Relations
Hammerschmid, Sonja	Dr.	Rector of the University of Veterinary Medicine, Vienna

Hess, Michael	Univ.Prof.Dr.	Head of Clinical Unit, Head of Clinic for Avian, Reptile and Fish Medicine, Head of Department for Farm Animals and Veterinary Public Health
Khol, Lorenz	Dr.	University Assistant at the Clinical Unit of Ruminant Medicine
Möstl, Karin	Ao.Univ.Prof.Dr.	President Federation of Veterinarians of Europe (FVE)
Plail, Regina	DI	Staff Function for Quality Management
Rümenapf, Hans Tillmann	Univ.Prof.Dr.	Head of Institute and EAEVE expert
Smulders, Frans	O.Univ.Prof.Dr.	Head of Institute and EAEVE expert
Thalhammer, Johann G.	O.Univ.Prof.Dr.	Head of Clinical Unit, Head of Clinic for Small Animals, Head of the Department for Companion Animals and Horses
Willmann, Ilse	Dr.	Staff Function for Reporting and Development Planning and EAEVE expert
Winkler, Max		Student
Winter, Petra	Ao.Univ.Prof.Dr.	Vice-Rector for Study Affairs and Clinical Veterinary Medicine