

**European Association
of Establishments for Veterinary Education**

**Association Européenne
des Etablissements d'Enseignement Vétérinaire**



Quality Assurance VISITATION REPORT

To Ecole nationale vétérinaire d'Alfort (EnvA), Paris, France

On June 6, 2017 to June 8, 2017

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Introduction

The Ecole nationale vétérinaire d'Alfort (EnvA) was created in 1766. It is subject to the regulatory framework of the Ministry of Agriculture regarding veterinary education. EnvA's main campus is located in Maisons-Alfort, Paris, the farm animal center in Burgundy (since 1975) and the Centre for Imaging and Research in Equine Locomotor Disorders in Normandy (since 1999). In 2016/2017, EnvA has 683 undergraduate students, 17 foreign students, and 40 postgraduate students. There are 346 full time employees (FTE), including 120 FTE academic staff. The operating budget is approximately 32.7 M€.

EnvA is an independent institution but has strong cooperation with other institutions. It is a founding member of the local Community of Universities and Establishments (COMUE) Paris-Est, consisting of local universities and other educational institutions. In 2014, EnvA became a part of the French Institute of Agronomy, Veterinary and Forestry Sciences that aims to strengthen the cooperation among the institutions supervised by the Ministry of Agriculture.

The last visitation by EAEVE to EnvA in April 2015 was in accordance with the Budapest SOP (Stage 1). The resulting ECOVE decision was Stage 1 Conditional Approval status. "Inadequate drugs' storage and biosecurity procedures in farm animal and equine facilities" was considered as a Major Deficiency. Furthermore, eight minor deficiencies were identified. Since a substantial amount of work to correct the deficiencies has been performed, the Establishment has now asked for a Stage 1-revisitation according to the Budapest SOP standards, along with a Quality Assurance (QA) Visitation, based on the Uppsala SOP standards. Thus, the type of the present visitation is unique, being performed during the transition period between the previous (Stage 1 and Stage 2) and new (integrated stage 1 & 2 procedure) SOP.

Since the last ESEVT visitation in 2015, the main developments include

- a major revision of the curriculum, including the development of a new competence-based teaching program, with emphasis on active methods, and revision of clinical rotations
- opening of a new building devoted to necropsy and analytics
- inauguration of a clinical skills laboratory
- major re-organisation of Financial Affairs and optimization of the income-expenditures management
- Information Systems Project document
- plans for renovation and construction of relevant buildings.

1. Outcome Assessment and Quality Assurance (ref. Standard 2.11 in Uppsala SOP)

EnvA has implemented elements of quality assurance in the teaching program since the 1980's and in research and imaging service since the mid 2000's. In 2010, the Dean made a strategic commitment, which later has been operationalized in a comprehensive QA program (2016, 2017). Since 2013, the four French veterinary schools have been collaborating on quality implementation and enhancement.

The consecutive School Projects (2003, 2009 and 2014) constitute an important basis of the strategic management of EnvA. The School Project, in which the strategic objectives for the next 4-5 years are published, is created through a participatory process involving students, staff and external stakeholders, prior to final validation by EnvA's Governing board. Together with the general political guidelines laid in national regulations, the School Project forms the basis of negotiations with the Ministry of Agriculture, resulting in an Objectives and Performance Contract (currently signed for 2015-2019). The set indicators are monitored every year and the realization progress is discussed during an annual strategic interview between EnvA and the Directorate of Education and Research of the Ministry of Agriculture.

One of the objectives of the 2009 School Project was "A quality approach of administration and training processes", and the focus on QA has continued as a priority in the current School Project (2014-2017). The identification of areas for improvement led to eight strategic priorities, with related progress indicators, in the current School Project. The indicators are monitored annually and the final outcomes will be assessed for preparing the following School Project.

Based on the eight strategic objectives in the current School Project, EnvA has prepared a Process Cartography (see Figure 1 in the QA-SER), showing the relationship between the School Project and the organization of the Establishment. It forms the basis for the generalized quality approach at EnvA. This major tool for quality implementation is published on EnvA's internal and external websites.

Internal audits and evaluations are key elements of the strategic management of EnvA. They can be carried out following a request from the Dean or another internal or external stakeholder. Individual persons or groups are involved for the given task and the results are presented to relevant councils and managers. In case internal or external stakeholders raise problems the Dean can also use a flexible approach and task a person or a group to manage the topic and make proposals to be submitted to relevant council.

External evaluations have been performed on educational, research, financial and managerial grounds. At the national level, the High Council of Higher Education and Research (HCERES) has evaluated EnvA's education and research outcomes in 2009 and 2015. HCERES is affiliate to ENQA and the evaluation is based on ESG standards. A general audit of EnvA by the General Council of Food, Agriculture and Rural Areas (CGAAER) was conducted in 2013. After each audit, the recommendations are presented to the Governing

Board and relevant councils of the Establishment, and the relevant manager implements the planned actions. Relevant recommendations are integrated in the subsequent School Project and/or in the Objective and Performance Contract. A list of external and internal audits and evaluations is shown in Appendix 3 of the SER.

The documentation associated with the quality system is organized in three levels. The strategic level is presented by EnvA's mission and organization statements, the strategic commitment of the Dean, the School Project and the related Process Cartography, the Objectives and Performance Contract and the continuous improvement process. The planning level describing the actual QA procedures is represented by series of flow charts and memos aimed at informing staff members and students about decisions and the modalities of their implementation. The operational level includes specific instructions how to implement certain actions and records providing evidence of performed activities.

The quality documents of the strategic and planning level are on EnvA's intranet website. The general guidance and framing documents (such as School Project, study regulations, Biosecurity Manual) are discussed in relevant councils. Minutes of the council and committee meetings are available on the intranet website, the departments' council minutes also on the EVE platform. All documents and procedures concerning Teaching and Student Life are available for students on the EVE platform.

The recruitment, curriculum framework, and programs are deeply regulated by the Ministry of the Agriculture and are published on the Ministry's communication media. All laws and regulations are publicly available on Legifrance website. Information about EnvA's programs and awards are published on the school's external website. Short news are broadcasted on Facebook.

The collection and analysis of relevant information coming from external and internal sources are important elements of the EnvA's continuous improvement. Each year, the Ministry of Agriculture sends a survey to former students, which allows EnvA to monitor the effectiveness of the education provided. At the Establishment level, surveys such as teaching and assessment evaluations by students are systematically carried out using the educational platform on Moodle (EVE).

Some of the research laboratories are subjected on their own QA policies.

1.1. OBJECTIVES AND ORGANISATION

1.1.1. Findings

EnvA aims to provide high-quality training to veterinary students and to veterinarians looking for continuing education. The objectives of EnvA's quality approach are the continuous improvement of activities and beneficiaries' satisfaction. Students, owners and professionals are considered as the core stakeholders of EnvA.

In France, the veterinary profession is deeply regulated. Regulation projects are discussed within the National Council of Higher Education and Agricultural, Agrifood and Veterinary Research. EnvA is supervised by the Ministry of Agriculture and the Ministry also appoints

the Dean. Guidelines and means necessary for the operational functioning of EnvA are discussed by the Dean and General Secretary during an annual strategic interview with the Directorate of Education and Research of the Ministry of Agriculture. The role and constitution of the committees, offices and councils of EnvA are partly defined by the national regulatory framework, partly by the Internal Rules of Procedures document.

The Internal Rules of Procedures document is based on legislation and regulations in force, and contains general rules that must be applied throughout EnvA. The document includes specific chapters for the Veterinary Teaching Hospital, the Technological Platforms and the two distant campuses. It also defines the role of the councils and committees, the organization of the Departments and the Teaching Units, the organization of research, the rules of life, hygiene and safety, the heritage protection rules and the ethical rules applicable to veterinarians and students. The rules of procedures and their amendments are discussed in relevant councils and committees of EnvA and finally approved by the Governing board.

The Governing board is the highest administrative body of EnvA and defines its strategic orientations. The Governing board has 36 members; the representatives from the academic staff, support staff and students are elected, while the Ministry of Agriculture appoints the representatives of the external stakeholders. The President and Vice president of the board are elected for 3 years from the external stakeholders.

The Dean and the Executive committee implement the strategic decisions taken by the Governing board. The Executive committee is made up of EnvA's 7 top managers appointed or chosen by the Dean. The committee meets every week. The Steering committee assists the Executive committee in the elaboration of projects, preparation of councils, and the execution of actions decided by the Governing board. The committee consist of 20 members appointed by the Dean, representing teaching, research and management, and meets once a month.

The Technical committee is made up of 8 elected staff members. It discusses the working organization of the staff members. The Hygiene, Safety and Working Conditions committee is made of 9 elected staff members to guarantee working conditions and welfare. It meets at least 3 times a year. The Ethics committee for animal experimentation is a shared structure with the Establishment's partners. It evaluates research and teaching programs based on animal use and meets once a month. The Ethics committee for clinical research validates protocols for clinical research performed on animals in the Veterinary Teaching Hospital of the EnvA.

The General Secretary office coordinates all the support services and organizes management meetings.

The Teaching and Student Life council is made up of 20 elected members (academic and support staff, students) and two external individuals nominated by the Governing board. The Dean is the chair of this council, which meets 3 times a year to make propositions regarding student life, teaching programs and student assessments. The Academic council is chaired by the Dean and has 40 members, who are elected representatives from the teachers. This council meets once a month and its role is to monitor the curriculum and the results of the end-of-semester assessments.

There is a (teaching) Department Council in each of the three departments. They are made up of elected staff members and students. They assist the Head of the Department (chair of the council) in choosing the actions and projects regarding the conception, organization and coordination of the teaching of the department. These councils meet once a month.

The Scientific council has 24 members, including the Dean and Vice-Dean of EnvA, elected representatives from staff and students involved in research training, and external experts designated by the Ministry of Agriculture. Its role is to make propositions about strategic initiatives in research. The chair is elected among the designated members of the council. The council meets three times a year.

The term of all councils is 3 years. The minutes of the councils are available on the intranet website and EVE platform (to all or only to representative students depending on the council).

Four main documents set the objectives and organization of the EnvA: the Functional Flow Chart, the School Project, the Objectives and Performance Contract, and the Rules of Procedures. All reference documents are brought to the attention of staff members and students through the intranet website and the educational platform. The reference documents are currently revised on demand. However, EnvA has identified a need for a scheduled revision scheme of the documents.

The Functional Flow Chart determines the organization of EnvA. It is proposed by the Dean, presented and discussed by the Technical committee and approved by the Governing board. Both the Chart for conventional functioning and the current and transitional one were presented in the Appendixes.

The School Project sets the strategic priorities over a 4- or 5-year period. The current (2014-2017) School Project includes 8 strategic priorities and comprises 114 actions. It was formulated by the whole community of EnvA and was widely discussed within councils and committees. The Governing board approves the School Project. It includes tools to follow its implementation and a series of timelines and indicators for each action.

A SWOT analysis of EnvA organization will be performed for the School Project 2018-2021. The current challenges EnvA faces include optimization of resources, a coherent mobilization of all its stakeholders, and an appropriate organization for sustainable collective dynamics, respecting well-being at work.

1.2.1. Comments

The organization of EnvA is complicated and was difficult for the QA Team to figure out from the SER. However, the on-site interview sessions and inspection of the documents clarified the organizational hierarchy to the Team. It also became evident that the structure is clear to the staff and students of EnvA. The interview sessions also made it clear that students and external stakeholders are included in the QA work both as members of the Governing board and relevant councils and through more direct dialogue with teachers and administration.

The Establishment has – via the School project and the subsequent Objectives and Performance Contract with the Ministry of Agriculture - a general strategic plan including QA, which is made operational through a series of manuals (e.g. Biosecurity Manual), flow charts, memos and instructions. Furthermore, the objects and indicators mentioned in the School Project are visible for all stakeholders on the website, and the strategic progress is monitored annually.

The SWOT analysis was not included in the SER, and has just very recently been taken into use as a strategic QA instrument. Thus, during the on-site meetings, the SWOT analyses for each Standard were presented to the Team, with relevant examples of completing the Plan-Do-Check-Act (PDCA) cycle.

1.2.3. Suggestions

A SWOT analysis should be applied widely and systematically.

1.2. FINANCES

1.2.1. Findings

EnvA budget is part of a regulatory framework defined at a national level by the Finance Ministry. Major adaptations of the procedures have been made since 2015. The preparation and budget execution at the Establishment level are controlled by the Financial Affairs Office, under the supervision of the General Secretary, in relation to the Human resources office. The budget is divided into 15 Centres of Responsibility that correspond to the main entities in the Functional Flow Chart. The budget preparation includes several steps and is described in detail in the SER. One or two amended budgets can be proposed to the Ministry of Agriculture during the year, after approval by the Governing board.

EnvA has no freedom in the total amount of the operating allocations provided by the Ministry of Agriculture but the Ministry will support urgent and justified needs.

Since 2012, several revisions (budget model, procedures for commitment of expenditures and the accountability chain) and rationalizations (budget monitoring tools, functioning of the income-generating centre of responsibility) have been implemented to enable the appropriate allocation of the incomes and expenditures. The recent audit of the finances of EnvA (2006-2014) by the national Court of Auditors have led to major changes in the organisation and information systems, including the writing of an Information Systems Project document. The document includes indicators for actions for a 5-year period. EnvA finds that upgrading of the software dedicated to finances will improve the financial management. Additionally, EnvA has recently been engaged in a budgetary internal control policy which aims at preventing the risks for not achieving previously defined objectives.

1.2.2. Comments

None.

1.2.3. Suggestions

None.

1.3. CURRICULUM

1.3.1. Findings

The current curricular frame for all veterinary schools in France is stated in the decree of the Ministry of Agriculture (2007). It is based on the EU requirements and created after consultations with the National Council of Higher Education and Agricultural, Agrifood and Veterinary Research. The national curriculum defines the expected programme learning outcomes and includes specific rules such as proportion of lectures (must not exceed 50% of teaching time), clinical and practical 4th year, tracking (5th year) and compulsory international mobility. Within this frame, each French Veterinary School is free to choose how to organize the contents and teaching methods of the semesters.

A new national curriculum frame is under way and should be finalised by June, 2017. This work is coordinated by the French Institute of Agronomy, Veterinary and Forestry Sciences and conducted in collaboration with the four veterinary schools. The revision is led by a strategic committee including the four Deans and a steering committee comprising representatives from each Veterinary School. Several inter-school working-groups have been involved. These groups have included both teachers and external stakeholders. The revision was started in order to adapt the French veterinary curriculum to the new developments of the veterinary profession and to emphasise the “competence-based” approach to teaching and learning. According to the interviews, the validation of the competence framework has been organised using the structured internet-based communication, i.e. the e-Delphi method, in order to effectively include external stakeholders.

Within the present EnvA curriculum, a new teaching strategy was developed in 2013 and implemented in 2014. The revision process started with the Dean’s proposal for the overall modification of the core curriculum. The Governing board approved the guidelines that emerged subsequent to discussions within the Academic council and the Teaching and Student Life council. The specific rules of teaching organization, including modalities of training and student assessment that resulted from this work, are summarized in the Regulations of Studies document. It is available to students on the educational platform (EVE), and is presented by the Dean to the first year students at the beginning of each academic year. The new teaching program will be fully evaluated when the students who entered the programme in 2014 will graduate in 2019. The new program is continuously evaluated e.g. through students’ and teachers’ course evaluations, mentors’ reports and other procedures regarding QA of the curriculum. These evaluations and reports are used to make necessary adjustments and improvements of the curriculum.

Teaching at years 1, 2 and 3 is organised according to specific courses, so-called competence units (CUs). At year 4, it is organised in clinical rotations, including food hygiene and veterinary public health. The educational scope, workload, the teaching methods as well as the teachers involved in each CU or rotation are validated in informal intra- and inter-Departmental meetings. The Teaching and Student Life office collects and organises the different CUs proposed for each semester by the departments, and presents the programs to the Academic council and the Teaching and Student Life council for final discussion and validation.

In accordance to the validated syllabus, the teachers in charge of the CUs or rotations are responsible for writing the specific course descriptions (“sheets”), which state the objectives, intended learning objectives, teaching and the assessments methods and the disciplines that contribute to the specific CU or rotation. The sheets are validated by the relevant Department council and subsequently published at EVE platform. The learning objectives are regularly reviewed and updated. Students’ evaluations on teaching are important in this process.

The Deputy Dean for Teaching and Student Life is responsible for the proposing of the teaching in general and the academic calendar. These are presented to and discussed within the Teaching and Student Life council and the Academic council. The Teaching and Student Life office is responsible for organising the teaching schedule for students according to the teaching sequences of each CU or rotation. This office is also responsible for coordinating the course evaluation process. The Deputy Dean for Teaching and Student Life directly refers to students who belong to the Teaching and Student Life council for specific questions regarding the teachings and student life.

Students’ evaluation of teaching has a long tradition in EnvA. Students evaluate the CUs, clinical rotations and mandatory extra-mural studies as well as the end-of-semester assessments. The Teaching and Student Life office coordinates the whole evaluation process in close collaboration with the Heads of the Departments. Evaluation of intra-mural CUs and rotations are performed online through the EVE platform. Based on the Regulation of Studies document, evaluation is compulsory for students. In case the student fails to do this, his/her academic semester cannot be validated. This procedure has recently been updated and was approved by both the Academic council and the Teaching and Student Life council.

Students’ evaluations on CUs and rotations are handled by relevant teachers. The teacher in charge of the course also meets with two student representatives from the particular course cohort to discuss and validate the evaluation responses. The validated students’ response and the related action plan from the teacher in charge are presented to and validated by the Department council. If necessary, the proposals for improvement are sent to further discussion to the Academic council and/or the Teaching and Student Life council. After final approval the evaluation results and responses are published on the EVE-platform.

For the mandatory extra-mural studies in rural practices on the fourth and fifth year, evaluations of the quality of teaching and learning are primarily based on students’ reports which they must submit to the supervisor after finishing the course. These reports make up the base for the assessment of students’ learning outcomes in relation to the intended learning goals of the specific extramural study.

1.3.2. Comments

Staff, students and stakeholders are involved in the definition, assessment and revision of the curriculum. At certain points it was difficult to the experts to figure out which body is responsible for the final decisions but this was clarified in the interviews. The quality assurance of the extramural studies does not yet cover the assessment of academic or educational quality of the training and the extramural partner/practice.

1.3.3. Suggestions

Special attention needs to be paid to assessing the quality of extramural training and development of a system that fulfils the future requirements of Standard 3 in the Uppsala SOP.

1.4. FACILITIES AND EQUIPMENT

1.4.1. Findings

Renovation of old buildings and building new are subject to a Real Estate Master Plan that is under supervision of the Real Estate office and coordinated by the services of the Ministry of Agriculture. According to the interviews on site, the plan aims at a rationalisation and modernisation of the existing buildings, including improvement of biosecurity, and assuring economical, sustainable development of the three campuses. The plan has been discussed within the councils of the EnvA and approved by the Governing Board. The detailed specification for each building is suggested and discussed by relevant EnvA working groups, advised by external consulting companies. The plan has finally been validated by the Dean.

The Hygiene, Safety and Working Conditions committee (CHSCT) was established on the Dean's proposal. It is responsible for the development and QA in relation to work environment, safety and hygiene procedures, including biosecurity at EnvA. A hygiene and safety register allows staff to record comments or malfunctions, which are then discussed within the CHSCT. A Prevention assistant has been employed to assist the implementation and monitoring of the biosecurity and biosafety procedures proposed by the CHSCT.

Biosecurity procedures and rules are described in the Biosecurity Manual, which is available on the intranet for staff members and on the EVE platform for students. The Biosecurity Manual is a result of a collaborative process including all stakeholders. Its contents have been discussed and validated by the CHSCT and the Teaching and Student Life council. As part of the implementation process, informational signs regarding biosecurity procedures and behavior have recently been set up at relevant locations to prevent safety risks.

Students have, with support of EnvA, made their own summarized version of the Biosecurity Manual that is published on the EVE platform. In addition, students receive special and relevant biosecurity instruction from teachers and other staff as part of the introduction to the CUs and intramural clinical rotations. Staff members are made aware by their managers about the biosecurity rules. Staff members, including newly recruited junior clinicians, also enter a training program organized by the Veterinary Teaching Hospital office and provided by members of the Teaching Unit of Regulated Animal Diseases, Zoonoses, and Epidemiology. Teachers that have participated in these training programs are recorded. The list is updated annually.

Other safety procedures (e.g. how to behave in case of attack or intrusion, storms, floods, toxic clouds or biohazards) are included in a specific Safety Plan that was implemented in 2015 and includes relevant training sessions. The plan was approved by the Governing board.

Finally, occupational medicine assists and monitors the staff in the prevention of risks associated with the working conditions.

1.4.2. Comments

The old buildings cause some challenges for the biosecurity. This was exemplified at the Department of Farm Animals during the guided tour, where the Head of Department pointed out that certain sinks for hand wash could not be set at optimal locations in respect to the biosafety zone due to building arrangements. Maintenance of disinfecting footbaths and equipment for cleaning boots relies on just one technical staff member at the Department of Farm Animals and no written maintenance procedures were readily available at the time of visitation. This makes the biosecurity maintenance vulnerable during holidays and in case of illness. Biosecurity issues are discussed in more detail in the Stage 1 revisit report.

At the Equine Clinic, students and teachers wore regular sport shoes. The Team was explained that the Department does not find washable (safety) boots or shoes necessary there due to the very low risk of disease transmission between equines and from equines to humans in contrast to the risk in farm animal practice. Furthermore, it was stated that the current biosecurity and biosafety routines at the Equine Clinic reflect the routines in French equine practice.

The record of accidents was shown on site.

1.4.3. Suggestions

Encourage or demand students to wear safety shoes or (short) boots. Reconsider the biosecurity measures regarding washable footwear at the Equine Clinic.

1.5. ANIMAL RESOURCES AND TEACHING MATERIAL OF ANIMAL ORIGIN

1.5.1. Findings

The organization of the practical and clinical training, including decision on animals and teaching materials of animal origin materials, falls within the general framework of the development and implementation of the curriculum. Practical and clinical trainings are discussed within the Department councils, the Teaching and Student Life council, and the Academic council before being decided on.

Generally, the requirements for animals and teaching material of animal origin needed for teaching are subject to the recommendations stated in the Regulations of Studies document of the EnvA and aims at fulfilling both the EAEVE requirements expressed in the relevant ratios and the number and variety needed for Residency Training Programs within the European Colleges. The number of students to train is also taken into consideration.

With respect to pre-clinical teaching, the actual numbers and variety of teaching materials in Anatomy are - within the above mentioned required frame – proposed by the Head of the Teaching Unit and discussed and validated by the staff of the Teaching Unit. The numbers and species of the used animals are recorded and at the end of the year discussed within the

involved group of teachers and form the basis for next year's revision, if necessary. ethical, economic and pedagogical aspects are taken into consideration.

In pathology, the numbers and species are also recorded and discussed yearly by the Teaching unit to insure that teaching resources fulfills the general requirements described above.

With respect to clinical teaching, the teaching program is validated monthly within the clinical departments in order to insure adequate student exposure to animals (numbers and species). Each clinical rotation is described in a specific sheet, describing the learning outcomes, and the sheets are available on the EVE platform.

At the Equine and Small Animal Department, the teaching program is coordinated by an appointed teacher in connection with the Head of the Department and the Deputy Dean for Teaching and Student Life. The teaching program is discussed within the Equine and Small Animal Department council and the Academic council. Most of the time, the number of clinical cases at the hospital exceeds the teaching demand and clinical teaching based on exemplary clinical cases supplements the patient-based teaching.

At the Farm Animal and Public Health Department, the teaching activities are under the supervision and coordination of the Head of the Department. Again, the program is discussed within the Department council and within the Academic council. According to the interviews, additional animals for teaching purposes are purchased from livestock dealers, if necessary. The Head of this department is also responsible for coordination and supervision of the inspections of food of animal origin, implemented during students' practical work at the slaughterhouse of Migennes and at the Champignelles Centre.

All clinical cases are recorded in a medical recording software (called "CLOVIS"), which is used at all French veterinary schools and allows for statistical evaluations of caseload. A review of each clinical activity is conducted annually. These reviews discussed within the Veterinary Teaching Hospital office and within the concerned Department councils.

Since 2016, students have used a log book which allows them to monitor their acquisition of clinical competences. This is primarily a self-assessment tool, but senior clinical teachers regularly monitor the competences book during small animal clinical rotations. There are plans to implement the competences book for a wider use during the next academic year. An analysis of the procedures made by the students based on the use of the book has been planned for 2018.

1.5.2. Comments

During the visit the Team got an initial impression that the number of equines during the compulsory rotations in Year 4 was less adequate, but discussions with the students and teachers confirmed that they found the training sufficient. The Team was also provided an overview of the caseload for all species.

1.5.3. Suggestions

None.

1.6. LEARNING RESOURCES

1.6.1. Findings

The compulsory teaching and assessment evaluations by students and the teachers' response to students' evaluation form the basic QA with the aim of improving teaching, including learning resources. It follows a set procedure that guarantees that both students and teachers agree with the students' comments and the responses provided by the teachers.

New teaching practices including learning resources are discussed and suggested by the Department Councils and approved by the Heads of Departments.

Two teachers of EnvA organise monthly internal teaching meetings with the purpose of sharing good teaching practices, presenting new teaching approaches and summarizing external teaching seminars. Based on the presentations in these meetings, each Head of Department asks the Department council to suggest evolutions of the teaching practices.

Learning resources for each CU are presented on the EVE-platform, based on the Moodle learning management system, which according to the interviews is used in all French veterinary schools. The relevant teachers within the Teaching Unit provide the specific learning resources and meet regularly to discuss and improve them, e.g. as a result of students' teaching evaluations.

An EVE platform Committee, comprising of teachers, staff members from the Information Systems, the Deputy Dean for Teaching of Student Life, and students has recently been formed to improve the functioning of the platform, in order to meet the needs of the users (students and teachers) more efficiently. As a consequence of this work, a need for a pedagogical engineer to help teachers has been identified.

The Library is managed by a curator (a qualified librarian) and provides 2,300 periodicals to students and teachers. Teachers have access to periodicals through relevant platforms, depending on the affiliation of their Research Unit. The choice of the periodicals is made after consulting teachers and Research Units' members. Staff and students have access to on-line periodicals not only from inside and but also from outside of the EnvA via a VPN connection. The number of downloads allows an analysis of the relevance of the journals.

A newly formed Library committee consisting of library staff members, the Deputy Dean for Research, the three Heads of Department, the Deputy Dean for Teaching and Student Life, and three students. The committee aims to choose the pertinent resources for staff and students (in a context of a cost rationalization of the subscriptions) and to collect the students' feedback regarding the functioning of the library.

The VetSims clinical skills laboratory, inaugurated in 2016, includes 90 work stations and has an assistant to help the students. The VetSims is open for student 10.5 h per week. A teacher of EnvA supervises the management of VetSims, with a close collaboration with the Head of the Biological and Pharmaceutical Sciences Department, who manages the funds allocated to VetSims. EnvA has created an online self-assessment software for the VetSims laboratory,

which gives feedback to students as well as the possibility of monitoring students' progress and the effectiveness of various work stations.

1.6.2. Comments

The VetSims skills laboratory is well executed and the way it allows students' self-assessment and monitoring of progress is innovative.

1.6.3. Suggestions

None.

1.7. STUDENT ADMISSION, PROGRESSION AND WELFARE

1.7.1. Findings

Admission into all French veterinary schools, including number of students per year, is regulated by the Ministry. The regulations and procedures are described on the internet.

Applicants must have hold the Baccalaureate and attend two or more years of study before taking part in a competitive national entrance examination, organized by the Ministry of Agriculture. There are six types of entrance examinations, depending on the students' pre-veterinary school education. On the basis of the test results the top students are selected, i.e. around 137 students per French veterinary school; the Ministry of Agriculture decides on the number every year. Students coming from a foreign country have their own selection process.

The rules for students' progression are described in the Regulation of Studies document, which is available in the intranet and on the EVE platform. Communication with students is spread between 3 platforms: the EVE platform, the Hyperplanning platform and the faculty email-server.

The Teaching and Student Life office, headed by the Deputy Dean for Teaching and Student life, supervises and monitors student life. The office is responsible e.g. for the organization of curriculum, student mentoring, planning and coordination of teaching schedule, organisation of assessments, collection and circulation of results, evaluations by students and student welfare. One staff member is responsible for the management of student housing and one teacher is dedicated to sport activities for students.

The Deputy Dean for Teaching and Student Life assigns a mentor (i.e. a teacher) for each first year student. The mentor guides the student through the first 4 years of study, including supervising the student's Personal Project (20 ECTS credits of electives). The mentor also reports to the Teaching and Student Life office, if students needs assistance due to study, welfare or social problems. Students who need or seek for assistance are assisted by the Committee for students in difficulties, consisting of 3 relevant staff members.

Students with certified difficulties have an additional third time for all summative assessments. The rights of disabled students are regulated by national law. Two major and three minor financial aid programs are available for students.

Students' progression is monitored online in the "Student Booklet". The progression is evaluated and updated according to the QA circle described for CUs, clinical rotations and assessments in chapter 1.3. Curriculum.

Attrition and drop-out rates of students are very low at EnvA. Normally, only 1-2 students per year need to repeat the study year. Attrition rates are monitored as part of evaluation of students' progression.

1.7.2. Comments

The student representatives stated that their teaching-learning environment is conducive to less stress than in many other veterinary Establishments. The mentoring system was functioning well.

1.7.3. Suggestions

None.

1.8. STUDENT ASSESSMENT

1.8.1. Findings

Rules for assessment of students are described in the Regulations of Studies document. Students have to pass a pre-defined number of CUs (clinical rotations in Year 4) each year in order to progress to next year. There is a special 3-step process for evaluation of students with borderline study performance: assessment proposal in CU team, Department Council discussion and Academic Council validation and decision.

The assessment procedures, including evaluation criteria, are described in CU sheets for each CU and published on the EVE platform. Similar type of sheets exist for clinical rotations. The assessments are determined by a team of teachers and coordinated by the teacher (or two teachers) in charge for the CU or rotation. Each CU has both a summative midway assessment and a summative final assessment (at the end of the semester, so called 1st session assessment). Students who fail the 1st session assessment attend the 2nd assessment at the end of the summer holidays. The Teaching and Student Life office is responsible for the administration of the assessments. Assessment results are always finally confirmed in the Academic council meeting, and subsequently communicated to students through the EVE platform.

All 1st session assessments are evaluated by students and subsequently by the teachers in a similar manner to assessment of the teaching (see Chapter 1.3 Curriculum).

The renewal of the teaching program in 2013 resulted in a more competence-based approach to assessment, fewer summative assessments, and a new grading scale (A to F). Moreover, EnvA has developed a series of online formative self-assessment tools (e.g. electronic quizzes) available for students on the EVE platform (Moodle).

1.8.2. Comments

None.

1.8.3. Suggestions

None.

1.9. ACADEMIC AND SUPPORT STAFF

1.9.1. Findings

The number of academic staff (associate and full professors) is regulated by the Ministry of Agriculture. New recruitment relies on a pluri-annual recruitment plan, which is first discussed within the Department council, then within the Academic council, and finally presented to the Governing board of the EnvA. The proposed recruitment plan is discussed during the annual strategic interview with the Ministry of Agriculture.

Recruitment is framed by national regulations that define the conditions for eligibility to the announced jobs, the tests for the examination, and the composition of the jury. There are two sessions of recruitment per year. Each job description includes the expected research and teaching activities, and services. New positions including the job profile are made publicly available on the Ministry of Agriculture website. The job descriptions are discussed in the relevant Department council, and approved by the Academic council and the Governing board. The Scientific board must approve the research component.

The Ministry of Agriculture officially appoints the evaluation juries for the recruitment of associate and full professors after proposal from the Department and subsequent approval by the Academic council and the National Commission of Teachers (CNECA). The juries are composed of both internal and external researchers from relevant fields. Associate professors are employed on trial for one year, after which they are peer evaluated on the basis of an activity report by the CNECA, an internal committee, and the Dean.

Contractual teachers and staff members supplement can supplement the teaching team based on the identified need and the available resources. The Dean decides their distribution.

Fulfillment of teaching obligations is evaluated by annual submission of the number of teaching hours, which are approved Head of the Teaching Unit, the Head of the Department, and finally the Dean.

Associate and full professors must report annually on the number of their teaching hours to the Head of the Teaching Unit and the Head of the Department, who approve the report and send it to the Dean. The reports allow monitoring the fulfillment of the governmental regulatory obligations regarding the balance between research and teaching.

Associate and full professors must submit every 4 years an individual activity report to CNECA. On the basis of the reports and the Dean's recommendations CNECA sends back its advice for the next four years regarding adjustments in the individual's career. The activity reports are also assessed yearly by an internal board of professors, who ranks the reports, which then can be used by the academic staff with regards to promotion.

Newly recruited associate professors are strongly encouraged to follow a national 4-week teaching training program organized by the Ministry of Agriculture. Thus far, 14 associate or full professors have followed the program. In addition, the EnvA's teachers have attended pedagogical seminars organized by the Paris-Est University's pedagogical body that assists teachers in their daily activities, as well as teaching seminars arranged by the Parisian engineering schools. Internal teaching meetings are organized periodically within the EnvA.

The recruitment of support staff members is also regulated by the Ministry of Agriculture.

The recruitment process within the EnvA includes the Technical committee, the Governing board and the Dean. The support staff is subject to annual personal (appraisal) interviews conducted by their direct supervisor. The objectives of the interviews are to determine the working and training goals for the coming year and to discuss the possible challenges or problems related to the job.

1.9.2. Comments

The pedagogic and didactic training of newly recruited staff is not compulsory. There is no yearly appraisal personal interviews for academic staff. This is partly due to French law that states that evaluation of university academics can only be done by specifically appointed committees.

1.9.3. Suggestions

The educational training program for teachers should be expanded and participation could be made mandatory to newly recruited teaching staff. Regular appraisal meetings with the aim of coaching academic staff in relation to their research and teaching plans and career, and discussing the possible challenges or problems, could be beneficial.

1.10. RESEARCH PROGRAMMES, CONTINUING AND POSTGRADUATE EDUCATION

1.10.1. Findings

The scientific research policy is created through a collective approach, involving all stakeholders in the Research Units. It is supervised by the Dean, with the support of the Deputy Dean for Research. It is processed through the Research Units (laboratory council), the internal research council and finally the Scientific council. The internal research council is made up of the directors of all Research Units and elected scientists of each Research Unit. It is under supervision of the Dean. This council acts as the link between the Research Units and the Scientific council and meets 6 times a year.

The Scientific council includes elected representatives of the EnvA and external experts. The experts are appointed by the Ministry of Agriculture, after proposal from the Dean. The Scientific council proposes the scientific policy to the Governing board and is responsible for the evaluation of the research programs of newly recruited faculty members, as well as of the recognition of each Research Unit after an external evaluation. Recognition takes place every 5 years on the basis of national external evaluation from HCERES. The Ministry of Agriculture approves the EnvA's research units on the basis of recommendations from the Scientific council.

Every year each Research Unit submits a report including specific indicators of their research activities. These indicators are used to calculate the budget to each Research Unit. The budget is allocated to EnvA by the Ministry of Agriculture. The Deputy Dean for Research of the EnvA then allocates the funding to the Research Units. Out of the 12 establishments under the supervision of the Ministry of Agriculture, EnvA has regularly the pole position regarding the indicators, e.g. the number and level of publications per faculty member.

Continuing education is managed by an office for Continuing Education and is provided by individual teachers of the EnvA. The training programs are distributed on the AlfortPro platform. All courses are evaluated by the participants and the evaluations are passed on to the teachers in charge of the course. EnvA's continuing education programs are regularly highly rated by the participants.

PhD education is managed in collaboration with the Paris-Est University via three doctoral schools. Faculty members of the EnvA are involved in the advisory board and management of these doctoral schools.

Selection of the PhD candidates is based on evaluation of track records of the students, their scientific projects, and the quality of the Research Unit and PhD supervisors. The selection is carried out by the doctoral schools. The progress of the individual thesis work is evaluated yearly by an advisory committee consisting of the student, the supervisor and 2 external reviewers. The latter reviewers report back to the doctoral school on a yearly basis. This procedure allows potential difficulties to be detected early. The thesis is examined by the supervisor and 2 external opponents.

The professional training programs include a 3-year national post-graduate diploma program, which is regulated by a national committee in accordance to a ministerial decree, and the 3-year European Colleges' residency program which is regulated by the European Colleges. The quality of teaching is assured by the existing reference documents and the high number of clinicians and diplomates of national, European and American specializations.

1.10.2. Comments

None.

1.10.3. Suggestions

None.

1.11. Brief description of the process and the implication of staff, students and stakeholders in the development, implementation, assessment and revision of the QA strategy of the Establishment.

The strategic School Project (current version 2014-2017) is created using a participatory approach involving staff, students and stakeholders before the final approval by the Governing board. It constitutes a strategic pillar for the Objectives and Performance Contract, negotiated with the Ministry of Agriculture (currently signed for 2015-2019).

The quality approach to veterinary education and research is a priority in the current School Project, which includes eight strategic objectives. In these the strategic orientations of EnvA are defined. The highest board of EnvA is the Governing board that includes elected representatives from the academic staff, support staff and students, as well as representatives of the external stakeholders, appointed by the Ministry of Agriculture. The President and Vice president of the board are elected for 3 years from the external stakeholders.

EnvA has numerous councils and committees for specific areas, e.g. Academic, Teaching and Student life, Research, Biosecurity and QA. Staff, students and in several instances also external stakeholders are appointed or elected to various committees and councils according to national regulations or EnvA's rules.

Staff, students and stakeholders are included in many ways in the implementation of the QA strategy. Internal audits with the EnvA can be carried out following a request from an internal or external stakeholder. In case internal or external stakeholders raise problems, the Dean can also use a flexible approach and task a person or a group to manage the topic and make proposals to be submitted to relevant council.

The collection and analysis of relevant information coming from external and internal sources are important elements of the EnvA's continuous improvement. For instance, each year the Ministry of Agriculture carries out a survey among former students, which allows the EnvA to monitor the effectiveness of the education provided. At the school level, surveys such as teaching and assessment evaluations by students are systematically carried out using the educational platform on Moodle (EVE). At the departmental level, students' performance and caseload of animals are regularly monitored in order to support students and adjust teaching resources.

Until 2016, the implementation of QA was one of the missions of the Vice-Dean. In March 2017, a QA Committee was created to support the quality approach and continuous improvement within the EnvA, promote a quality management system based on the PDCA principle and deploy this approach to the various councils and advisory bodies. The QA Committee is coordinated by a member of the Executive committee and the other members include relevant top managers and representatives of staff and students. The QA Committee coordinates the creation of different documents while the writing process is performed through participatory approaches by beneficiaries and their manager. The manager is responsible for communicating the validated quality documents to relevant stakeholders through relevant communication media. The EnvA feels that the creation of the QA Committee allows long term development, more direct involvement of the community and a better structuration. The EnvA states that several procedures still remain to be written, especially for support services. The main task for the next years is to develop electronic document management.

1.11.1. Comments

The EnvA has a collaborative culture of QA. It collects, analyses and uses relevant information from internal and external sources for the effective management of their programmes and activities. Staff, students and stakeholders are involved in the QA processes. The new QA Committee is a promising additional tool and the staff members were enthusiastic when discussing the connections of the Committee within the actions of the Establishment.

1.11.2. Suggestions for improvement

The role of the QA Committee should be further formalised. As the Establishment already states, developing electronic document management would be beneficial.

2. ESEVT Rubrics (summary of the decision of the Visitation Team of the Establishment for the ESEVT Standard 11, i.e. (total or substantial) compliance (C), partial compliance (PC) (Minor Deficiency) or non-compliance (NC) (Major Deficiency))

Standard 11: Outcome Assessment and Quality Assurance	C	PC	NC
11.1. The Establishment must have a policy for quality assurance that is made public and forms part of their strategic management. Internal stakeholders must develop and implement this policy through appropriate structures and processes, while involving external stakeholders.	x		
11.2. The Establishment must have processes for the design and approval of their programmes. The programmes must be designed so that they meet the objectives set for them, including the intended learning outcomes. The qualification resulting from a programme must be clearly specified and communicated, and refer to the correct level of the national qualifications framework for higher education and, consequently, to the Framework for Qualifications of the European Higher Education Area.	x		
11.3. The Establishment must ensure that the programmes are delivered in a way that encourages students to take an active role in creating the learning process, and that the assessment of students reflects this approach.	x		
11.4. The Establishment must consistently apply pre-defined and published regulations covering all phases of the student "life cycle", e.g. student admission, progression, recognition and certification.	x		
11.5. The Establishment must assure themselves of the competence of their teachers. They must apply fair and transparent processes for the recruitment and development of staff.	x		
11.6. The Establishment must have appropriate funding for learning and teaching activities and ensure that adequate and readily accessible learning resources and student support are provided.	x		
11.7. The Establishment must ensure that they collect, analyse and use relevant information for the effective management of their programmes and other activities.	x		
11.8. The Establishment must publish information about their activities, including programmes, which is clear, accurate, objective, up-to date and readily accessible.	x		
11.9. The Establishment must monitor and periodically review their programmes to ensure that they achieve the objectives set for them and respond to the needs of students and society. These reviews must lead to continuous improvement of the programme. Any action planned or taken as a result must be communicated to all those concerned.	x		
11.10. The Establishment must undergo external quality assurance in line with the ESG on a cyclical basis.	x		

3. Executive Summary

Brief history of the Establishment and its previous EAEVE Visitations

The Ecole nationale vétérinaire d'Alfort (EnvA) was created in 1766. It has been visited by EAEVE in 2001 and 2015. The ECOVE decision on the Stage 1 visitation in 2015 was Conditional Approval, and a Stage 1 re-visitation was performed concurrently with the present QA visitation.

Brief comment on the QA-SER

The QA-SER, based on the Uppsala SOP standards, consisted of 30 pages and was complemented by 6 Appendices. The Team found the QA-SER comprehensive but it left several aspects to be clarified on site. The organisation and consequently, the decision making of the Establishment, was one example of this. Additionally, the indicators used to monitor the processes remained unclear until the interviews and document review on site.

Brief comment on the QA-Visitation

The overall atmosphere during the visitation was very friendly and constructive, and the whole visit was conducted in an open and professional way. Due to the unique type of the visitation in the transition period the schedule for QA assessment was tight, but relevant. The short presentations by the academic staff in the beginning of the meetings were informative and relevant persons participated in them. The documentation shown to the Team both on paper and electronically on site was extensive. However, the documentation was only in French but help from the Establishment was organised for translating the requested aspects.

Commendations (areas worth of praise identified by the Team)

The EnvA has a collaborative QA spirit and its QA is becoming increasingly transparent, public and formalised. The Team was provided plenty of evidence of closing the PDCA cycle, as well as several examples of good and at some point, innovative QA practices. The newly established QA Committee seemed to be complementing the work done in committees and councils in a meaningful way.

Recommendations (list of the Minor Deficiencies identified by the Team)

The EnvA is recommended to apply SWOT analysis widely and on a regular basis as a tool of QA. The quality of the extramural training needs special attention in the future. The academic staff could benefit from having regular appraisal meetings. The biosafety and biosecurity procedures regarding footwear in the Equine Clinic should be reconsidered. Certain procedures that are currently dependent on one staff members, such as the change of disinfectants in the footbaths at the Farm Animal Clinic, should be reviewed and published.

List of the Major Deficiencies

None.

Decision of ECOVE

The Committee concluded that no Major Deficiencies were identified during the QA-Visitation.

The 'École Nationale Vétérinaire d'Alfort' is therefore classified as holding the status of: **ACCREDITATION**.