

## ANNEX VI

### GUIDE FOR THE VISITING EXPERTS

#### STAGE ONE AND TWO VISITATION

This document gives, in chronological order, for the attention of the experts, information relating to the preparation and execution of the visit/s to the veterinary training Faculty and to the preparation of their report/s.

#### 1 STUDY OF THE SELF EVALUATION REPORT/S

Each visiting expert should receive the self-evaluation report (SER 1, SER 2) in English at least two months before the date of the visit. It is essential that the experts should allow for enough time to study the whole SER. Therefore, if the SER is not received in time, the team should seriously consider cancelling the visit.

The experts should be aware that the SER remains confidential at all stages of their work.

Each expert studies the SER in order to familiarise him/herself with the various aspects of the veterinary teaching establishment.

In a **Stage one** visitation the chairperson of the expert group assigns to each expert responsibility for chapters of the SER 1, which fall within her/his more specific area of competence. Three weeks before the visit each expert should send to the other experts and to the programme co-ordinator of the EAEVE a draft report upon the sections of the SER 1 which have been assigned to him/her. This draft report should include the expert's initial "Findings and Comments" based on the study of the SER 1

In case of a **Stage two** visitation.(SER 2) each expert should develop an opinion on the report in writing and make it available to the other expert(s) about three weeks before the visit.

Each expert should also set down in writing all the questions which in hi/her view are sufficiently important to require an answer during the site visit.

If the reply to certain questions requires investigations, or if an expert needs more information on certain aspects before the start of the visit, questions may be sent to the Faculty in writing ahead of the visit via the EAEVE-Co-ordinator and in information of the chairperson. During the first meeting of the team these questions and the answers obtained must be arranged in the order in which they will be raised during the visit.

#### 2 TRAVEL ARRANGEMENTS

At least two months before the visit the Faculty will contact each expert and the EAEVE-coordinator about the travel arrangements. The Faculty can choose one of two options for making these arrangements:

- either the members of the group of experts are asked to book and pay for their own tickets and are reimbursed by the Faculty, or

## Amended in May 2012 – GA Budapest

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- the Faculty plans the journey in consultation with each expert, books and pays for the tickets, which are then sent directly to the experts or are collected by the experts at their points of departure.

Even when the second option is chosen, the need may arise for reimbursement of small items of expenditure, such as travel to and from the home airport, airport parking or necessary taxis. In both options, the experts are asked to provide receipts of all expenses.

If team members are accompanied, the travel expenses and the hotel accommodation for the accompanying persons are the sole responsibility of the expert and not of the Faculty. Experts should ensure that their personal travel insurance is appropriate for the country to be visited, especially in the case of non-EU countries.

### **3 THE VISIT**

#### **3.1 STAGE ONE VISITATION**

The visit to the premises of the Faculty should take the majority of the first two days of the evaluation. Unless otherwise arranged the normal plan of a visit for Stage -one-visitation is as follows:

- The actual visit to the Faculty may last three (3) to four (4) days. All working days of a week (Monday through Friday) can be used for the visit to the premises and the interviews.
- The group of experts meets in private on the evening (normally between 18:00 and 20:00) prior to the official onset of the visit.
- The group of experts starts working on the report parallel to the actual visitation. The schedule should allow for enough time to prepare the exit interview.
- The return home of the visiting experts is as arranged, either on the evening of the last day of the visit or in the morning of the next day.

It is the responsibility of the EAEVE-office, usually the EAEVE-Co-ordinator to organise this visit in cooperation with the Liaison Office (LO) (see Annex VII) in a way that this rather tight schedule can be met.

The visit is intended to check and supplement the information provided in the SER 1 and to assess the extent to which the "Guidelines, Requirements and Main Indicators" (**Annex I**) are met. The visiting experts must ask themselves - among others - the following fundamental questions:

- Are the objectives and standards of the Faculty appropriate to the needs of the profession in each area of study?
- Are the resources adequate for attaining these objectives?
- Are the resources allocated and used efficiently?
- Can it be considered that the Faculty will continue to have the necessary resources at its disposal?
- Does the Faculty ensure that its educational provision operates with appropriate academic standards as well as it offers its students with learning opportunities of acceptable quality?
- Does the Faculty provide confidence -towards stakeholders- that the quality of learning of the trainees is acceptable and deserves certification?

## Amended in May 2012 – GA Budapest

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In order to better deal with these questions and to judge on the ratios R1 – R20 delineated by the Faculty and presented in the SER 1, the EAEVE-office will provide the experts prior to the visit with an updated list of ranges of R1 – R20, derived from positively evaluated faculties

The experts must be aware of the fact, that the main indicators ca-not be interpreted in a strictly mathematical isolated sense, but in the light of all other indicators, data and observations.

Preceding the start of the visit the experts should meet informally to exchange their impressions, to define further their questions and to – if necessary - .finalize the programme.

The co-ordinator of the ECEVE is responsible, in cooperation with the chairperson of the group of experts, for compiling the first draft report. If the team is not accompanied by an ECEVE-Co-ordinator, the chairperson should appoint a team member with rapporteur function.

During the interviews the chairperson will lead the discussions, whilst ensuring that all experts are given the opportunity to introduce discussions related to their assigned areas. The chairperson with the EAEVE-Co-ordinator and the LO have also to ensure that the timetable is respected to prevent any significant build-up of delay. As the time available is always too short, a hard line must be taken if the answers are too long or stray off the point.

The experts are quite free to interview persons who were not included in the original programme. They can also ask to meet with a certain person or group for a second time. The head of the Faculty does not normally attend the meetings, except where his presence is specifically requested

This also applies to the LO, however, arrangements must be made that he/she can be reached by the group at any time. In case communication depends on a translator, confidentiality has to be guaranteed.

The experts must always try to obtain precise answers which contain figures and can be verified. It may be interesting in some cases to check specific information by cross-checking details from different sources (e.g. details of the teaching and examination procedures supplied by teachers and students).

If media coverage occurs, experts should refrain from any comments regarding the Faculty. The principles of the evaluation system or general veterinary matters alone should be discussed.

The group of experts should meet every day, as often as possible and in the evenings, to discuss the information obtained during the day, to supplement the draft report and to prepare for the following day.

The chairperson of the expert group should during the final meeting (also called the exit interview) with the head of the Faculty, some senior staff and the President/Rector present -very briefly- the main observations and conclusions of the team. This report of the chairperson is not open for discussion and no written text is given to the Faculty at this stage.

Although this oral report is of a preliminary nature, it should be considered carefully by the group of experts, since the main conclusions should not be altered in any subsequent processing of the written report. In case of disagreement amongst the group of experts about a comment, the latter is retained for the specific attention of the ECOVE.

The exit interview must confirm the positive points noted and spell out the relative importance of the negative findings. Nevertheless the group should not express an opinion on the question whether the deficiencies noted fall into the first or the second category (see below).

### 3.2 STAGE TWO VISITATION

The normal plan of a visit is as follows:

- The actual visit may take two full days and may take place on Monday through Friday as arranged.
- On the evening of the day preceding the official start of the visit the experts should meet informally to exchange their impressions, to define their questions and to – if necessary – finalise the programme.
- The first day and the morning of the second day should be used for meeting the different Groups and, when arranged, visitation of selected premises of the Faculty. The afternoon of day two should be used to prepare for the final meeting with the head of the Faculty, some senior staff and the President/Rector to present – very briefly – the main observations and conclusions of the group of experts. This report of the chairperson (exit interview) is not open for discussion and no written text is given to the Faculty at that stage.

The visit is intended to check and supplement the information provided in SER 2. The experts must be aware that “assessment” may be approached in different ways, also depending on the target to be assessed. However, clearly the frame provided in Annex Ib and Annex III, contents Stage 2, must be observed.

During the interviews the chairperson will lead the discussions and – where appropriate – the same principles as in Stage one visitation (see above 3.1) apply. The various assessment methods applied may be judged as *satisfactory*, *less satisfactory* or *non satisfactory*, allowing the Faculty to be classified as holding the status of *Accreditation*, *Conditional accreditation* and *No accreditation*.

Concerning the weighing of the various targets to be assessed (chapter 1 10, Annex III, Stage 2), it is suggested that a distinction be made so that the outcome of the assessment of procedures AP 1, 2, 4, 5, 6, 7, 10 and 12 into category one (1) and of AP 3,8 and 11 into category two (2).

The oral report given during the exit interview is of a preliminary nature and should only address assessment of the procedures for quality control applied by the Faculty and no hint of a final classification should be given as this is the clear responsibility of ECOVE.

The exit interview must be considered very carefully since the main conclusions should not be altered in any subsequent processing of the report. In case of disagreement amongst the group of experts about a comment, the latter is retained for specific attention to the ECOVE:

## 4 THE REPORT OF THE GROUP OF EXPERTS

Before a visit, all experts will receive a template for a site-visit report from the EAEVE-Co-ordinator. Inexperienced experts may request a copy of an existing report (in confidence) from the evaluation programme coordinator, to illustrate what is needed in terms of content, length and presentation. The report is prepared in English.

The report must be seen as a document, supplementing the SER and reference can be made to the SER.

Consequently the chapters of the visit report have the same titles as the chapters in the SER. Each chapter is subdivided into “Findings”, “Comments” and “Suggestions”, accounting for the positive or negative features of the faculty visited or some special peculiarities.

The rationale for “Comments” and “Suggestions” should be deducible from “Findings”. Excessive length of the report must be avoided and it should be clear to all parties involved. The report must contain an executive summary.

In addition the following points must be observed:

- The report describes the situation as observed at the time of the visit. Although the Faculty may present the most wonderful plans for future changes, the team is not obliged to mention them in their report.
- If a visit takes place when a change of the curriculum or assessment procedures is in progress, the juxtaposition of two courses /procedures should be clearly described.

### **Stage one visitation:**

- The report should present an assessment of the extent to which the "Guidelines, Requirements and Main Indicators" (**Annex Ia**) are met and it should group its negative conclusions under one or the other of the following headings:
  - On the one hand, deficiencies which, were they to persist, would mean that in the opinion of the ECOVE, the training given could not be regarded as satisfying the requirements laid down in Directive 2005/36/EC.
  - On the other hand, suggestions which, in the opinion of the visiting experts, should be followed up in order to bring about desirable improvements, but which, if not followed up, would not result in the training being regarded as not fulfilling the requirements mentioned above.

The distinction of these two headings in the draft report must be regarded as a proposal by the expert group to the ECOVE. It is up to the ECOVE to make a final decision.

### **Stage two visitation:**

The report should present an assessment to what extent the procedures applied by the Faculty for quality control can be judged as satisfactory, less satisfactory or non satisfactory in respect to the various targets assessed (Annex Ib).

In case of deficiencies an opinion should also be expressed if the status Conditional accreditation or No accreditation should be granted.

## **5 FINAL EVALUATION REPORT**

The EAEVE-Co-ordinator completes the first draft version of the report within a reasonable time of the visit. This is sent to the experts for comments. After consultation with the chairperson of the expert group, the rapporteur then prepares Draft A and sends it to the head of the Faculty for factual corrections.

In taking into account the comments made, the EAEVE Co-ordinator then prepares report Draft B which is, after having been accepted by the chairperson of the evaluation team, sent to the ECOVE.

Furthermore, this report must be accompanied by a self-explanatory, albeit preliminary Executive Summary.

The ECOVE *in plenum* discusses report Draft B with the head of the institution concerned (or his nominee) and the chairperson of the group of visiting experts, asks for clarifications, draws conclusions and may suggest editorial changes, making it the **Final Evaluation Report**.

## Amended in May 2012 – GA Budapest

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This discussion is a definitive stage in the evaluation process. When the ECOVE has adopted the Final Evaluation Report, the outcome is orally communicated at the ECOVE meeting to the Head of the evaluated Faculty, informing her/him of the Appeal procedure (**Annex VIII**) and of the transparency up on which the system of evaluation is based.

The ECOVE is then responsible for the production of a final Executive Summary, which is sent together with the Final Evaluation Report by the EAEVE-Office to the head of the Faculty visited.

The List of Evaluated Establishments, including not only the name of the Faculty but also the year of evaluation, the date of ECOVE-decision, the status achieved and the final Executive Summary/ies of the Evaluation/s is/are made public to eventual stakeholders by publication on the homepages of the EAEVE.