Screening of competences

Results of the Professional Degree in Veterinary Medicine at the Veterinary Faculty, University of Ljubljana

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Executive summary

Introduction

In autumn 2017, IQM Team, which consisted of faculty members, decision makers and students, redefined the competence model for the professional degree in Veterinary Medicine at the Veterinary Faculty (VF), which defines the knowledge and skills levels of students enrolled in the study programme. The competence model is structured into 13 competence areas. Each competence area consists of cognitive and practical competences (45 cognitive and 45 practical competences in total) that students should reach at the end of their 3rd and 5th year of study. In order to evaluate the students' obtained competences, students in their 7th and 11th semesters (after their 3rd and 5th years of study) and teaching staff (teachers and assistants) participated in the online Competence Screening Questionnaire in Higher Education (CSQ-HE) survey. The survey was conducted in 2018 in the last week of the winter semester for students and in the third week of the winter exam period for teaching staff. The response rate was 41.07 % for students (46/112) and 75.81 % for teaching staff (47/62). The relatively low student participation rate is probably due to inappropriate timing of the survey - just before the start of the exam period.

Main results

7th semester students evaluate that they (out)reach the intended level in 53 competences (24 cognitive, 29 practical). Out of these, they assess that 39 competences were obtained from the study programme. In cases where the intended levels were not reached from the students' perspective, the deviations were mainly of one level only; however, for the competence area of "Responsibility in veterinary medicine" (competences: "Social responsibility, material responsibility") students evaluate their competences to be 2 or 3 levels below the intended levels. Students assess that they exceed the intended cognitive competence level for two levels for the practical competences "Pathophysiological processes" and "The behaviour of sick animals". In the teaching staff's opinion, students in their 7th semester reach the intended levels in 51 competences (25 cognitive and 26 practical competences). They agree that the biggest deviation is in the competence area of "Responsibility in veterinary medicine". They also think that students' competences are lower for the practical competences "Structure of animals" and "Microbiological and parasitological diagnostic methods", both 2 levels below the intended level.

11th semester students assess that they (out)reach the intended level in 34 competences (19 cognitive, 15 practical). Out of these, they evaluate that 23 were obtained from the study programme. In cases, where the intended levels were not reached from the students' perspective, the deviations were mainly of one level only; however, for the competence area of "Diagnostic methods in veterinary medicine" (competences: "History taking, clinical examination and patient work-up", "Microbiological and parasitological competences" (cognitive competence), "Haemathological, cytological toxicological and biochemical analyses" (practical competence) students evaluate their competences to be 2 levels below intended. The courses covering this competence area have already been adapted; the change in performance could be observed in the perceived competence levels of students in their 7th semester. These students were the first generation with the new curriculum. Students estimate that their cognitive competence in "Food safety assessment (chemical safety)" and in "Treatment approaches for herd health" is not as high as the intended (2 levels below). For some practical competences in the competence area of "Animal husbandry," students evaluate their competences as 3 levels below the intended. Students also perceived a lack of cognitive competences in the competence areas "Notifiable animal diseases" and "Use of veterinary medicinal products" (2 levels below the intended). In the competence area "Legislation and forensics in the field of veterinary medicine," the lack of competences was expected because this course is taught in students' last year of study; however, it will be taught in the 5th year of study in the new curriculum. Students assess that they exceed the intended competence level for the cognitive competence "Communication" by two levels.

In the teaching staff's opinion, students reach the intended levels in 20 competences (13 cognitive and 7 practical competences). They evaluate that the biggest deviation (3 levels below the intended) is in the competence area of "Animal husbandry" (competences: "Living conditions for animals and maintenance of hygiene" and "Composition of meals for a particular type and purpose of animal").

Conclusion

The study programme is generally successful. Instructions on different levels should be clearly explained in the next round of competence screening; however, gaps in one level of competences would be expected also in the future. All the competences where deviations for two or three levels were observed were considered in the adaptation of the study programme. Some courses were re-designed, some moved from the last year of study programme to earlier years and some new elective courses were proposed.

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Further information on the project is available on the Erasmus+ platform for project results:

➜ Go to http://ec.europa.eu/programmes/erasmus-plus/projects.
➜ Enter the project title ‘Internal Quality Management: Evaluating and Improving Competence-Based Higher Education’ in the search bar to get to the project homepage.