

Interim Report

Name and location of the Veterinary Education Establishment (VEE)

Lithuanian University of Health Sciences (LSMU), Veterinary Academy (VA), Faculty of Veterinary Medicine (VMF)

Name and details of the current VEE's Head and the Head(s) of the VTH

Dr. Rolandas Stankevičius, Dean of VMF; Dr. Dalia Juodžentė, Head of Dr. L. Kriaučeliūnas Small Animal VTH; Dr. Arūnas Rutkauskas, Head of Large Animal VTH.

Date of the completion of the Interim Report (*three years and five years after the Full Visitation at the latest*): 01/12/2024.

Date of the previous Visitation: 28/02/2022-04/03/2022.

Any major changes which may affect the compliance with the ESEVT Standards since the previous (R)SER/IR (*e.g., new national regulations, new foreign language track, more admitted students, less funding, lower caseload*)

There have been no major changes that could affect the compliance with the ESEVT Standards since the previous SER.

Progress in the correction of: Minor Deficiencies (partial compliance with the ESEVT Standards) and plans for the near future

The plan and settled dates of corrective measures were approved by the VMF Council on 21/06/2022 (Protocol No. VAF10-11) to eliminate the minor deficiencies detected by the EAEVE experts.

1. Partial compliance with Substandard 3.4.

The Veterinary Medicine (VM) SPC structure was updated on 15/11/2022 (Rector's Order No. 2022-V-0288) and later on 24/10/2023 (Order No. 2023-V-0275). A precise distribution of tasks and activities among the SPC members was planned for each year - for 2022/23 (SPC Protocol No. 22/23-04, 07/12/2022), 2023/24 (SPC Protocol No. 23/24-04, 27/10/2023), 2024/2025 (SPC Protocol No. 24/25-02, 04/10/2024). The regular monthly SPC meetings were organized to check and monitor the task distribution and completion. The VM studies content was revised yearly before the study plans were approved. SPC closely communicated (and continues doing so) with the subject coordinating lecturers to ensure the implementation envisaged in the strategic plans and analyzed the surveys of the students, social partners, and other interested parties to improve the progress. Each study subject was prepared under the new Procedure¹, approved by the SPC, VMF Council, and the Senate. The subjects of general sciences were optimized; their volume decreased by 9.51%, and the volume of clinical modules decreased slightly, only by 2.99 % in the study year 2024/2025 compared with the study year 2023/2024. The interdisciplinary integration was continued by applying the targeted measures, i.e., meetings with the integrated subject lecturers (SPC Protocol No. 23/24-08, 08/01/2024) to clarify the corrections needed and a survey of students to detect the overlapping topics in different subjects. SPC organized follow-up meetings with the lecturers to analyze the survey results (SPC Protocol No. 23/24-11, 15/05/2024). The applied measures (detailed subject mapping, identifying the overlapping and/or duplicate subject topics) effectively improved the overall study, including eliminating subject content overlapping and closer collaboration between the field/subject professionals. The subject development and regular subject content revision by SPC ensured that newly added topics did not overlap with the existing ones in other subjects. Innovative and creative teaching approaches and assessment methods were successfully implemented under the 2022-2024 EDTECH Center of National Agency for Education Project „Digital Transformation of Education, “No. 10-004-P-0001,

(20 Moodle study courses were updated). SPC improved the subject integration horizontally and vertically through formal regular discussions to promote cooperation between subject departments and VTHs and informal community communication (Veterinary Week, 2024).

Joint case-relevant discussions involving all respective academic staff and students were regular and organized as scheduled: Large animal VTH once per month (Journal Club meeting), Small animal VTH once per semester (Interdisciplinary discussion-meeting, SPC Protocol No. 23/24-10, 25/03/2024). These sessions bring pathologists, clinicians, and students together to improve and discuss clinical cases, confirm or rule out diagnoses. This way, the students working in multidisciplinary teams improve their diagnostics skills and competencies in prescribing treatment.

The growing number of student visits to the Veterinary Medicine Simulation Center (VMSC) (the number increased by 38.45% and 12.5% in 2022 and 2023, respectively) shows the strengthened cooperation between the subject departments and the VMSC. The ratio (%) of the number of simulation training systems used in study subjects to the total number of study subjects in the VM study program was 43.75% in 2022 and 12.77% in 2023. Also, VMSC added and installed 43 new simulation stations. The VMSC's further development is in process until the end of 2025. The subject integration is designed systematically and planned accordingly so that as many practical skills as possible can be acquired from the first study year.

2. Partial compliance with Standard 4.5.

By the LSMU Council Decision No. UT1-30-6, 25/04/2019, the VMF was allocated 508,000 EUR to purchase the equipment for the Large animal VTH. The equine procedure room was renovated and equipped with a horse fixation frame

¹ LSMU Study Subject (Module) Description Preparation Procedure (Decision No. 181-0420/06/2024).

machine, and newly purchased digital X-ray machine, protective aprons, and an X-ray holder. The flooring of the premises was covered with rubber carpets, and the walls were repainted with moisture-resistant paint. The lower part of the walls is planned to be tiled by the end of 2025. The equine surgery room was advanced with a new surgery table and anesthesia machine. A new moisture and temperature control and cooling system was installed. The Large animal VTH premises were renovated (one of the strategic tasks) to comply with biosafety rules for working with animal-origin materials. The Large animal VTH is currently installing premises for students to practice using materials of animal origin supplied from slaughterhouses (another strategic task being implemented).

3. *Partial compliance with Standard 5.1.*

Under the LSMU Council Decision No. UT1-30-6, 25/04/2019, the electronic animal registration information system VETKIS was purchased and launched. Pets, production animals, birds, and exotic animals that received preventive or treatment services by VTH are registered in this new e-patient registration system. The system allows patients to be filtered out in student training according to the indicators. Each department regularly records individual animals, carcasses and other organs used for student practical activities in the new e-registration journals (Google Drive). Based on the data and demand for teaching material, procurement is planned and purchased annually to ensure the required number of animal-origin materials for the VM studies through the university Public Procurement Service with the VMF's allocated funds. The number of necropsies per student increases every year. Necropsies of companion animals, ruminants, pigs, equine, rabbits, rodents, birds, and exotic pets increased by 19.03%, 16.77%, 43.40%, and 2.88% compared to the 2017-2019 and 2021-2024 academic year figures. Following the set strategic goal, the annual number of animals, animal-origin materials, and carcasses for the VM preclinical and clinical studies was intended to increase by at least 5%; but the actual number of these materials increased by 26.80% compared to 2022 and 2023. VMF strengthened cooperation with existing animal-origin materials suppliers. To ensure broader students' practical training, the Food Hygiene and Technology and Special Pathology subject specialists integrated closer inter-collaboration by creating the conditions for students to see animal organs with pathologies (if any) at the Pathology center.

4. *Partial compliance with Standard 9.1.*

Following the newly approved LSMU Senate's Decision², all candidates applying for teaching positions must also be able to teach in a foreign language at a level not lower than B2 according to the Common European Framework of Reference for Learning, Teaching, and Assessment of Languages.

The LSMU Senate prepared and approved Procedure for Defining Duties for Veterinarians, Qualification Assessment, and Promotion³. The lecturer selection commission is composed under the Law of Science and Study and the LSMU Staff Employment Procedure, which VMF cannot change because it applies to the entire university. International lecturers from the University of Murcia, Spain, supplemented the current commission's composition (Decision No. 165-12, 21/12/2022).

5. *Partial compliance with Standard 9.3.*

The VMF Strategy implemented Clause 2.4.1.-2, the organization, planning and administration of studies was updated and optimized. The VM study program Strategy's implementation was prepared to reduce lecturer contact workload. Comparing 2023/2024 to 2024/2025, contact hours dropped 8.06% (335 hours fewer than 2022/2023) by shifting theoretical topics to independent student work. The 2025/2026 study plan was further revised to balance contact and independent work hours. Twice a year, SPK analyzes the students' opinions about the quality of teaching, schedules, and administration of the past semester's study subjects (modules) and calls for discussions with the study program lecturers of the problems, seeking solutions to improve the quality of studies. Multiple signed contracts with international lecturers have increased the staff's international involvement and mobility. The number of contracts with international lecturers (Spain (2), Turkey (1), Italy (1), Poland (1), Austria (1), and the USA (1)) exceeded the 2026 goal (2).

The visiting lecturer number rose from 3.2% (2021/2022) to 22.4% (2023/2024)

Under the VMF Strategy Clause 2.2.3.-3., at least 20 % of lecturers from the total VMF FTE academic staff had mobility visits each year. The number of Erasmus+ mobility visits is also increasing every year (22 (17.6%) in 2021/2022, 18 (14.4%) – in 2022/2023, and 26 (20.8%) – in 2023/2024 lecturers from the total VMF FTE academic staff. Besides the Erasmus + program, on average, 39% of lecturers from the total VMF FTE academic staff had other mobility visits yearly (18 visits in 2021, 49 - 2022, and 37 - 2023).

Expected date of the next Visitation (*which should be completed at the latest two months before the date of the ECOVE meeting preceding the end of granted status*) 2029

Annexes: Updated Excel table with ESEVT Indicators (*focusing on the last three complete academic years*)

² Qualification and Certification Requirements for Lecturers and Science Determination of Employee Positions, Completions for Lecturers and Responsibility of Scientific Staff in Advertising, Organizing and Execution and Certification of Lecturers and Scientific Staff (Decision No. 173-05, 30/11/2023);

³ LSMU Requirements for Granting the Category of Veterinarian and the Procedure for the Organization and Execution of Periodic Assessment of Conformity to the Category (Decision No. 164-05, 24/11/2022).