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Mapping veterinary education and accreditation in Europe

Harmonisation of veterinary education is fundamental for establishing European Union (EU) citizens' trust in veterinary services; to this purpose the European System of Evaluation of Veterinary Training (ESEVT) started more than 30 years ago in 1985 upon the mandate of the European Commission (EC). The ESEVT is the tool for providing the standard for minimum quality of undergraduate veterinary education in Europe and beyond, being the only Europe-wide profession specific evaluation system. ESEVT is based on the principles of EU Directives regulating qualification of veterinarians and the Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area (ESG). The ESEVT evaluation process is a fully transparent accreditation procedure based on a system of visitation together with periodic interim reports provided by the VEEs. According to the SOPs, each veterinary school has to go through an evaluation that includes the following steps: The preparation of the Self Evaluation Report (SER) by the school; the examination of School's Self Evaluation Report by a team of experts; the evaluation visit of the establishment and report to ECOVE by the team of experts; the final decision by ECOVE on the status of the school and; "Approved" and "Accredited" establishments are included in the EAEVE official list. The complete visitation report is published on the Website of both EAEVE and the visited Establishments. Most veterinary schools in Europe must follow an evaluation process by any of the National Accreditation Bodies that are members of the European Network of Quality Assurance in Higher Education (ENQA). All 96 veterinary schools that are members of EAEVE voluntarily follow the accreditation by the ESEVT. ESEVT's principal aim in setting standards, and evaluating the veterinary school against them, is to ensure that the establishment is well managed, has adequate financing to sustain its educational, research and social commitments, has appropriate resources of staff, facilities and animals, provides an up-to-date professional curriculum and an appropriate learning environment, operates a fair and reliable assessment system as well as an ad hoc Quality Assurance and quality enhancement mechanisms. Then compliance of a veterinary school with all the ESEVT standards guarantees that its graduates acquire the relevant knowledge, skills and competences required for the entry-level of a veterinarian. Of the 96 veterinary schools in 34 countries that are members of EAEVE 14 (14.6%) are pending for evaluation by the ESEVT; 82 (85.4%) have been evaluated and 66 (68.75%) approved or conditionally approved. From the 75 veterinary schools in the European Union, 59 (79%) are approved or conditionally approved by the ESEVT. ESEVT has proved to be more focused on the acquisition of professional skills by the undergraduates and better adapted to the market and societal needs than the current National Accreditation Systems that are not profession specific. ESEVT is gaining more acknowledgements at national level in the EU member states and also in non-EU countries since it has proved to be an efficient, economical and easy-going profession-specific system of accreditation of VEEs.

Biography

Ana M Bravo del Moral is the President of EAEVE and Professor in the Area of Veterinary Clinical Sciences, Faculty of Veterinary Medicine in Lugo, University of Santiago de Compostela, Spain. She graduated in Veterinary Medicine from Faculty of Veterinary Medicine, University of León, Spain in 1984 and received Doctorate in 1989 from the same university. She worked as Dean of the Veterinary Faculty in Lugo, University of Santiago de Compostela, Spain. She is active member of several committees and boards of the USC. She has been acting as a Director of the PhD course on "Laboratory Animal Welfare and Protection" in USC and Referee for the evaluation of research projects for the Italian Ministry of Health. Her research activity includes 22 Financed Research Projects, 5 Research contracts with industries, 2 patents, 70 peer review papers as author or co-author, 1 book, 2 book chapters, more than 100 oral presentations and conferences.

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