

**Higher Education Academy subject centre for Medicine, Dentistry and Veterinary Medicine
(MEDEV)**

Mini-project Report

Ref No:	627
Applicant:	Susan Rhind & Richard Mellanby
Institution:	University of Edinburgh
Title of application:	Building Bridges through Graduate attributes: Easing the Transition to the Veterinary Profession
Which key/themed areas did the project address?	Graduates attributes, Employability
Year of application and current date:	Year: 2009 Date: 25 May 2011
Is this a final or interim report?	Final

Description of project *(please use as many pages/images as required)*

A central requirement of the veterinary curriculum is to provide the new graduate with the necessary skills to be a successful clinician. This is particularly crucial for veterinary students since unlike medical and dental graduates, there is no standardised support structure within the workplace available to recent veterinary graduates in their first job. Despite the importance of this task, the profession has been slow to gain feedback from recent graduates on the attributes which they feel ease the transition from student to clinician; likewise, there is a little data on the opinions of other key stakeholders in the veterinary profession as to what they consider to be important attributes in recent graduates.

The central aim of this project was to establish the attributes which recent veterinary graduates feel ease the transition from the undergraduate student environment to working as a member of the profession. In addition to this primary focus on recent graduates, we were interested in comparing their views to those of final year students and exploring the data for any differences between the cohorts. In addition, data from a parallel project allowed comparisons also to be made with clients and employers views.

The methodology focussed on questionnaire surveys across 3 schools followed up by focus groups and interviews.

Main outcomes of the project *(please use as many pages/images as required)*

- Evidence based research study of current opinions across 3 UK vet schools of final year students and recent graduates on their views on attributes that help ease the transition into practice.

- Dissemination of project results nationally: leading to discussion and debate across the schools on implications for the curriculum
- Ongoing dissemination and discussion at veterinary medical and medical education workshops

Conclusions of project to date (*successes, failures, conclusions, recommendations, etc.*)

Major successes of the project were the strong collaborative effort across 3 schools providing a rich dataset representative of the current opinion of final year students and recent graduates.

Comparing data across employers and clients was less successful as a different questionnaire tool was used so direct comparison of data was not straightforward. However as the project progressed it became apparent that the amount of data gathered for our final year and recent graduate cohorts was such that we considered the data analysis time factored into the project was better focussed on analysing this aspect in detail rather than diluting the effort across poorer quality data. Nevertheless, the client and employer data has been compared across those items which could be directly compared highlighting some further interesting differences when compared to recent graduate opinion.

The conclusions as described in the attached paper establish that recent graduates and final year students rate highly the attributes which help foster the client/vet relationship. The study confirms the importance to recent graduates and final year students of non-academic attributes in the transition to working in the veterinary profession.

Workshops or presentations arising from the mini-project (*conferences, workshops, departmental*)

National Graduate Attributes workshop – Edinburgh, March 2011

Workshop at VetEdUK 2011 conference - Nottingham, July 2011

Publications and presentations (*reports, papers, conference papers/proceedings, circulation lists, quantities published, audience*)

- Paper submitted to BMC Medical Education – currently under review (attached)
- Abstract accepted for short communication at AMEE conference 2011 (attached)
- Abstract accepted for poster presentation at VetEdUK 2011 conference

Networks (meetings with constituency hosted/attended, involvement in existing or new networks as a result of this project)

Through this project we established a strong link with UoE employability consultancy and through this have become a member of the University Employability Strategy Group. Thus although our project was initially designed as discipline specific, these discussions are now being had at an institutional level across disciplines and there is much interest in the methodology and results from our project.

Other outcomes (changes to curriculum, changes in practice in host institution and across the UK, further collaborative/follow up work, impact on host institution T&L committee, impact on statutory bodies such as GDC, GMC, RCVS, etc, contacts made, networks established)

Curriculum changes as a direct result are 'work in progress' given the time needed to translate research findings into course level changes. However the focus of the national workshop was very much on distilling the messages from the project into curriculum changes and guidance – hence our project is focussing discussions on further developments on communication skills, business and practice management and addressing the 'image problem' of research within the curriculum.

RCVS representation at the concluding workshop allowed an excellent opportunity for discussion especially relating to the RCVS PDP and the representative was keen to take back elements of the discussion to RCVS.

At an institutional level, our work has been recognised as an example of good practice and we have been invited to contribute to several meetings on the subject. Furthermore, the project steering group is now very keen to continue the work in this area and is considering developing future grant applications for both internal and external funding calls.