

**European Association
of Establishments for Veterinary Education**



RE-VISITATION REPORT

**To the Faculty of Veterinary Medicine, Veterinary Academy, Lithuanian University of
Health Sciences, Kaunas, Lithuania**

On 04 – 07 March 2019

By the Re-visitation Team:

Ana Bravo del Moral (Chairperson), Lugo, Spain: Visitor in Basic Sciences

Philip Duffus, Bristol, United Kingdom: ESEVT Coordinator

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Introduction

The Faculty of Veterinary Medicine (FVM) (called the Establishment in this report) within the Veterinary Academy (VA) at the Lithuanian University of Health Sciences (LSMU), is situated in Kaunas, Lithuania. In 2010, the Parliament of the Republic of Lithuania reorganized the Kaunas University of Medicine and Lithuanian Veterinary Academy by merging them to create the Lithuanian University of Health Science.

In October 2012 there was an ESEVT Visitation to the FVM which resulted in the detection of five Major Deficiencies. An ESEVT Re-visitation was then undertaken in late April 2015; this Re-visitation led to a decision by ECOVE that one of these five original Major Deficiencies was still present.

This single Major Deficiency is the subject of this Re-visitation report. The ESEVT SOP 2012 is valid for the Re-visitation. There is an additional report accompanying this Re-visitation report that covers the QA aspects of the eleven Standards within the SOP 2016.

Although quite brief, the R-SER covered all the changes that had been implemented at the Establishment in response to the Major Deficiency previously identified in the 2015 Visitation. Additional information was requested prior to the Visitation which was provided in a timely and effective manner.

During the Re-visitation the analysis of the efforts made to correct the Major Deficiency were achieved by a combination of meetings with the relevant staff, and then a detailed physical examination of the changes.

Both the meetings and the tour of the facilities were well organised. There was also ample opportunity to question students (especially students in their clinical rotations) on how the newly introduced changes had affected them.

The Major Deficiency found in 2015 was identified as:

“The requirements regarding Physical Facilities in general and with respect to safety and biosecurity procedures, as laid down in Annex I of the SOP*, are still not met”

(* SOP 2012)

Furthermore, the Re-visitation Team based the persistence of this single Major Deficiency on the existence of some important deficiencies that prevent the Establishment fulfilling the ESEVT Standards. The Team indicated a number of suggestions that the Establishment might

wish to consider in order to fulfil the ESEVT Standards and overcome the Major Deficiency. These suggestions were:

1. The Faculty must implement a biosecurity and biosafety SOP for the Establishment as a whole, including the Small and Large Animal Clinics, whilst handling patients, and utilise the Isolation Units by staff and students. In addition, address the cleaning and disinfection of the clinical facilities, especially the Isolation Unit rooms.
2. The team strongly recommends creating a Committee on Biosecurity and Biosafety at Faculty level and appointing individuals from the Department of Infectious Diseases or from the Institute of Microbiology and Virology to audit and monitor the correct implementation of the SOP.
3. Construct a lavatory in the entrance of the Isolation Unit for small animals.
4. Provide equipment to wash and disinfect hands in the Large Animals Isolation Unit.
5. Improve the system to transport patients to Surgery, as utilising the stairs is not appropriate for patient and staff welfare/well-being.
6. The Small and Large Animal Isolation Units are not fit for purpose: the floor and doors are wooden, so cleaning and disinfection is almost impossible.
7. For the Large Animal Isolation Unit there is an open, wooden scaffolding for the roof with no air negative pressure, which is not appropriate in securing the hospitalization of patients with infectious diseases.
8. The Team strongly suggests developing a clothing code on the SOP for biosecurity and biosafety for the staff and the students, in order to guarantee the proper clothing and shoe cleaning & disinfection by students during practicals at both Small and Large Animal clinics. To ensure that the preventive measures are correct, the FVM should provide suitable clothing and boots for students and be in charge of the periodic cleaning and disinfection of this equipment at the Faculty level.
9. Although students have information on vaccination and day-one skills from the intranet, the team strongly recommends the FVM to ensure that all students know this important information by personal communication during their first year, with a mandatory registration form indicating their comprehension of the information.
10. Currently, there is no verification of the fulfilment of all Day-One Skills. To guarantee that, the team strongly suggest the design of a logbook with a listing of all Day-One Skills (Annex IV of ESEVT SOP 2012) and the signature of the practitioner and/or teacher responsible for the verification of the appropriate performance of each task.
11. The Team strongly suggests the allocation of a major part of the new building for Experimental animals as a suitable site to host the Small Animal Clinic.

1. Correction of the Major Deficiency

1.1. Major Deficiency: The requirements regarding Physical Facilities in general and with respect to safety and biosecurity procedures, as laid down in Annex I of the SOP, are still not met.

1.1.1 Findings

1.1.1.1 The Faculty must implement a biosecurity and biosafety SOP for the Establishment as a whole, including the Small and Large Animal Clinics, to handle with patients and to use the Isolation Units by the staff and students as well as for the

cleaning and disinfection of the clinical facilities, especially of the Isolation Unit rooms.

The Dean of the FVM of LSMU set up a Working Group in 2015 to evaluate the situation of the Establishment with regard to biosecurity and biosafety and to prepare the guidelines for the SOP development. Over an 18 months period the Working Group collected the information on regulations, studied other SOPs, ascertained the requirements of the different units, received input from staff and students; and finally prepared the first draft of the Biosecurity and Biosafety SOP.

On 19 January 2017 the Rector formally established the Biosecurity Committee (annex 2 of the RV SER) with the responsibility of finalising the Biosecurity and Biosafety SOP, and then at a later date monitoring and auditing its implementation.

In September 2017 the Biosecurity and Biosafety SOP was discussed and approved by the academic staff of the FVM. The Faculty discussed with the support staff through meetings within the different units and Departments to develop the biosecurity SOP; however, there was no direct involvement of students in the process of designing this document due to students' lack of specific professional knowledge on the issue.

After the approval of the SOP, responsible persons were assigned in every unit for its implementation.

Students throughout 1st to 6th years must sign to agree that they have understanding and knowledge of the Biosecurity and Biosafety features within the SOP and agree to follow all the SOP requirements before starting the practical work on every subject, with a confirming signature of the relevant member of academic staff.

The Occupational Safety and Health Service of LSMU coordinates the management of hazardous and infectious waste but is also in charge of the training on Safety at the workplace that is obligatory for all staff (academic and support) at LSMU.

The Team verified that the Centre of Pathology manages the disposal of waste of animal origin according to the SOP and Lithuanian legal acts. The necropsy room is clean, but the floor is worn with foci of eroded concrete in several places.

1.1.1.2. The team strongly recommends creating a Committee on Biosecurity and Biosafety at Faculty level and appointing some staff from the Department of Infectious Diseases or from the Institute of Microbiology and Virology to audit and monitor the correct implementation of the SOP.

On 19 January 2017 the Rector formally established the Biosecurity committee (annex 2 of the RV SER) with the responsibility of finalising the Biosecurity and Biosafety SOP and later monitoring and auditing its implementation.

From 3 to 17 December 2018 the Biosecurity Committee developed the first internal audit of the implementation of the SOP through visitations, inspection of facilities, discussion with academic and support staff and observation of everyday procedures in all units of the FVM. The audit report was generated in January 2019 and sent to the Head of the Units. This

document was not made public since it contains names and descriptions that may prevent the respect to the protection of personal data. The main suggestions of the audit can be summarised as follows:

- Biosafety is a responsibility also of the staff coming to fix equipment or facilities (electricians, plumbers, etc) and this staff awareness requires more attention
- Biosecurity documentation and procedures should be regularly updated within the different units
- Improve monitoring at the clinics of availability of disposable equipment (gloves, overshoes, hand soap...) or unnecessary items (several bottles of soap, disinfectants in the same sink...)
- Improve cleaning and disinfection of excrements, secretions, excretions at the clinics
- Renovation of LA and SA isolation units to ensure easier cleanliness and disinfection and accommodation of more patients while keeping the necessary isolation.
- Renovation and extension of facilities for changing clothes for staff and students at the LA clinic
- Increase of the capacities of the central laundry service or make additional contracts with external providers.

No external audit has been completed as yet. The Deputy Chief veterinary officer of Kaunas State Food and Veterinary Service, following a request by the Dean, has been appointed as external auditor on 1st October 2018. The external audit is planned to take place in March 2019.

1.1.1.3. Missing a lavatory in the entrance of the Isolation Unit for small animals.

Annex 5 shows the new equipment of Isolation Unit for SA with a shower, sink, hands disinfection system, cabinet for clothes and instrument storage. During the Re-visitation on site the team verified the instalment of this equipment.

1.1.1.4. No equipment to wash and disinfect the hands in the Large Animals Isolation Unit.

Annex 6 shows the sink and disinfection system for hands in the LA Isolation Unit.

During the Re-visitation on site the Team verified the instalment of the sink and the equipment for disinfecting hands at the LA Isolation Unit.

1.1.1.5. The system to transport the patients to Surgery through the stairs is far from being appropriate for the patient and staff welfare and wellbeing.

Annex 4 shows a picture of the elevator installed in the SA clinic. On site the Team verified the size of the lift that allows the transport of small to medium size dogs via a stretcher.

1.1.1.6. The Small and Large Animal Isolation Units that are not appropriate for the purpose: the floor and doors are wooden made so good cleaning and disinfection is almost impossible.

Photos in page 2 and 3 of the Annex 5 show the isolation unit for small animals. On site, the Team verified the renovation of the wooden floor with a tiled one, albeit with grouting between the tiles.

Photos in page 2 and 4 of Annex 6 show the new isolation unit for Large Animals with two entrances, one for the staff and another for the animals; there is one room with a stable framed by metal bars with a capacity for only one large animal. The walls and floor are made of tiles with shallow grouting between the tiles.

1.1.1.7. For the Large Animal Isolation Unit there is an open, wooden scaffolding for the roof with no air negative pressure, absolutely not appropriate to secure the hospitalization of patients with infectious diseases.

Annex 6 shows the new Large Animal isolation unit next to the Large Animal Clinic. The team verified that the room has negative pressure and the roof is made of concrete with a ceiling of smooth plaster.

1.1.1.8. The Team strongly suggests developing a clothing code on the SOP for biosecurity and biosafety for the staff and the students to guarantee the proper clothing and shoes' cleaning & disinfection by the students during practicals at both clinics (Small and Large Animals); to ensure that the preventive measures are correct the FVM should facilitate the clothes and boots for the students and should be in charge of the periodic cleaning and disinfection of this equipment at Faculty level.

The SOP in annex 3, page 8, point 1.2.3 addresses the dressing code. The Team verified the use of different colours of the clothes by staff and students as addressed in the SOP.

Annex 7 shows the footwear disinfection and laundry equipments.

The Team verified that the Large Animal clinic provide rubber boots for students and that the students must clean and disinfect these boots on the outside after use. Once clean, a machine automatically washes and disinfects the inside of the boots.

The Small Animal clinic requires the undergraduate students to wear their own green clothes and rubber clogs which are to be used only in the Small Animal clinic followed by cleaning and disinfection after their use.

On a voluntary basis students may ask for the washing of their green clothes at the FVM laundry (see later).

Also disinfectant mats are installed in several entrances and exits of the Large Animal and Small Animal clinics and Isolation Units.

A new faculty laundry service was installed with separate washing machines and driers for the staff and students' clothes and the bed covers for small animal patients.

1.1.1.9. Even when the students have information of vaccination and day-one skills in the intranet the team strongly recommends the FVM to ensure that all students know this important information by personal communication in the first year, making them to sign a registration form after reading and comprehending the information.

The Team verified that all students are informed of the benefits of vaccination and Day-One skills from 1st year.

The students have insurance coverage in the practicals undertaken both inside and outside the Faculty (farms, slaughterhouse, etc). In case of an accident, the student informs the academic staff and goes to an emergency whenever possible; if not, the academic staff phone the emergency number to call for an ambulance and report the accident to the head of the unit who must inform the Occupational Safety and Health Service of LSMU.

Before performing any practical training, the students must sign their knowledge and understanding of the biosafety and biosecurity rules within the SOP for the particular unit.

1.1.1.10. There is not a verification of the fulfilment of all Day-One Skills. To guarantee that, the team strongly suggest the design of a logbook with a listing of all Day-One Skills (Annex IV of ESEVT SOP 2012) and the signature of the practitioner and/or teacher responsible on the verification of the appropriate performance for each task.

Annex 8 shows the logbook and lists the DOS. Table 3 of the Logbook enumerates the list of DOS that students from 3rd to 5th year must acquire. The completion of these DOS is rated by the teacher, recording the number of times the students adequately perform each skill, and then verifying it with his/her signature.

In the first semester of the 6th year, students must acquire DOS that are not already recorded in their logbook through full intramural practical training (2 months) and extramural (2 months); the completion of these DOS is verified and signed by the teachers (intramural) and practitioners or state veterinarians (extramural). The DOS for extramural practice are verified utilising the “Procedure of clinical practice of the student in the study programme of veterinary medicine“. Namely, during these practice training, students fill out their Practice diary and their practical skills are also evaluated by the practice manager. The report and oral defence of the practice is evaluated by the Practice Assessment Commission, composed of academic staff teaching the relevant clinical subjects and external veterinarians (stakeholders).

The school is planning to apply OSCE examination from 2020, but initially is attempting to prepare students of the advantages of this new evaluation system through a pilot application in Anatomy and Propaedeutics.

1.1.1.11. The team strongly suggest the allocation of a major part of the new building for Experimental animals to host the Small Animal Clinic.

The FVM could not fulfil the recommendation since the building for Experimental Animals was constructed with funds for research facilities and cannot be dedicated to other services such as for teaching or clinical consultations.

1.1.2. Comments

The Working group and Biosecurity Committee have prepared a very complete Biosecurity and Biosafety SOP that in 99 pages include core and practical information and procedures that apply to all units within the Establishment.

The Team verified that the Biosecurity Committee have developed a very efficient internal audit (to be actioned in December 2019) on the application of the Biosecurity and Biosafety SOP by the FVM and have prepared an excellent audit report in the Lithuanian language that was sent to all unit Heads, but not made public since it contained names and descriptions that

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may enter in conflict with the protection of personal data. The Team was kindly provided with an English summary of the audit report. The audit report is an important document that may be prepared as a summary with general findings but without names or specific descriptions in order to allow its publication.

Students should participate as members in all Committees at the FVM, even when they may not have experience or expertise in the issue. This is not the case in the Biosecurity Committee of the FVM even when students are main recipients in the application of the document, mainly during practicals. In fact, the Biosecurity Committee, after the audit in 2018, proposed the FVM to consider the inclusion of students in the Committee.

The Team appreciates the initiative of the LSMU to perform obligatory training on Safety at work-place to academics and support staff by personnel graduated in Public Health of the Occupational Safety and Health Service.

With regard to the equipment required in the report Re-visitation in 2015, the Team verified the installation of the necessary cleaning and disinfecting equipment fit for the purpose in both the Large Animal and Small Animal Isolation Units. The installation of a lift in the Small Animal Clinic solves the transportation upstairs of staff and small to mid-size patients via stretcher but its size does not allow lifting of large dogs on a stretcher.

In the case of the new Large Animal Isolation Unit, the new facility has now an appropriate concrete roof and ceiling of smooth plaster, but the walls and floor, made of tiles with shallow grouting could make cleaning and disinfection difficult. A similar type of flooring was installed in the Small Animal Isolation Unit. The FVM explained that the decision of the materials was taken by staff in charge of repairs that had limited expertise in Biosafety and Biosecurity requirements.

The necropsy room floor is worn with foci of eroded concrete that makes it too porous and difficult to clean and disinfect.

The Isolation unit for Small Animals has two separate rooms with negative pressure, but the entrance from the outside is inside one of these rooms. Both rooms have several cages with solid sides, but are not completely isolated, so they must restrict their allocation to patients with the same infection. While this Isolation Unit still has some deficiencies, the LSMU will construct the main part of the new Small Animal hospital in 2021 and expect this new facility to be fully in accordance with the Biosecurity and Biosafety SOP.

The isolation unit for Large Animals has only one multispecies stable with negative pressure. There is no possibility to isolate a second LA patient with a different infectious process.

The system to clean and disinfect the rubber boots provided to the undergraduate students in the Large Animal clinic is very effective and friendly, allowing not only the cleaning and disinfection of the outside of the rubber boots but also of the inside that is dried up and kept warm for the use of next students. For the Large and Small animal units students must wear their own clothes and, upon voluntary request, these clothes may be washed at the central Laundry service of the FVM.

In order to guarantee the full implementation of the Biosafety and Biosecurity SOP the Team recommends the FVM provides the students' clothes and washing for practicals in the Large Animal and Small Animal Clinics.

The new laundry central service is appropriate for the present but when providing clothes and washing for students the unit most probably will need some increase in equipment and staff to run the service.

1.1.3. Suggestions

- Students should participate as members of the Biosecurity Committee in order to get a full involvement in its implementation, audit and suggestions for its future update and revision.
- To avoid the inefficient use of resources which are fit for the purpose of Biosecurity and Biosafety, it is strongly suggested that any future building of a new facility or any rebuilding, purchase of new equipment and repairs must submit the project to review by the Committee and Working Group in charge of Biosafety and Biosecurity. This approach is in order to guarantee that the design and materials fulfil the requisites addressed in the Biosecurity and Biosafety SOP.
- It is suggested that the Biosecurity Committee prepares the future audit reports on the implementation of the Biosecurity and Biosafety SOP by the FVM, without including specific names or descriptions that would interfere with the law of protection of personal data. This will allow release of this important document to the public.
- The new Large Animal Isolation Unit now has an appropriate concrete roof and ceiling of smooth plaster. However, the walls and floor, made of tiles with shallow grouting could still be difficult to clean and disinfect. A similar type of floor is installed in the Small Animal Isolation Unit. It is suggested that the floor of both Isolation units and the walls of the Large Animal Isolation unit are repaired to a smooth material without corners or gaps to facilitate the cleaning and disinfection. The floor of the necropsy room also needs renovation.
- The isolation unit for Large Animals has only one stable with negative pressure which means that the unit will not be able to host more than one patient at the time. It is strongly suggested to have at least two stables for the isolation of Large Animals.
- The LSMU should guarantee that the new Small Animal hospital, due to start functioning in 2021, has an Isolation Unit in accordance with the Biosecurity and Biosafety SOP of the FVM.
- In order to guarantee the full implementation of the Biosafety and Biosecurity SOP the Team recommends the FVM to provide the students' clothes and washing for practicals in the Large Animal and Small Animal Clinics.
- The new laundry central service is appropriate for the present but when providing clothes and washing for students the unit most probably will need some increase in the equipment and staff to run the service.

3. ESEVT Indicators

Not applicable.

4. Conclusions

The Major Deficiency identified during the full Visitation in 2012 and the Re-visitation in 2015 has been corrected.

Decision of ECOVE

The Committee concluded that the Major Deficiency had been corrected.

The Faculty of Veterinary Medicine, Veterinary Academy, Lithuanian University of Health Sciences is therefore classified as holding the status of: **APPROVAL**.