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Programme accreditation, Vetsuisse Faculty, Universities of Bern and Zurich

Accreditation report (self-assessment report, report of the expert group, AAQ's proposal) | 13.05.2025

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Management Summary

The Vetsuisse Faculty (VSF) was established in 2006 as a merger of the two veterinary faculties in Switzerland – those of the university of Bern and of the university of Zurich. It has formulated common foundations that describe an overarching vision, mission, and long-term strategic goals for both sites. These foundations serve as a basis for the local implementation of the main tasks, i.e. provide a leading expertise in teaching, research, and clinical and non-clinical services. As both locations in Bern and Zurich are fully integrated into their home universities, these foundations are complemented by the specific strategic considerations of both faculty locations.

Vetsuisse has undergone its programme accreditation in accordance with the specified schedule and the guidelines set out by AAQ. The on-site visit took place in September 2024 in Zurich.

In its evaluation, the group of experts judged the study programme to be very well equipped for future challenges. It highlighted the practical training, the curriculum, the staff to student ratio, the competent teaching staff, the development of staff and the promotion of young talent, the willingness to use and implement technological developments (including artificial intelligence) for evaluation and teaching as strengths of the study programme. To further improve the programme, the experts made recommendations in the following areas: platform used for the master theses' allocation, internal communication, the quantity of assessments that students have to take and learning objectives they have to achieve (i.e., student's workload) as well as the quality improvement cycle.

In its proposal, AAQ supported the expert group's analysis and recommended accreditation without conditions. In its statement, VSF thanked the experts and welcomed the recommendations made. The faculty explained it was prepared to make the effort and readily acknowledged its potential for improvement.

The statement issued by the Commission for Medical Professions (MEBEKO) confirmed that the accreditation procedure was conducted in accordance with the established rules and that the VSF was evaluated in line with the relevant standards. It also followed the recommendation of the experts.

At its meeting on 21 March 2025, the Swiss Accreditation Council decided to accredit the veterinary medicine programme at the VSF without any conditions. The accreditation is valid until 20 March 2032.

1. The procedure of programme accreditation according to the Higher Education Act and the Medical Professions Act

Legal bases, object

The object of accreditation according to the HEdA and MedPA is the education of human medicine, dentistry, chiropractic, pharmacy and veterinary medicine. The accreditation of training in university medical professions is carried out within the framework of programme accreditation according to the HEdA, whereby the quality standards according to the HEdA are supplemented by quality standards according to the MedPA. The MedPA defines as a prerequisite for accreditation that graduates of the programme achieve the entirety of the objectives set out in the MedPA and are qualified for continuing education (Art. 24 Para. 1 MedPA). The totality of the objectives, i.e. the general objectives, the occupation-specific objectives as well as the qualification for further education, can only be assumed after completion of the entire five or six years of education. In other words, the subject of the accreditation procedure is the combination of bachelor's and master's programme, within the framework of which the training for a medical profession according to Article 2 MedPA takes place. The starting point for accreditation is in each case the master's programme of the diploma-awarding higher education institution. Within the framework of the accreditation procedure, the diploma-awarding higher education institution must explain how it ensures the entry competences of the students (i.e. the exit competences of the bachelor's graduates) with regard to Article 24 paragraph 1 MedPA.

The procedure

The procedural steps, the procedural rules and the quality standards are laid down in the Accreditation Ordinance of the Swiss University Council (Accreditation Ordinance) and explained in the AAQ guideline "Accreditation of study programmes according to HEdA and MedPA".

Participants’ roles: SAC, AAQ, expert group, study programme

The Swiss Accreditation Council (SAC) takes the accreditation decision. As the supervisory body for AAQ, it approves the longlist for the expert group. The SAC communicates and publishes the accreditation decision and maintains a list of accredited study programmes.

The Swiss Agency for Accreditation and Quality Assurance (AAQ) admits the study programme to the procedure and carries out the accreditation procedure in accordance with the HEdA and MedPA: It accompanies the study programme in the accreditation procedure. It appoints an expert group and supports it in its mandate. AAQ prepares an accreditation proposal for the attention of the Swiss Accreditation Council on the basis of the self-assessment and the results of the external assessment, in particular the report of the expert group. AAQ publishes the overall documentation on the procedure on its website.

The expert group makes its assessment of the quality standards on the basis of the self-assessment and the on-site visit. The experts take part in the on-site visit, talk with the stakeholders of the study programme and write the report of the expert group, which also includes an accreditation recommendation.

The experts in the accreditation procedure of the Vetsuisse Faculty are:

- Prof Dr Antoine Clinquart, Vice-Dean for Education, Faculty of Veterinary Medicine, Université de Liège, Liege (BE), President
- Prof Dr Andrea Tipold, Vice-Dean, Stiftung Tierärztliche Hochschule Hannover, Hanover (DE)
- Prof Dr med vet Kerstin Fey, Universität Giessen, Giessen (DE)
- Paula Meissler, Veterinary Medicine Student, Ludwig-Maximilians-Universität, Munich (DE)

The study programme submits its application for programme accreditation to an agency recognised by the SAC (AAQ for this procedure). It writes a self-assessment based on the quality standards. It invites the participants for the on-site visit. The study programme can provide its input for the expert group's profile and comments on the expert group's report and AAQ's accreditation proposal.

2. The study programme Veterinary Medicine

Presentation

The educational aim of the VSF is to provide a modern competency-based veterinary curriculum focused on fundamental knowledge, day-one skills, and behaviours required of all graduates. It utilises modern didactical methods, grounded in educational theory to achieve the purpose and context in accordance with the Medical Profession Act (MedPA, Medizinalberufegesetz, MedBG) and the EU Directive 2013/55EU. The Vetsuisse Curriculum is currently accredited in Switzerland and by the European Association of Establishments for Veterinary Education (EAEVE).

The current Curriculum 2021 follows the Bologna principles and has been implemented simultaneously in the Bachelor and the Master programme. For its Curriculum 2021, the VSF has developed the competency framework VET-PROFILES (Appendix 1). This framework aligns our objectives with those developed for human medicine curricula in Switzerland with the essential day-one competencies required by EU Directive 2005/36/EC (as amended by directive 2013/55/EU) and its Annexes. The framework defines the outcomes of the educational process in consideration of the most common roles in which veterinarians act after graduation and is designed to prepare graduates for professional careers by confirming their ability to meet the needs of animals and the expectations of society.

The VSF curriculum has a mandatory core and tracking system where students must select one of six tracks. The Bachelor curriculum builds up core knowledge and skills. The core Master curriculum is comprised of courses and clinical rotations to allow the further development of all core professional competences and skills. The compulsory tracking also takes place in the master’s curriculum and is intended to provide students with additional competences in one of six lines of future professions (small animal medicine, equine medicine, farm animal medicine, pathobiology, biomedical research, and veterinary public health).

Presentation of the Vetsuisse Faculty

Establishment's Head: 2023 – 2024 Vetsuisse Dean Prof. Dr. med. vet. Roger Stephan

Address identical with Dean's office Zurich location http://www.vetsuisse.ch/

Dean's office Bern location University of Bern Dean's office Vetsuisse Faculty Bern Länggassstrasse 120 3012 Bern Tel. +41 31 684 25 11 david.spreng@unibe.ch Dean: Prof. Dr. med. vet. David Spreng Assistant to the Dean: Barbara Bach http://www.vetsuisse.unibe.ch/content/index_ger.html	**Dean's office Zurich location** University of Zurich Dean's office Vetsuisse Faculty Zurich Winterthurerstrasse 204 8057 Zurich Tel. +41 44 635 81 21 stephanr@fsafety.uzh.ch Dean: Prof. Dr. med. vet. Roger Stephan Assistant to the Dean: Marlen Tschudin Wyler http://www.vet.uzh.ch/de.html

Official authority overseeing the VSF: Vetsuisse Council

The **decision-making processes** at the faculty are tied to the formal structures of their respective home universities Bern and Zurich. The decision-making pathways are illustrated in the organisational chart (Figure 1).

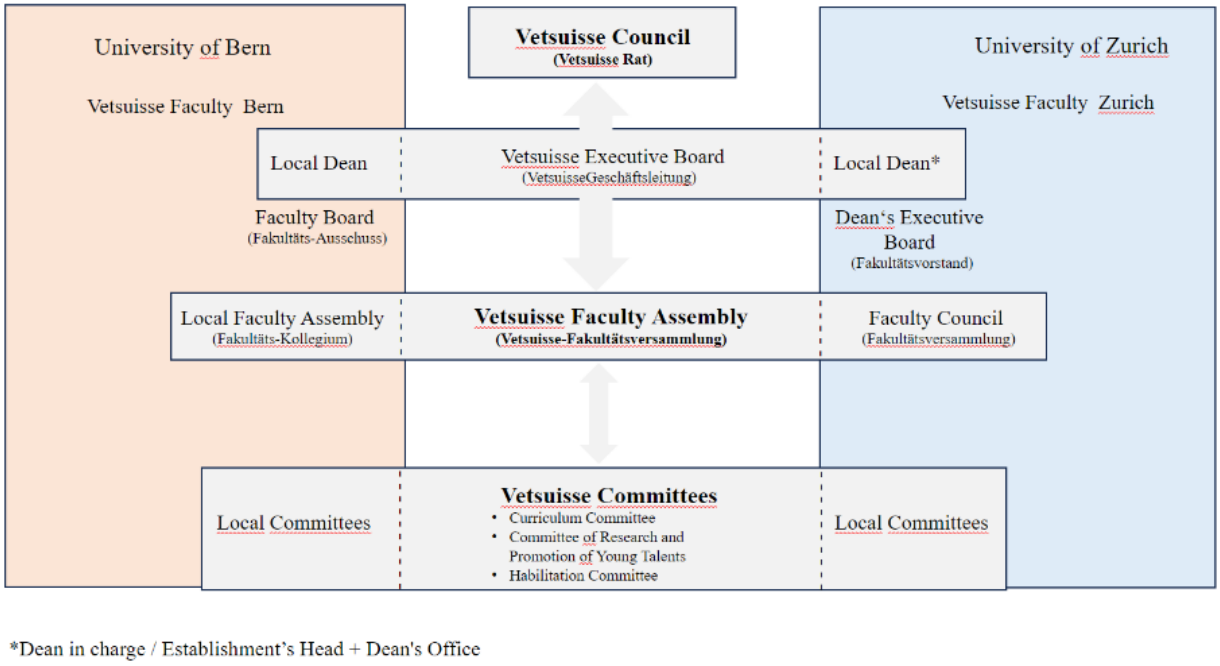


Figure 1 Organisational chart of the VSF

Integration into the home universities

Both locations remain integral parts of their respective home universities and have the same status as all other faculties of their home university. They are directly supervised by the rectorate of their respective university and are administrated by these.

Bern

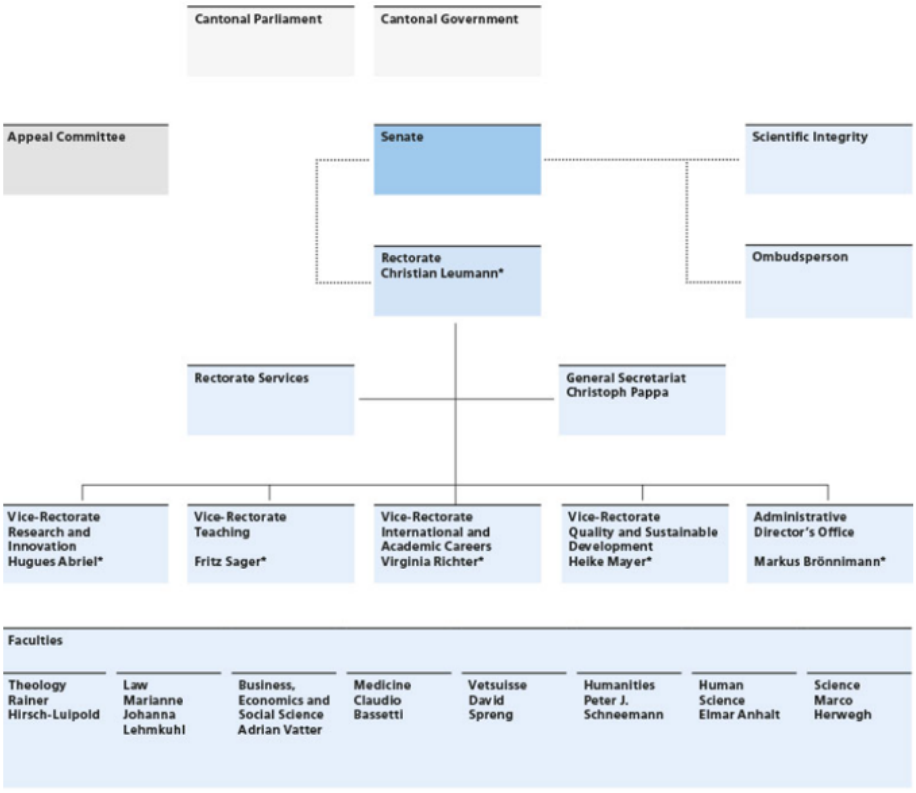


Figure 2 Integration of the VSF at the University of Bern (as of August 1, 2024, Virginia Richter will succeed Christian Leumann as rector of the University of Bern)

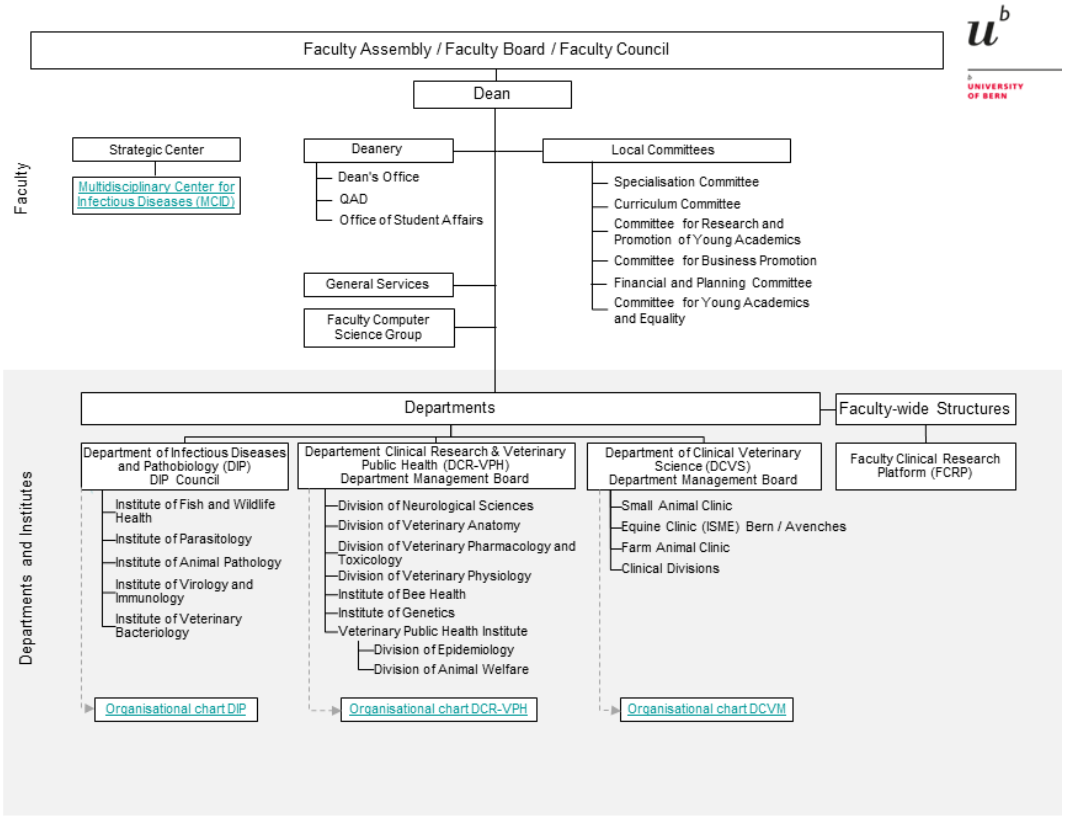


Figure 3 Organisational chart VSF-Bern

Zurich

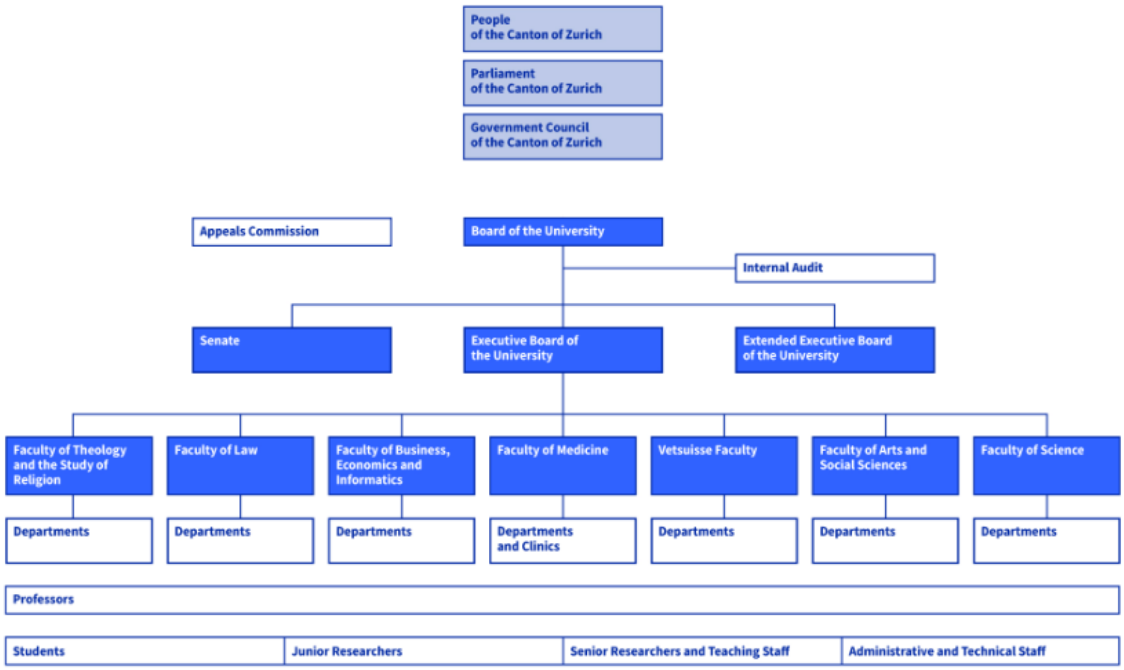


Figure 4 Integration of the VSF at the University of Zurich

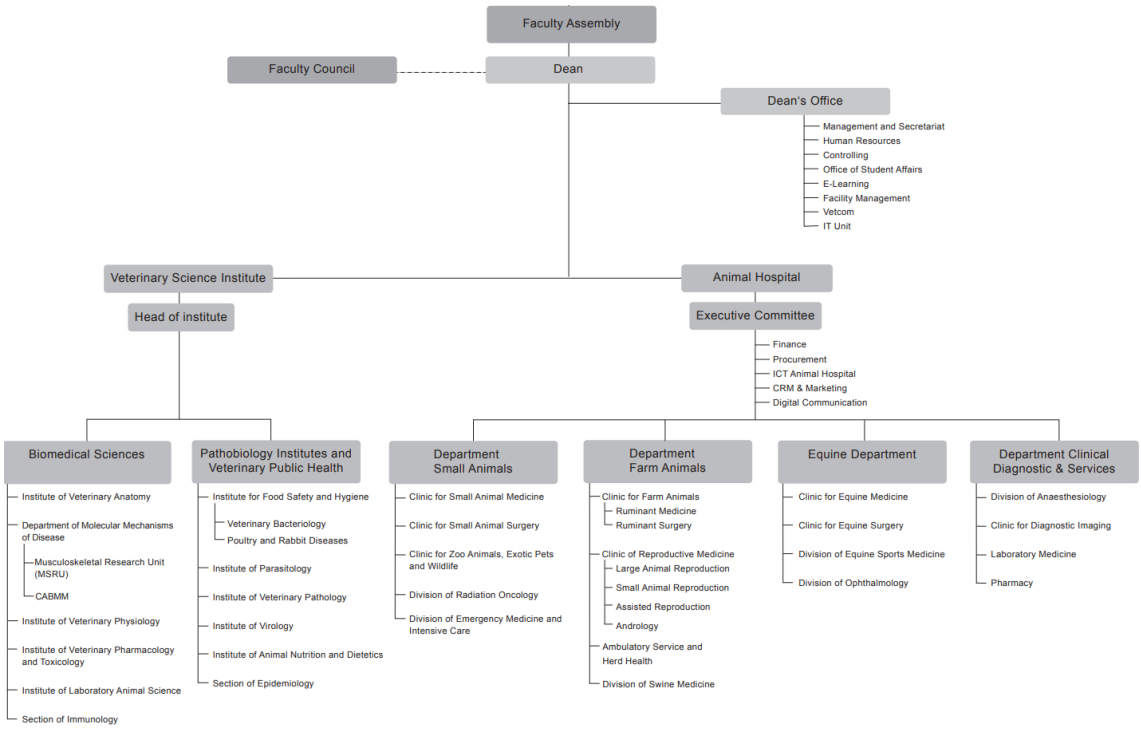


Figure 5 Organisational chart VSF-Zurich

Description of council/boards/committees of the VSF Bern and Zurich (Figure 1)

Vetsuisse Council (Vetsuisse Rat)
The Vetsuisse Council is composed of the two rectors of the universities, two members of the highest ruling authorities (University of Bern and Zurich), two additional members of the University Boards (rectorate; University Bern and Zurich), and two representatives of the ministries of education of Bern and Zurich. The two local deans are members of the Vetsuisse Council without the right to vote. One of the two rectors heads the Vetsuisse Council, with a two-year rotation schedule. The council is responsible for strategic planning and development of the VSF including financial planning. It approves all regulations related to the VSF, the appointment of professors and the Vetsuisse Dean.

Vetsuisse Executive Board (Vetsuisse Geschäftsleitung)
The Deans of the two locations constitute the Executive Board. They are responsible for creating and executing the VSF strategic planning. They submit proposals and plans to the Vetsuisse Faculty Assembly for discussion and to the Vetsuisse Council for decision.

Vetsuisse Dean
The Vetsuisse Dean is the head of the VSF. Alternating every two years, the local dean of one site becomes Vetsuisse Dean. Her/his role is to lead and direct the faculty and to represent it externally. He or she is responsible for the elaboration and implementation of planning, the allocation of common funds available to the VSF, cooperation with national and international committees, and public relations. The Vetsuisse Dean appoints committees, recruited from the Vetsuisse Faculty Assembly, to assist her/him with this task.

Local Dean
The local Dean runs the daily administrative business and is directly in charge of the central maintenance, learning and informatics resources in accordance with the structure of the local universities. The dean represents the faculty at the respective home university level and the central university administration. He/she presides over the Faculty Board and the Local Faculty Assembly (Bern) and the Dean's Executive Board and the Local Faculty Assembly (Zurich). He/she is also ex officio member of all important committees. He/she prepares all matters to be decided in the local Faculty Board/Faculty Assembly or the Dean's Executive Board/Faculty Assembly. He/she sets up temporary committees for specific tasks. The local deans and the vice deans are generally elected by the Local Faculty Assembly for a period of 4 years (with the option to prolong for additional terms). The dean is supported by the dean's office, the vice dean and by all local standing committees.

Vetsuisse Faculty Assembly (Vetsuisse-Fakultätsversammlung)
The Vetsuisse Faculty Assembly consists of 12 deputies of the professors (incl. Assistant Professors), six delegates of the intermediate staff and the two student representatives of each location. The Vetsuisse Faculty Assembly discusses the Vetsuisse Dean's submissions. It convenes at least once per semester and approves all Vetsuisse matters delegated to the Vetsuisse Faculty Assembly, of which some can be subject to final approval by the Vetsuisse Council. It confirms the members of the Vetsuisse standing committees. It decides by two-thirds majority vote.

Two Local Faculty Assemblies
The Bern Faculty Assembly (Fakultäts-Kollegium) and Zurich Faculty Assembly (Fakultätsversammlung) are composed of all professors, delegates of the intermediate staff and student representatives, and administrative/technical staff (Zurich). They bear the final responsibility for all local faculty business and decide by majority vote. The Faculty Assemblies meets at least twice (Bern) or three times (Zurich) per semester.

Bern: Faculty Board (Fakultäts-Ausschuss)
In Bern, the Faculty Board assists the dean. It is composed ex officio by the local Dean, the local Vice Dean, Chief-Financial-Officer, Head of Planning, the heads of departments, Quality-responsible for education and Quality-responsible for research. The composition of the Faculty Board ensures that each department is represented by four professors. In addition, there is one intermediate staff and one student representative. The Faculty Board has the final vote on all financial matters and prepares important matters to be decided by the Faculty Assembly. The Faculty Board meets five to six times per year. All decisions are taken by majority vote. In the event of a tie, the dean decides.

Zurich: Faculty Council (Fakultätsvorstand)
In Zurich, the Faculty Council is headed by the dean. The dean and the three vice deans (for teaching, research, and communication and continuing education, respectively) constitute the executive board. The assistant to the dean, the head of the administrative office, the controller of the faculty and the director of finance of the University Veterinary Hospital attend the meetings in an advisory capacity. The dean and the vice deans are elected by the faculty assembly for a period of four years (with the option to prolong for additional terms). The medical director of the University Veterinary Hospital acts as vice dean for communication and continuing education and is elected by the governing board of the Hospital. The Faculty Council meets at least three times per semester. All decisions are taken by majority vote.

Standing Vetsuisse Committees
There are three standing committees of the Vetsuisse Faculty established as cross-site faculty structures:
a Vetsuisse Curriculum Committee
b Vetsuisse Committee for Research and Promotion of Young Academics
c Vetsuisse Habilitation Committee

Vetsuisse Curriculum Committee
The Committee oversees the veterinary curriculum and is responsible for the continuous development of veterinary education at the VSF. Each location is represented by the following members with full voting rights: four professors of all levels including lecturers, three members of the academic junior faculty, two students, and one curriculum coordinator. One representative of the Swiss Society of Veterinarians (GST) is a non-voting guest member.
Bern: Prof. Dr. med. vet. Horst Posthaus (head of the local Bern Curriculum Committee and member of the Vetsuisse Curriculum Committee)
Zurich: Prof. Dr. med. vet. Thomas A. Lutz (head of the Vetsuisse Curriculum Committee)

Vetsuisse Committee for Research and Promotion of Young Academics
The Committee develops the research strategy, the basis for quality assurance and projects for the promotion of young academics in accordance with the goals of the VSF. Each location is represented by the following members: four professors of all levels including lecturers, three members of the academic junior faculty, and one student.

Vetsuisse Habilitation Committee
This committee ensures the quality of habilitation and equivalent qualifications at the VSF and defines criteria for academic career development. Each location is represented by the following members: six professors of all levels including lecturers, one member of the academic junior faculty, one student.

Local Student Affairs Offices The faculties in Bern and Zurich have student affairs offices that are responsible for the planning and coordination of all teaching related activities, including the detailed timetables for students, organization of examinations, and the information of veterinary

students for all aspects of their university life. One staff member of the office in Bern holds a Master of Medical Education since 2021, one member of the Zurich office will embark on this training programme in 2024. Both offices combine their strengths and are collaborating on all aspects of the continuous implementation and evaluation of the veterinary curriculum.

Follow-up of the last procedure

Main developments since the last Visitation:

The last Swiss Agency of Accreditation and Quality Assurance (AAQ) visitation took place in October 2017 and was conducted in collaboration with the visitation of the European Association of Establishments for Veterinary Education (EAEVE). The final version of the report received full approval by Swiss Accreditation Council (SAC) 17/04/2018. There were no major deficiencies mentioned in the last visitation report.

Seven specific suggestions were formulated; *their implementation is added in italics*.

1. The planned and already partially introduced tutorial system for students and academic staff is highly valued and should be followed up. *The system has been maintained and extended by the newly established skills lab of the VSF.*
2. The introduction of Curriculum 2020 is highly recommended, as is the addition of a sixth year with additional funding for practical education. Additionally, a structured plan should be implemented for personal development of students. *The Curriculum 2021 was successfully introduced in fall 2021 and the curriculum was extended to 5.5 years. Practical skills training has been expanded and starts already in the bachelor phase.*
The committee on the promotion of students and young scientists in Zurich and both student affairs offices support the students in their personal development. An e-portfolio (EPASS) was introduced to combine an evaluation instrument with a tool that allows students to reflect on their learning. External practical training starts already in the first year and has been significantly extended over the entire curriculum. This allows additional mentorship for students from private practitioners outside the faculty.
3. Increased amount of explicit teaching of subjects such as ethical, economic aspects, communication skills and report writing is recommended. *These points have been taken into account with the Curriculum 2021.*
4. The plan to introduce a formative assessment programme of competencies is supported, and more feedback after assessment is desirable. *Such a system (EPASS) has been introduced, in particular for the last three practical semesters of the Master course.*
5. Critical thinking about the use of complementary medical methods and therapeutic approaches should be encouraged, with a reflection on these methods and societal demands. *The VSF included these topics in the Curriculum in close collaboration with experts of the Swiss Society for Veterinarians (GST).*
6. The introduction of a unified platform for e-learning on both sides is recommended. *Students from both VSF sites have access to the same or in some instances similar e-learning material, however a unified IT-platform was not established due to different IT requirements at both Universities.*
7. Academic personnel teaching should be encouraged more in terms of promotion, and more should be encouraged to complete the Master of Medical Education at the University of Bern. *One member of the Student Affairs Office in Bern and one faculty member have completed the MME training, a member of the Zurich Office will start this education in 2024.*

With the introduction of Curriculum 2021, the study programme lasts 11 instead of 10 semesters. It was introduced for the first year of the bachelor and the first year of the master programme in

2021 (1st and 4th year, respectively). In 2022 these cohorts completed the 2nd and 5th year of the curriculum, while the last annual courses (3rd year and 11th semester) have been implemented in autumn 2023.
The old curriculum was rated very positively, particularly the student: teacher ratio. The extended aims of Curriculum 2021 were as follows:

- strengthening of practical skills training starting in the bachelor phase;
- strengthening of clinical skills training in the master's phase by extending time for internal clinical rotations and external practical training;
- strengthening the master thesis work by allocating defined time slots;
- further alignment and harmonization of teaching between both locations;
- strengthening the involvement of student in decision making processes;
- strengthening decision making skills of students;
- strengthening the collaboration between the VSF and external stakeholders regarding external practical training and achievement of day one competences for our students.

The new curriculum has been designed by the joint Curriculum Committee and was ratified by the Vetsuisse council. Compared to the previous curriculum it is more uniform between the two locations. It is based on common goals, still allowing enough flexibility to respect site specific differences in infrastructure and legal requirements imposed by the two cantonal Universities.
The most important newly introduced unifications are:

- identical competence-based learning objectives in alignment with the EAEVE day-one skills catalogue;
- common list of learning objectives and disciplines/subjects to be taught in the bachelor phase of the curriculum;
- identical requirements and conditions for external practical training in the final three semesters of the master's period;
- common requirements and conditions for the master thesis, incl. freedom of choice of the location;
- identical and objective final state exam for each student.

Despite the clear goal of unification and synchronization, VSF deliberately decided to allow for sufficient freedom of teaching and diverse teaching cultures at both locations. Many of the existing variations are related to the different cantonal and university-wide regulations and requirements, infrastructure, and organization of the two Vetsuisse sites such as:

- different IT-systems;
- slightly different distribution of some disciplines over teaching modules;
- choice of local elective courses in the core curriculum;
- different organisation of clinical rotations in the final three semesters.

3. Standards of the programme accreditation according to HEdA and MedPA

Area I: Training objectives

Quality standard 1.01:
The study programme has clear objectives that clarify its special features and meet national and international requirements.

Description and self-assessment

The Vetsuisse Faculty (VSF) strives to maintain its position as one of the leading veterinary faculties in Europe in research and education. It sees itself as an essential player in the "One Health" concept. Many aspects of animal health, including animal well-being, are closely linked to human health. These include food safety, antibiotic resistance, pathogenesis, and disease treatment. Knowledge in this field is a crucial resource for understanding interconnections and preserving animal and human health and well-being, preventing disease spread, and promoting a sustainable society. ***The mission of the VSF*** *is to provide research and education at the highest level. The VSF concept emphasizes close national and international collaborations among veterinary and human medicine, agronomy, natural sciences, and social sciences. The knowledge generated by the VSF translates into practical applications to contribute to the well-being of animals and humans. This also involves economic, ecological, and social aspects.*

The VSF provides research-based education in all areas of veterinary medicine. As the only accredited VEE institution in Switzerland, VSF maintains this status through excellent work in all subfields, utilizing the synergies arising from the VSF's two-locations. In the Curriculum 2021, practical education and self-responsible decision taking of the students were increased. Newly designed teaching modules that combine digital teaching methods with practical training in non-clinical and clinical settings are offered to align with the work environment that students will encounter on day 1 after graduation. The VSF also prepares the students for the concept of lifelong learning.

The current Curriculum 2021 follows the bologna principles and has been implemented simultaneously in the Bachelor and the Master programme. The VSF has developed the competency framework ***VET****-PROFILES derived from the Swiss* ***P****rincipal* ***R****elevant* ***O****bjectives and a* ***F****ramework for* ***I****ntegrative* ***L****earning and* ***E****ducation in* ***S****witzerland (PROFILES). PROFILES was developed by the 6 Swiss medical faculties for human medicine curricula and served as the prototype for the veterinary framework catalogue. The framework was adapted to the veterinary field and aligned with the essential day-one competencies required by EU Directive 2005/36/EC (as amended by directive 2013/55/EU) and its Annexes (Fig. 6). Statistical results of the latest graduate surveys and analysis of data from the Medical Professions Register were also taken into account. The framework defines the outcomes of the educational process in consideration of the most common roles in which veterinarians act after graduation and is designed to prepare graduates for professional careers by confirming their ability to meet the needs of animals and the expectations of society.*

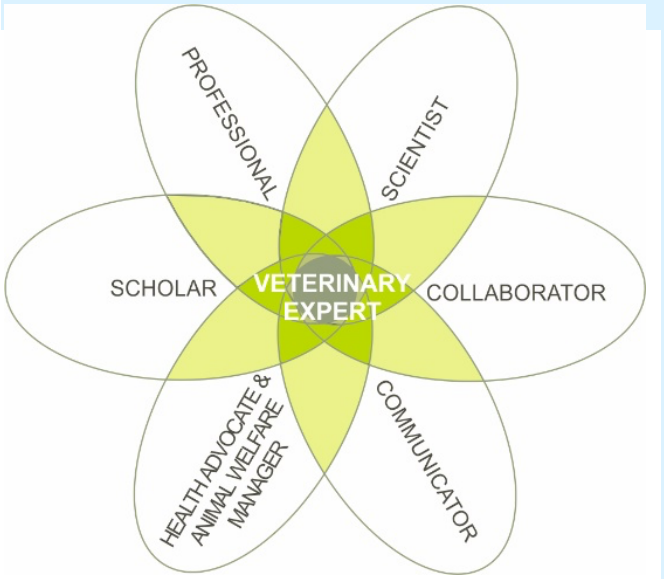


Figure 6 VET-PROFILES competences diagram

Expert group assessment

The expert group found the programme objectives to be clear and well described, with the VET-PROFILES competency framework well embedded, as well as a significant element of practical training. Upon review of the programme content, the experts found the curricula to be robust and effectively covering the specific requirements, as detailed in Standard 1.03. The Vetsuisse Faculty uses the resources across both campuses to the full extent of their resource, ensuring graduates are fully prepared for their role as veterinarians.

The requirements of the Swiss Society of Veterinarians (GST) are fully recognised within the programme, with collaboration and cooperation clearly demonstrated. The European educational requirements are also met, enabling mobility for graduates and confirmation of the standard of educational provision.

The standard is completely fulfilled.

Quality standard 1.02:
The programme pursues educational objectives that are consistent with the mission and strategic planning of the higher education institution (or the other institution in the higher education sector).

Description and self-assessment

The VSF has formulated common foundations that describe an overarching vision, mission, and long-term strategic goals for both sites. These foundations serve as a basis for the local implementation of tasks in teaching, research, and service. These foundations are

complemented by the specific strategic considerations of both faculty locations and both home universities. According to the Vetsuisse Concordat, the VSF pursues the following goals:

1. increasing the quality of research and teaching

2. providing excellent services

3. ensuring Switzerland's international competitiveness in veterinary medicine

4. promoting animal health and welfare through the use of excellent preventive and curative measures as well as through innovative research and high-quality university teaching

5. promoting the quality and safety of products of animal origin in the interests of human and animal health and in the interests of the environment

The current strategic plan has been approved by the Vetsuisse Council in December 2021 and includes:

- *Implementation and first evaluation of the Curriculum 2021.*
- *Accreditation by the AAQ and EAEVE in 2024.*
- *Evaluation of the new curriculum.*
- *Institutionalisation of the Swiss State Secretariat for Education, Research, and Innovation (SERI) project "Quality-assured External Practical Modules" by 2025.*

Expert group assessment

The expert group was impressed by the level of strategic planning and oversight demonstrated via the SER and the on-site visit, particularly regarding the collaborative approach clearly demonstrated between the two Universities (Bern and Zurich), indicating a faculty with excellent collaboration. The governance structure illustrated by VSF was deemed to be excellent.

This top-level involvement with programme development was highlighted with the curriculum review and development, with the new curriculum delivered from September 2021. This new approach has lengthened the programme of learning, allowing for an increase in the practical training of students, whilst still ensuring that the theory elements are thoroughly covered. VSF's active involvement in programme development reflects the commitment to excellence in teaching that is clearly expressed in the mission statements of the Universities of Bern and Zurich.

The learning outcomes and entrustable professional activities were found to be both well formulated and thoroughly embedded, ensuring students are meeting the intended programme outcomes.

The standard is completely fulfilled.

Quality standard 1.03:
The university shall regulate, and where applicable the university colleges shall regulate, the course of study leading to a federal diploma in accordance with the objectives of the Medical Professions Act. The university awarding the Master's diploma shall be responsible for the quality of the training and for accreditation.

The study programme enables graduates – in line with the level of their university medical training – to namely:

a) To care for animals comprehensively, individually or as part of an animal population, and to a high standard of quality;

b) to deal with questions using scientifically recognised methods and taking ethical and economic aspects into account, and to make appropriate decisions;

c) communicate appropriately and purposefully with owners and other stakeholders;

d) to assume responsibility in the health care system, especially in the area of primary health care, and professionally in the society;

e) to carry out organisational and management tasks within the framework of their professional activities;

f) take into account the competences of other recognised health professions;

g) to survive in international competition.

Description and self-assessment

General provisions, modules and ECTS credits, evaluations, exclusion or final rejection and suspension, degree programmes, and legal protection are laid down in the study regulations entered into force on 1 August 2021. The training objectives of the entire study programme are governed by the Medical Profession Act (MedPA) of June 23, 2006 (as of 1 September 2023), and, where applicable, by other related implementing provisions. The Vetsuisse Curriculum is fully compatible with this Act.

Progression criteria are defined by the study regulations (Studienreglement) and the study plan (Bern: Studienplan; Zurich: Studienordnung), provided in Appendix 2. The students' assessment strategy is defined in the local study plan. The study plan is regularly reviewed by the Vetsuisse Curriculum Committee based on curriculum development and curriculum mapping results of content, learning outcomes, and student performance. The respective Vice rectorates for teaching of the home universities are also involved in this process. The Curriculum Committee elaborates adjustments subsequently passed by the VSF Assembly and finally ratified by the VSF Council. The current versions have been approved by the VSF Council on Aug 01, 2022.

The annexes have been revised and approved by the VSF Council on June 28, 2023. Both Universities awarding the Master's diploma are fully accredited (Bern, Zurich).

The veterinary curriculum enables graduates to achieve competences in 7 general fields that they are expected to be able to perform at day-1 after graduation (Chapter 1 VET-PROFILES):

1. Veterinary Expertise

2. Veterinary Science

3. Communication

4. Collaboration/Teamwork

5. Health Advocacy and Animal Welfare

6. Professional Attitude

7. Life-long Learning

In addition, VET-PROFILES define the essential competences to be reached by the graduates as Entrustable Professional Activity (EPAs). On day 1 of their professional activities, graduates are expected to perform the tasks listed here with a certain degree of independence.

EPA Nr. And Title

1 Name and describe the body structures and functions of healthy and diseased organisms

2 Take a clinical history

3 Handle and restrain animals

4 Perform a clinical or postmortem examination and assess the health status and well-being of an animal or groups of animals

5 Formulate a problem list and prioritize differential diagnoses

6 Perform common clinical procedures

7 Recommend diagnostic and screening tests, collect and handle samples, and use equipment

8 Interpret results of diagnostic and screening tests

9 Identify a patient requiring urgent / emergency care and initiate emergency care

10 Develop a management/therapy plan, safely prescribe and administer medications or accompanying measures in common situations

11 Document veterinary medical findings

12 Communicate effectively with animal owners, veterinary medical professionals and different stakeholders

13 Participate in animal welfare and public health

14 Acquire, apply and communicate scientific knowledge

Further details about core competences and EPA's are elaborated in VET-PROFILES (Appendix 1).

The study programme enables graduates – in line with the level of their university medical training - to:

a) care for animals comprehensively, individually or as part of an animal population, and to a high standard of quality (EPA 2 – 10): *After introducing Bachelor students to the basis of clinical activities, the core Master curriculum is comprised of courses and clinical rotations to allow the development of all core professional competences according to VET-PROFILES. Throughout the Bachelor and Master programmes, modules are designed in a concept of a spiral curriculum, revisiting and reinforcing topics with a special emphasis on students developing clinical reasoning and case processing skills. Clinical skills teaching is conducted in veterinary teaching hospitals, in off-site practices owned by the VSF and extramurally in private practices that have an agreement with the VSF. In the latter students are exposed to common cases in primary veterinary care. The VSF implemented systematic practical skills development during year 1 – 4 and the clinical rotations in the last three semesters; except for brief introductory modules, the last three semesters are purely practical. This ensures that graduates have learning experiences that match the expected competencies postulated in VET-PROFILES and that are essential for day-1 of their veterinary profession. Resources for the Veterinary Curriculum are provided by the two Universities to their respective Faculties. Although different between the two locations, both budgets are sufficient to provide high quality training for veterinary students and excellent student-to-staff ratios. The available facilities in terms of learning environment, lecture halls, small group rooms and Skills Labs are appropriate for a modern curriculum. Additional resources for virtual and digital technology advancement were provided by both universities in recent years.*

b) deal with questions using scientifically recognised methods and taking ethical and economic aspects into account, and to make appropriate decisions (EPA 10-14): *The VSF implements research-based education in each discipline. The majority of senior lecturers with a veterinary background are certified EBVS or ABVS specialists or equivalent, which implies a very strong link to research activities and research-based education. The clinical activity embeds daily discussions of cases including evidence-based approaches. In all Clinics and Institutes, procedures for the discussion of state-of-the-art research (seminars, journal clubs etc.) are established, enabling junior staff to develop their portfolio of research skills, including critical appraisal of the literature and scientific research presentation skills. A significant task of senior lecturers is to train students, interns, and residents in all different areas of specialisation. Students choose one of six tracks during the Master programme (small animals; equines; farm animals; biomedical research; pathobiology; veterinary public health) to spend a significant amount of time in a specialized area of their choice, to strengthen their competences in this area beyond the core curriculum. Furthermore, during the external practical training in the last 3 semesters, observational work-based assessments are conducted formatively by the responsible external supervisors, e.g. for feedback on communication skills, teamwork, dealing with pressure, work ethics, positive mental attitude, flexibility, time management, self-confidence, and dealing with criticism.*

c) communicate appropriately and purposefully with owners and other stakeholders (EPA 12): *The students learn basic communication skills during the Bachelor programme. Even though slightly different between Bern and Zurich, students in both locations acquire important sets of communication skills with animal owners and other stakeholders. Students get clinical and communication experience during day shifts, ambulatory and night duties. A "student consultation line", in which students are responsible for the patients by themselves (under supervision of senior teachers) is piloted. Here they reinforce their communication skills including history taking, phone communication, and giving discharge instructions during client interactions. In some clinics a skills video library is available for students before performing a*

dedicated task. Students also participate in daily reports, and case-based and topic-based rounds. Students of the 5th year are teamed by junior students or near peers performing their practical days.

d) assume responsibility in the health care system, especially in the area of primary health care (EPA 13): *Students gain clinical experience during day shifts, ambulatory and night duties. Even though a large part of the cases admitted at the clinics in both locations are referral cases, students get sufficient exposure to primary care cases at both locations. Both Clinics for Ruminants in Bern and Zurich provide ambulatory services for farms located in the surrounding area; this is where students get direct exposure to farm animal health for primary care. The main goal of the ambulatory services is hands-on training for students during the last 3 (clinical) semesters of their veterinary education in rural practice (first opinion cases, including routine farm animal clinical work). The ambulatory service provides a 24/7 emergency service, and visits for herd health management are conducted each year. The knowledge gain within the VSF can then be further strengthened during extramural rotations.*

e) carry out organisational and management tasks within the framework of their professional activities (general competence 4 & 6): *In the master's programme students get clinical experience during day shifts, ambulatory and night duties. They assist the attending clinician in patient care, taking clinical history, performing physical examinations, reporting of therapy/management plan, and writing of medical records in the clinical information system; students have full access to the clinics' information system (BE: Polypoint, ZH: Vetera®). To include the diversity of animal patients and veterinary professions, 12 weeks of external (outside VSF) practical training are mandatory for each student. Furthermore, during the intramural rotations and the external practical training in the last 3 semesters, observational work-based assessments are conducted formatively by the responsible external supervisors, e.g. for feedback on communication skills, teamwork, dealing with pressure, work ethics, positive mental attitude, flexibility, time management, self-confidence, and dealing with criticism.*

f) take into account the competences of other recognised health professions (EPA 10 & 12): *The VSF students have close contact with peers and with technical personnel from the beginning of their studies. During the master's programme they get closer contact with the in-house academic staff (veterinarians and other professions) when they are closely monitored by supervisors. Furthermore, during the external practical training in the 5th year, students have close contact with their responsible external supervisors, allowing access to a wide range of competences of various recognized health professions. Extramural training is organized in close collaboration with the GST to allow for real-life exposure of students to all fields of veterinary medicine and beyond. Finally, students are sensitized to the One Health Concept in which veterinary medicine plays a crucial role (e.g., in respect to food hygiene, zoonotic diseases, antibiotic resistance in human and veterinary medicine, etc.).*

g) survive in international competition (general competence 1, 2 & 7): *The VSF has excellent standings in international rankings (# 4 worldwide in the most recent QS rating), and many of clinical and research staff are among the best publishing veterinarians in Europe. This international competitiveness enables the graduates to compete at a high level with graduates from other countries. Both locations take part in the Swiss-European Mobility Programmes (SEMP, largely equivalent to Erasmus+). There are on average 10-15% outgoing students each year, and an even higher number of incoming students on all levels of programmes. Many master students go abroad during the mandatory practical training as they can choose placements in Switzerland or abroad without restrictions. The VSF via their home universities is part of various university alliances (e.g. Bern: The Guild, ENLIGHT; Zurich: UNA Europa, Universitas 21) which increases the international visibility of the VSF. All clinics and institutes of*

the VSF have an extensive network of international collaborations. The Curriculum is accredited at the European level by the EAEVE since 2010, the renewal process is currently ongoing.

Expert group assessment

The expert group found that the programme fully covers all elements required for students to register as veterinarians in accordance with the MedPA. The inclusion of the VET-PROFILES ensures good coverage of the required theoretical and practical development of students, and incorporates the following mandatory elements:

a) To care for animals comprehensively, individually or as part of an animal population, and to a high standard of quality: VSF has developed a spiralised curriculum to continuously develop student's knowledge of, and practical capability to, care for animals across a variety of species and settings. VSF initiates practical training early in the curriculum, with the final three semesters exclusively spent on clinical rotation. This not only allows for a wide variety of cases and experiences, but also ensures that graduates are as well prepared as possible for their future roles.

b) to deal with questions using scientifically recognised methods and taking ethical and economic aspects into account, and to make appropriate decisions: evidence based veterinary medicine has been fully embedded in this curriculum, with a strong cohort of veterinary specialists available to support both student and staff development in this area. Additionally, the integration of PhD and post-doctorate candidates within the teaching team continuously promotes the concepts of research and critical thinking. There have been specific improvements in the areas of ethics and economic thinking since the last review, with a mandatory ethics training programme for all students to undertake.

c) communicate appropriately and purposefully with owners and other stakeholders: student communication development and capability were discussed in detail during the onsite visit, and it was clear that this is fully considered and effectively managed. The expert group was impressed by the consideration of different communication requirements for different stakeholders, such as small animal pet owners compared to farmers, and the support available for students to develop their communication skills in a wide range of circumstances. Additionally, student representatives who met with the experts were confident and engaged in forthright discussions, demonstrating their capability to effectively communicate.

d) to assume responsibility in the health care system, especially in the area of primary health care, and professionally in the society: student progression and development towards autonomy was clear to see from both the individuals met with and the requirements that students must undertake throughout their programme. It was clear that there is a progressive increase in responsibility throughout the programme, with students arranging their own extra-mural training placements and identifying areas for development during those training weeks. This was specifically highlighted towards the end of the programme, where students are required to undertake night shifts and manage cases, albeit with guidance where required.

e) to carry out organisational and management tasks within the framework of their professional activities: students must be well organised to undertake this programme of study, with a variety of responsibilities and requirements to be managed. The increasing levels of responsibility demonstrated throughout the completion of the programme absolutely supports this development, however, the experts did ascertain that a more robust overview of document

completion, specifically in the hospital setting, could be useful to ensure students are aware of the full remit of this aspect of their role.

f) take into account the competences of other recognised health professions: interprofessional training and education is well covered within this programme, with students exposed to veterinarians working in different fields of the profession and paraprofessionals such as. veterinary nurses, farriers and physiotherapists, animal owners and people working in veterinary public health business. The elective element of the programme enables students to choose a track that suits their own interests and potential career intentions, which is not limited to veterinary hospital roles, but also includes options such as biomedical research and veterinary public health.

g) to survive in international competition: graduates of this programme will be well placed internationally, with VSF achieving number four in the QS World University Rankings for veterinary programmes. Additionally, students have the benefit of learning from a variety of American and European veterinary specialists, can take advantage of international placements, and have undertaken a programme accredited by EAEVE.

The expert group has come to the conclusion that all of the mandatory elements are met and were also particularly impressed by the engagement of teaching personnel, as well as the ratio of teaching staff to students, and the practical training and development of students.

The standard is completely fulfilled.

Area II: Conception, architecture and structuring of the study programme

Quality standard 2.01:
The study programme implements the respectively applicable learning objectives in a way that allows graduates to achieve the training objectives according to MedPA.

Description and self-assessment

The VSF curriculum has a mandatory core and elective tracking system. The Bachelor curriculum (see also Fig. 7) builds up core knowledge and skills. Students are allowed to choose some additional courses as electives. The design is modular, with the first year covering basic natural science and veterinary knowledge. This year also serves as an additional assessment year (all ECTS credits must be earned within no more than 2 years). In the second and third year (Bachelor Phase) most courses are taught conjointly in an organ-based manner.

The core Master curriculum is comprised of courses and clinical rotations to allow the further development of all core professional competences and skills. Modules are designed in a concept of a spiral curriculum, revisiting and reinforcing topics with a special emphasis on students developing clinical reasoning and case processing skills. The compulsory tracking also takes place in the master curriculum and is intended to provide students with additional competences in one of 6 lines of future professions (small animal medicine, equine medicine, farm animal medicine, pathobiology, biomedical research, and veterinary public health). Additionally, master students choose elective courses to gain deeper knowledge based on their

personal preferences and career goals. Clinical skills teaching is conducted in veterinary teaching hospitals, in off-site practices owned by the VSF, and extramurally in private practices that have an agreement with the VSF. In the latter, students are exposed to common cases in primary veterinary care. The VSF implemented systematic practical skills development during year 1 – 4 and the clinical rotations in the last three semesters; except for brief introductory modules, the last three semesters are purely practical. This ensures that graduates have learning experiences that match the expected competencies essential for day-1 of their veterinary profession.

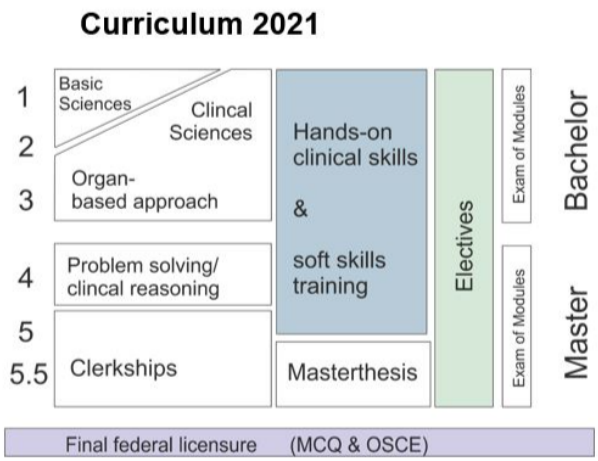


Figure 7 Curriculum structure

As described in QS 1.03, the framework of the VET-PROFILES is based on a defined set of competencies and required EPA's necessary for veterinarians after graduation, which are in alignment with the ESEVT Day one competencies. The framework represents the broad educational goals, and served as criteria against which the selection of various curriculum components was judged. A set of learning outcomes were mapped to the taxonomy and permitted further refinement of the present content/modules and the selection of appropriate educational and assessment methods. On the module level, detailed learning objectives were used to determine items of teaching, learning and assessment.

They are disseminated via course syllabus and the digital curriculum mapping tools (BE: Core Teaching System [CTS] and ZH: **L**earning **O**pportunities, **O**bjectives and **O**utcomes **P**latform [LOOOP]). In more detail, the learning objectives were grouped as cognitive, affective or psychomotor objectives. Congruent educational methods were chosen in consideration of feasibility of resources and diversity of students' learning preferences.

In general, refinement or change of the broader, general learning outcomes of VET-PROFILES is under the responsibility of the Curriculum Committee. Afterwards, they are approved first by the local faculty assemblies and finally by the Vetsuisse Faculty Assembly.

Within each course or module, smaller events have more specific learning objectives. They refer to teachers' intentions what students are taught during the individual event. Teachers are responsible for the learning objectives; however, all teachers were involved during the formulation of the Curriculum 21 regarding the amount of content that the students can reasonably be expected to master. These specific objectives are provided in module syllabi available on the respective IT tools (BE: ILIAS, ZH: VVZ, LOOOP).

Expert group assessment

The expert group found the learning outcomes and entrustable professional activities to be well described, and these fulfil the remit of this standard. Additionally, the variety of teaching approaches supports diversity as well as empowering students with different preferences.

VSF has recently integrated an online platform for programme documentation and communication, Learning Opportunities, Objectives and Outcomes Platform (LOOOP), which is to be commended. The faculty is clearly working hard to progress technological utilisation. However, during the on-site visit, it appeared to the experts that students were not clear on where to find the intended outcomes for some taught sessions, for example, and it seems that there is still work to be done with the students to consider more effective utilisation of this platform. The experts therefore recommend that Vetsuisse carry out a more thorough review of LOOOP implementation.

Whilst it is accepted that students are enabled to achieve the training objectives in accordance with the requirements of MedPA, there was some concern regarding the workload expectations of students, the risk being that students' overwhelm may reduce their assessment capability. It is accepted that the university has received excellent feedback regarding the theoretical teaching on the programme, and the practical training has been increased. The experts therefore do not suggest reducing either of these elements, but perhaps reconsider the requirement for the timing of sessions and number of assessments, and the relevance to each intended outcome. Measures could then be taken to further improve student satisfaction and well-being.

The standard is largely fulfilled.

Recommendation 1: Better inform students about the implementation of the LOOOP, so they have ready access to the course requirements and intended outcomes.

Recommendation 2: Consider the time commitment requirement for delivering the intended outcomes, and the student workload implications.

Quality standard 2.02:
Graduates of the study programme must have the following knowledge, skills and abilities:

a) They have the scientific basis required for preventive, diagnostic, therapeutic, palliative and rehabilitative measures;

b) They understand the principles and methods of scientific research;

c) They recognise health-preserving influences, can assess them and take them into account in their professional activities;

d) They are able to accompany and care for animals or livestock in cooperation and consultation with members of other professions;

e) They are able to analyse medical information and the results of research, as well as to critically evaluate their findings and implement them in their professional activities;

f) They are able to learn in interprofessional collaboration with members of other professions;

g) They know the legal basis of the Swiss animal health system and can apply this knowledge in their professional activities;

h) They are able to assess the effectiveness, appropriateness and efficiency of their services and to act accordingly;

i) They understand the relationship between the national economy and the animal health sector and its various care structures;

j) They are able to apply and continuously supplement this knowledge, skills and abilities on the job.

Description and self-assessment

a) Students have the scientific basis required for preventive, diagnostic, therapeutic, palliative and rehabilitative measures (EPA 1): *All teaching staff are instructed to teach science- and evidence-based veterinary medicine; this is also in line with the official statements and goals of the VSF and their respective home Universities. The Curriculum 2021 gave more room to the preventive, palliative and rehabilitative measures, while including new modules and blocks in those areas such as module population medicine in Bern and module prophylactic measures, Herd Health in Zurich. The basis for all measures is acquired throughout the 5.5-year curriculum.*

b) Students understand the principles and methods of scientific research (EPA 1): *The VSF implements research-based education in each discipline. At the beginning of their studies, students are instructed in scientific working with an introduction to the library and scientific literature research. Courses such as epidemiology and presenting clinical symptoms extend these basic skills. Students subsequently learn how to generate and evaluate scientific data and how to present it. Besides the mentioned introduction, students become familiar with research in elective courses such as Digitalization and Sustainability, where students work independently with various databases on topics, write a report, and present their results. Research topics are covered in several elective courses available to our students during the Bachelor and Master period. The VSF offers a track in biomedical research as one of the tracks in the master programme, in which research as a professional field of veterinary medicine is emphasized. The tracks Pathobiology and VPH also include hands-on introductory courses to research methodology at both locations. Furthermore, many institutes offer the opportunity to participate in their actual research projects, and paid student supporter positions may be offered. Clinical activity includes daily discussions of cases, including evidence-based approaches. In all Clinics and Institutes, procedures for the discussion of state-of-the-art research (seminars, journal clubs etc.) are established, enabling junior staff to develop their portfolio of research skills including critical appraisal of the literature and scientific research presentation skills. Master students receive a structured and expanded introduction into the field of research and the*

master thesis. The Master thesis is a compulsory module and lasts at least 4 months (20 ECTS); students in non-clinical tracks typically spend 6-8 months to prepare their master thesis. The topics offered for master theses reflect the variety and diversity of the research programmes of the respective institutions. Hence, the VSF curriculum requires that all students demonstrate their ability to conduct scientifically oriented work based on research question formulation, preparation of a research plan, and writing of a report that is structured, consistent in content, clearly formulated, and correctly referenced. As a recent development, students are instructed in the acceptable use of generative artificial intelligence programmes in scientific research.

c) Students recognise health-preserving influences, can assess them, and can take them into account in their professional activities (EPA 13): *Animal welfare is introduced at the beginning of the curriculum and is referred to throughout the clinical education. Indicators for the maintenance of good health are addressed in all clinically relevant subjects, particularly in herd health management, animal nutrition and in clinical settings when treating individual animals. In the first year of the Master programme, students are specifically instructed in welfare aspects of animals in animal experimentation. VET-PROFILES covers animal welfare and public health in EPA 12.*

d) Students are able to accompany and care for animals or livestock in cooperation and consultation with members of other professions (EPA 10 & 12): *Based on thorough theoretical and practical training during the Bachelor program, these skills are mainly acquired in the last 3 semesters of the curriculum, during internal clinical rotations and external practical training. Here students can apply their theoretical knowledge to actual situations in collaboration with animal caretakers, clients, and farmers, and are also exposed to Herd Health Management procedures including feed and breeding analyses performed by members of different professions. Training also includes communication to owners and non-veterinary professionals.*

e) Students are able to analyse medical information and the results of research, as well as to critically evaluate their findings and implement them in their professional activities (EPA 5, 7, 8, & 14):

Throughout the veterinary curriculum, students are sensitized to the importance of critical analysis of all available information. The basis of statistical analysis of biomedical studies is laid during the first year of the Bachelor programme. The most direct training of these aspects happens during the preparation of the Master thesis, which must be a science-based thesis. Experimental design and statistical analyses are important parts of the introductory weeks before the clinical rotations and Master thesis. Further, students discuss clinical cases with their supervisors daily in their rotations. Students in non-clinical tracks participate in all scientific activities of the respective institutes and clinics. In clinical tracks, students participate in all clinical activities and are allocated time for thinking and reading to understand their cases and to be able to present them to peers and supervisors and to inform clients.

f) Students are able to learn in professional collaboration with members of other professions (general competence 4): *The VSF sees itself as an essential player in the "One Health" concept for collaboration with human medicine, agricultural, natural, and social sciences. Knowledge in this field is a crucial resource for understanding interconnections and preserving animal and human health and well-being, preventing disease spread, and promoting a sustainable society. Students are introduced to this area and to interprofessional thinking throughout their studies. They learn the importance of cooperation with industry and practice partners to generate external funding and enhance knowledge and technology transfer, and the importance of digitalisation in research and teaching throughout their studies.*

g) Students know the legal basis of the Swiss animal health system and can apply this knowledge to their professional activities (EPA 13): *The module Veterinary Public Health (transmissible diseases and legislation) is a central module in the 1st year of the master. It is taught in a combined module by Vetsuisse lecturers along with external lecturers from the Federal Office of Public Health (FOPH), Federal Food Safety and Veterinary Office (FSVO), Institute of Virology and Immunology (IVI) and one cantonal veterinary office. The students are assessed by oral examination on current topics about the Swiss animal health system, disease control and animal protection laws.*

h) During their clinical training in the final 3 semesters of their studies, students must assess the results of their services critically and act accordingly. *Students are involved in all kinds of practical settings. They experience firsthand the importance of effective, appropriate and efficient behaviour and reasoning in the management of a successful practice, clinic or other field of work. They put theory into practice, which is very valuable and highly appreciated by students and by the VSF.*

i) Students understand the relationship between the national economy and the animal health sector and its various structures (general competence 6): *Concepts of the animal health sector and its various structures are delivered in the Veterinary Public Health module. The legal and political framework that agriculture must deal with in the context of veterinary services is primarily taught in the veterinary public health and farm animal tracks. It is fundamental for future farm animal practitioners and veterinary public health employees, as it directly influences veterinary professional development. As students have direct contact with farmers in the ambulance service, they are confronted with the national economy and animal health during their studies.*

j) Students can apply and continuously supplement their knowledge, skills and abilities on the job (general competence 7): *The academic environment at the VSF is conducive to learning (on all levels), self-learning and first and foremost, lifelong learning. Students are encouraged to recognise their own interests and learning goals as early as possible in their studies. They are invited, several times per semester, to participate in continuing education and further training courses for veterinarians by the VSF and in other university's public lectures. Students are made aware of the Swiss Society of Veterinarians (GST) that offers a wide range of knowledge and skills courses. For young professionals and early career practitioners, the GST provides an orientation guide to independence, based mainly on VET-PROFILES. For GST members, the GST offers the youngVets forum, where young veterinarians can network in the event of uncertainties and initial difficulties when starting their careers.*

To supplement the knowledge, skills and abilities acquired during the studies, the VSF, the GST and the FSVO offer continuing education courses for veterinarians like the VS-Nutztierabende, Bovinella, Animal Nutrition and additional training for the dispensing of medicinal products by veterinarians (FTVT). Alongside the many European and American College residency programs offered, veterinarians can acquire advanced skills through structured further training courses (Fachtierarzttitel (FVH), Fähigkeitsausweis (FA) and Fertigkeitszeugniss (FZ)). The courses are offered by the GST in cooperation with the specialist sections.

Expert group assessment

The expert group found all elements of this standard to be covered, as detailed below:

a) Graduates have the scientific basis required for preventive, diagnostic, therapeutic, palliative and rehabilitative measures: students cover all of these required elements across the five- and half-year programme of study, with subject matter experts teaching on the relevant subjects.

b) They understand the principles and methods of scientific research: this element is fully covered by the teaching professionals and underpinned by the faculty attitude towards research capability and development. This is most clearly evident in the wide range of master's thesis topics that students can choose from. Journal clubs and 'science lunches' also support student development in this area.

c) They recognise health-preserving influences, can assess them and take them into account in their professional activities: according to the experts, students are well prepared in this area, and VSF is utilising augmented reality to further develop student exposure to a variety of examples that they may not naturally see, such as herd health issues.

d) They are able to accompany and care for animals or livestock in cooperation and consultation with members of other professions: all students undertake a wide variety of clinical rotations, covering the variety of species they may work with once qualified. Students actively engage with farmers, for example, in order to develop their communication with stakeholders and appreciate the value that the wider veterinary community can offer with regard to animal care.

e) They are able to analyse medical information and the results of research, as well as to critically evaluate their findings and implement them in their professional activities: evidence based veterinary medicine is an embedded concept in this programme, from written assessment requirements to clinical discussions and formative case reviews whilst undertaking clinical rotations. This area is specifically developed during the master's thesis, which all students must undertake, with a topic of their choosing.

f) They are able to learn in interprofessional collaboration with members of other professions: the expert group noted that the programme offers a strong interprofessional basis, with focus on concepts such as "One Health", which requires an exchange with human physicians, biologists and agronomists in particular. Additionally, the programme promotes the expertise of those who work alongside veterinary professionals to support animal health, such as farmers and those in the public health sector. The opportunity for students to see practice and join lectures across both campuses further strengthens this element, as well as the opportunity for students to undertake electives additional to the curriculum.

g) They know the legal basis of the Swiss animal health system and can apply this knowledge in their professional activities: students are taught and assessed on the necessary elements of this requirement and have the advantage of members of the faculty actively engaging with the relevant federal offices, as well as the strong relationship between the VSF and the GST.

h) They are able to assess the effectiveness, appropriateness and efficiency of their services and to act accordingly: the experts were impressed by the level of self-reflection that has been incorporated into the programme, particularly with the opportunity for students to direct their practical training requirement based on their understanding of their current weaknesses, via the EPASS portfolio process. Case study completion and the work-based

assessment processes all contribute to this important formative development opportunity for students. VSF is encouraged to continue to use the EPASS portfolio to the fullest of its capacity, ensuring all teaching and assessment personnel offer students the same personal development opportunities, such as the spontaneous feedback which students clearly appreciated, but was not evident in all cases.

i) They understand the relationship between the national economy and the animal health sector and its various care structures: this element is well covered via specific modules within the curriculum, and students met during the onsite visit had a keen awareness of the current issues facing the veterinary sector.

j) They are able to apply and continuously supplement this knowledge, skills and abilities on the job: students are developed across the duration of the programme, from both the academic and practical perspective. During the visit, the experts observed that the students are aware of the continuing education options available to them, and the support provided by both the faculty and GST. Alongside the strong residency programme offering and more student specific offerings, such as the scientific lunches, students can be assured that they have the opportunity for lifelong learning.

The expert group determined that the extension of the programme delivery has allowed for even better integration of the elements of this standard.

The standard is completely fulfilled.

Quality standard 2.03:
The study programme supports the development of the students' social competence and personality with regard to dealing with their future professional requirements.

In particular, the programme works to ensure that students:

a) recognise and respect the limits of veterinary practice and their own strengths and weaknesses;

b) understand the ethical dimension of their professional actions and perceive their responsibility towards the individual, society and the environment;

c) preserve the dignity of patients in the course of treatment.

Description and self-assessment

In particular, the programme works to ensure that students:

a) recognise and respect the limits of veterinary practice and their own strengths and weaknesses (general competence 1): *Students are made aware of the limitations that veterinary medicine (or medicine in general) faces. They get to know the concept of first opinion*

cases (as in general practitioners) and of referral clinics like at the Veterinary animal hospitals of the VSF. Students are made aware of the importance of acknowledging every person's owns limit in knowledge and capability. At the university they get the opportunity to network and get to know specialists, and are encouraged to ask for further advice should they need it later in their career.

b) understand the ethical dimension of their professional actions and perceive their responsibility towards the individual, society and the environment (general competence 6): *Students are introduced to ethical affairs at regular intervals during their studies: i.e. euthanasia, treatment of cancer in animals, and the keeping of laboratory animals for research purposes. They are sensitized to the 3R principles (replace, reduce, refine) and they can complete the course "Ethik – Gesetzgebung – Alternativmethoden und 3R" as a preparation for working as a veterinarian or doing postgraduate education. The Vetsuisse in Bern has several elective courses about pain evaluation and treatment. At UZH there are presently two new elective courses about ethical topics concerning animals: "professional ethics in veterinary medicine" and "3R Prinzip und Ethik im Tierversuch", where students gain insights into ethical dilemmas based in veterinary medicine. During the external practical training students learn more about workplace ethics.*

c) preserve the dignity of patients in the course of treatment (general competence 1 & 5): *The VSF places emphasis on ensuring the welfare of animals used for educational and research activities. According to the Animal Protection Index (API) ranking, Switzerland is considered to have one of the most stringent animal welfare policies and legislation. The Swiss animal welfare law aims to protect "the well-being and dignity of animals" and is the only legislation that recognizes the concept of animal dignity. Animal husbandry conditions are defined in the animal welfare ordinance and followed strictly. The clinics are required to have permission from the respective Canton to perform educational activities with students.*

To counteract a shortage of patients, to avoid excessive use of the clinic's own animals and patients in regard to 3 R Principles, and to provide more availability for self-directed learning, the VSF is continuously developing and evaluating alternative models. Examples include implementing new models of animals in the skills labs of both locations, the virtual dissection tables (TableVet, Anatomage) in Bern and the interactive teaching platforms (RadioSurf, EquiSurf, Tierpathosurf).

Students learn many basic procedures on models in the Skills labs. A table with all stations in use or under construction is provided in Appendix 4. The VSF is committed to preserving the dignity of patients in the course of treatment: the students learn via online education about "fear free" handling of pets. Students are educated early in the studies about emotional wellbeing, enrichment, the reduction of fear, anxiety, and stress in pets, and improving the experience of each human and pet involved in veterinary situations. Pain management is very important, and animals must not suffer during treatment. Animal welfare must be ensured at all costs and is given priority above the wishes of animal owners. Students are made aware that all information (personal and factual data) is confidential. This also includes communication using images and social media (Facebook, Twitter, etc.). This applies to all cases and patients that students see at the veterinary hospitals.

Expert group assessment

The experts found the students on this programme clearly demonstrated their social competence and personal and professional development. Specifically:

a) They recognise and respect the limits of veterinary practice and their own strengths and weaknesses: The expert group observed that this concept is well developed throughout the duration of the programme, specifically with the inclusion of student self-reflection and identification of their own areas for development. Students are offered the opportunity to re-sit the formative practical assessments as many times as they need to in order to demonstrate their competency. This allows for a developmental approach, with perhaps less stress and pressure than more formal assessment approaches, and a strong awareness of the value in the feedback provided by the assessing clinicians.

b) They understand the ethical dimension of their professional actions and perceive their responsibility towards the individual, society and the environment: students are now required to undertake an online ethics training session, as part of their programme, promoting this concept and developing their own ethical considerations and awareness. Additionally, the concepts of the 3Rs are fully covered, with inclusion from researchers supporting this teaching.

c) They preserve the dignity of patients in the course of treatment: this developmental area also links to the professional autonomy that students progress towards in the duration of their training, specifically the ability to make difficult decisions, reflect on outcomes, and have the professional integrity to be assured of their decision in challenging circumstances. The experts point out that VSF has developed specific pain electives to assist students with their patient support considerations, as well as the research contribution mentioned above.

The standard is completely fulfilled.

Quality standard 2.04:
The study programme sets the following educational objectives:

The graduates

a) know the basic structures and functional mechanisms of the animal organism relevant to the practice of the profession, from the molecular level to the whole organism or population, in all its developmental phases and in the entire spectrum from the healthy to the diseased state;

b) have basic knowledge about the behaviour of healthy and sick animals or animals in herds as well as about their demands on husbandry, feeding and handling and know how deficiencies affect their well-being and performance;

c) master the diagnosis and treatment of common and urgent health disorders and diseases in their professional field;

d) are qualified to carry out structured examinations of an animal or an animal population, to plan further diagnostics, to interpret findings across the board and to draw up therapy and animal health concepts and prophylactic measures;

e) have a basic knowledge of genetics, animal breeding and animal production and understand the effects of hereditary characteristics and production methods on animal welfare and performance;

f) are familiar with the legal basis and the state's tasks in the veterinary field, in particular with the concepts of monitoring and combating animal diseases, including diseases transmissible between humans and animals, with the control of food of animal origin and with the principles of animal welfare;

g) are capable of handling remedies in a professional, environmentally sound and economic manner;

h) are able to summarise and communicate the findings and their interpretation;

i) respect the dignity of creatures, are aware of the areas of tension between the various demands of animals, humans, society and the environment and are willing and able to apply their knowledge responsibly;

j) have adequate knowledge of methods and therapeutic approaches of complementary medicine.

Description and self-assessment

The graduates

a) know the basic structures and functional mechanisms of the animal organism relevant to the practice of the profession, from the molecular level to the whole organism or population, in all its developmental phases and in the entire spectrum from the healthy to the diseased state (EPA 1): *Basic natural and veterinary science (including physics, chemistry, statistics, anatomy, physiology and biochemistry) are introduced at the start of undergraduate education. In the organ-centered modules of year two and three of the Bachelor course, further basics are learned in connection with pathology, pharmacology, infectiology and clinical aspects. This knowledge is assessed by examinations throughout the bachelor period.*

b) have basic knowledge about the behaviour of healthy and sick animals, animals in herds, and their demands on husbandry, feeding and handling, and know how deficiencies affect their well-being and performance (EPA 3 & 4): *Building on the foundation of the mechanisms with health and disease in individual animals, students begin to deal with herd health and heard health medicine during the master's programme. Preventive veterinary medicine is one of the core topics of research at the VSF and consequently in the teaching of its students. Undergraduate students have basic lectures in animal husbandry, animal welfare, genetics, and animal feeding from the beginning of their studies. Basics in theory are followed by practical demonstrations and excursions courses i.e. in animal feeding and animal husbandry during further modules in the master. All the topics, in particular animal*

welfare, get more and more applied during rotations through the different clinics. Students receive detailed training in clinical care and observation from the veterinary academic staff.

c) master the diagnosis and treatment of common and urgent health disorders and diseases in their professional field (EPA 2-9): *Based on profound clinical knowledge acquired during the first 4 years of the curriculum, students actively participate in all aspects of clinical veterinary medicine; this includes anamnesis, diagnosis, and treatment choice decisions across all species. Students are also involved in the labelling and dispensing process. Furthermore, the VSF provides necropsy services for all species, including zoo and wild animals, enabling comprehensive post-mortem examinations and diagnostic investigations. Students receive access as part of their placement in the respective clinics and institutes. During these rotations, they acquire the most essential skills for each case and gain insights into a wide range of different diseases and treatments. The objective is to implement theoretical knowledge into practical application, reinforcing and deepening their understanding through direct contact/use. All the VSF clinics offer emergency services that are integrated in the intra-mural rotations. Additionally, during the extra-mural training students get involved in the daily business of private praxis/clinics with the possibility of first line cases presenting and emergency situations, including euthanasia.*

d) are qualified to carry out structured examinations of an animal or an animal population, to plan further diagnostics, to interpret findings across the board and to draw up therapy and animal health concepts and prophylactic measures (EPA 4-10): *Structured examination procedures are already part of the propaedeutics teaching in years 2 and 3 of the Bachelor course. In the module “chief complaints” in the first year of the master period, students learn to apply algorithms to conduct examinations of single animals and animal populations. This module is a precondition for the clinical activities in the rotations in the last three semesters of study. Furthermore, the VSF uses an electronic portfolio to collect observational work-based assessments; this includes methods which are mainly used to observe, assess and improve student performance in patient care settings during their clinical rotations in the last 3 semesters of study. Students perform a collection of different formative dynamic tests, including the mini-CEX, DOPS or a case presentation, so that students will be directly observed more frequently by a supervising clinician, usually guided by a structured checklist or rubric. Therefore, students receive continuous feedback focused on learner growth and change that is collected in their e-portfolio EPASS.*

e) have a basic knowledge of genetics, animal breeding and animal production and understand the effects of hereditary characteristics and production methods on animal welfare and performance (EPA 1 & 13): *Genetics, animal welfare, animal breeding and production are introduced from the first year of the bachelor period and assessed in a summative examination. Topics of hereditary disposition and production methods are further discussed in other core modules (i.e. food safety, organ-system reproduction, mammary gland, prophylactic measures, herd health, swine medicine etc) and in more depth in certain tracks of the Master's programme, such as Veterinary Public Health and Farm Animals, for students interested in the area of food safety.*

f) are familiar with the legal basis and the state's tasks in the veterinary field, in particular with monitoring and combating animal diseases including diseases transmissible between humans and animals, with the control of food of animal origin, and with the principles of animal welfare (EPA 10 & 13): *Veterinary public health encompasses food safety as well as clinical epidemiology. Anthropozoonoses and population statistics are first presented in parasitology and in epidemiology in the bachelor period, the two modules of food safety and epidemiology of infectious diseases follow in year three and four of the training.*

Examinations are performed at the end of the modules. Further, the students are constantly exposed to the One Health Concept in which veterinary medicine plays a crucial role (e.g., in respect to food hygiene, zoonotic diseases, antibiotic resistance in human and veterinary medicine, biosafety etc.) throughout their studies. They are introduced to infectious diseases brought into Switzerland through travelling abroad with pets. Students are introduced to applied and interprofessional thinking in monitoring and combating animal diseases in the 1st year of the Master's programme, with instructors from the Federal Food Safety and Veterinary Office (FSVO) and the cantonal veterinary offices, as well in issues of animal welfare law and veterinary legal knowledge. In the clinical context students are introduced to infection prevention and control in veterinary practices before they start the intra-mural training in the clinics.

g) are capable of handling remedies in a professional, environmentally sound and economic manner (EPA 10): *Based on profound theoretical training during the Bachelor programme, students actively participate in treatment choice decisions across all species and are involved in the labelling and dispensing process, which involves economic, ecological, and social aspects. This is specifically performed during the clinical rotations in the last 3 semesters of the curriculum. Further, the students are introduced to current hospital hygiene strategies and are thoroughly educated around hygiene and prudent antibiotic use with regards to MDR bacteria.*

h) are able to summarise and communicate findings and their interpretation (EPA 11 & 12): *Communication training takes place during the Bachelor and Master programmes. Communication of research findings, including their interpretation, is a part of the Master thesis. As with other practical aspects of veterinary work, students develop the competence during clinical training to summarise and communicate findings as part of practical training. The final assessment takes place at the federal admission examination, which is a structured examination separated into two parts (clinical skills and clinical knowledge). Students also learn the basics of communication, particularly when communicating difficult diagnoses, prognoses and other serious situations in a clinical context.*

i) respect the dignity of creatures, are aware of the areas of tension between the various demands of animals, humans, society, and the environment, and are willing and able to apply their knowledge responsibly (EPA 13): *Vetsuisse clinicians, teaching staff and researchers are aware of their role model function for lifelong learning and can demonstrate its necessity in direct collaboration with their students. They support students in both routine and extreme emotional situations during clinical and scientific work. Topics relating to the various requirements are discussed as part of the programme.*

j) have adequate knowledge of methods and therapeutic approaches of complementary medicine (EPA10): *In the fourth year of training, students learn about the concepts of complementary medicine in the context of evidence-based medicine. They learn about the well-founded treatment options and typical indications in some fields of complementary medicine (acupuncture, homeopathy, phytotherapy, osteopathy), and the limitations of their application in veterinary medicine. Electives are offered in this discipline.*

Expert group assessment

a) Graduates know the basic structures and functional mechanisms of the animal organism relevant to the practice of the profession, from the molecular level to the whole organism or population, in all its developmental phases and in the entire spectrum from the

healthy to the diseased state: according to the experts all elements of the underpinning theory and knowledge required for veterinarians are effectively covered within this programme, enabling students to develop concepts from the cellular level upwards.

b) They have basic knowledge about the behaviour of healthy and sick animals or animals in herds as well as about their demands on husbandry, feeding and handling and know how deficiencies affect their well-being and performance: animal husbandry is embedded from the beginning of the programme, with students supported via practical and augmented reality training sessions.

c) They master the diagnosis and treatment of common and urgent health disorders and diseases in their professional field: during the visit, the experts received confirmation that the students are progressively trained regarding diagnostic and treatment capability beginning in the bachelor programme and via clinical rotations and extra-mural placements. During the training programme, students are undertaking night shifts and working in the ICU, or another area specific to their training requirements, encouraging diagnostic autonomy, whilst having the support of experienced clinicians to assist them as required.

d) They are qualified to carry out structured examinations of an animal or an animal population, to plan further diagnostics, to interpret findings across the board and to draw up therapy and animal health concepts and prophylactic measures: students are empowered to take responsibility for individual cases and discuss their planned care and diagnostic approaches with specific case scenarios. Additionally, the EPASS portfolio system enables students to document their progress, and processes followed, with feedback provided by the supporting clinicians. The experts were impressed by the variety of clinical examination focused assessments, such as mini CEXs and presentations, enabling students to develop their skills in this important area.

e) They have a basic knowledge of genetics, animal breeding and animal production and understand the effects of hereditary characteristics and production methods on animal welfare and performance: all students are provided with the necessary level of detail required to support animals in these requirements, with the option to delve further into the nuances of these areas with the elective track options, particularly the Farm Animal or Veterinary Public Health options.

f) They are familiar with the legal basis and the state's tasks in the veterinary field, in particular with the concepts of monitoring and combating animal diseases, including diseases transmissible between humans and animals, with the control of food of animal origin and with the principles of animal welfare: the experts note that this important aspect of veterinary training is covered from the outset of the programme, with the One Health consideration embedded as on ongoing concept. This area is particularly well supported by the expertise available within the teaching faculty, exposing students to experts within this field.

g) They are capable of handling remedies in a professional, environmentally sound and economic manner: students are taught and developed in these concepts with due regard to contemporary issues and concerns, such as prudent use of antibiotics. Equally, this practical component is a core element of the veterinary care provided during the clinical rotations, and students are required to make sound, and evidence-based, decisions on their proposed strategies, discussed in case discussions and presentations.

h) They are able to summarise and communicate the findings and their interpretation: the students met with on campus have told they receive training on completion of hospitalisation records, although it was noted that the documentary aspect of effective communication could perhaps be introduced at an earlier point in the programme.

i) They respect the dignity of creatures, are aware of the areas of tension between the various demands of animals, humans, society and the environment and are willing and able to apply their knowledge responsibly: due to the sheer volume of cases that students are exposed to, there is always going to be an opportunity to cover this challenging aspect of veterinary training, and the developmental approach again enabled the expert group to understand the feedback and progression opportunities that students receive.

j) They have adequate knowledge of methods and therapeutic concepts of complementary medicine: students are trained in this aspect in a satisfactory manner. In addition, an optional elective is provided, should they wish to develop their knowledge and skills to a more exert level. The expert group considered that the ease of access to this variety of therapeutic approaches would allow students to be aware of the positive aspects, as well as the limitations, of this growing area of veterinary medicine.

The expert group was completely assured that this programme will effectively prepare students for their future roles in a variety of professions in the veterinary field.

The standard is completely fulfilled.

Quality standard 2.05:
The study programme is regularly reviewed to determine how, in view of new challenges and conditions in the professional field, the general objectives according to MedPA are implemented and the necessary requirements for continuing education are met.

Description and self-assessment

The current curriculum is the result of the 3rd curriculum reform since the foundation of the VSF in 2006. The VSF has the goal to constantly improve the programme. This is also reflected in the efforts made to receive European recognition of the programme. The first ESEVT visitation took place in November 2007, followed by a second in September 2010. The last ESEVT visitation took place in October 2017 and was conducted in collaboration with the visitation of the Swiss Agency for Accreditation and Quality Assurance (AAQ). The process for renewal of the EAEVE/ESEVT accreditation is currently ongoing.

Learning outcomes and content are assessed across the curriculum through curriculum mapping and regular module evaluation or quality talks with students. Performance in student assessments is matched to programme objectives. The review is presented to the Curriculum Committee or the Vice Dean Teaching and where necessary, provided as feedback to teachers.

The faculty regularly analyses the outcomes of all examinations. Results are discussed in the Curriculum Committee, feedback is provided to the teaching staff, and measures are decided within the Curriculum Committee. The measures are then directly integrated into the continuous development of the curriculum. Extra-mural trainings are evaluated through an external process. In addition, the FOPH has commissioned the Institute for Medical Education (IML, Bern medical faculty) to monitor the quality of the federal license exam. The results of the assessment of the examination are communicated by the IML to the Examination Committee. The Examination Committee consists of representatives of the VSF Bern and Zurich and is headed by an expert

from outside of the faculty (who currently is also GST president). All members of this commission are appointed by the Federal Council, each for 4 years.

The Federal Statistical Office (FSO) regularly performs outcome studies which include university graduates. These surveys are supplemented by specific questions from the Universities. Furthermore, the VSF closely collaborates with the GST, which performed a survey on the optimization of veterinary training and the working situation for veterinary practitioners in Switzerland. Employment prospects are visible on the website of the GST.

Employment destinations of graduated students are tracked by the registration of students in the MedReg register of medical professions. The FOPH evaluates data from the register on an annual basis.

Both local faculties run nationally and internationally accredited continuing education programmes (Swiss Veterinarians Association, European and American Colleges of different specializations); overall, the VSF offers 27 European or American residency programmes in nearly all the fields recognized by the EBVS/ABVS.

Expert group assessment

There is a stringent and robust approach to ongoing curriculum development, demonstrated via the work of the Curriculum Committee and the introduction of the updated syllabus. The experts noted that the process is ongoing and cyclical, with feedback mechanisms in place.

The programme development includes wider changes that are relevant to veterinary training, such as the utilisation of generative artificial intelligence, which is being incorporated into the training process. State funding is also sought and provided to assist with the development opportunities, as well as the insight provided by research conducted by university personnel.

Continuing education is provided, and students were able to discuss the opportunities available to them, particularly from the GST, which clearly has a collaborative relationship with the faculty. During the visit, the experts heard many examples relating to the continuing education offering, including access to this at the faculty. The teaching personnel include a wide variety of expertise to support in a diverse number of specialisations, including Diplomates of nearly all European and/or American Colleges, reflective of the intention of the faculty to be recognised globally and produce internationally capable graduates.

The experts agreed that the university demonstrates a proactive attitude towards ongoing programme developments, and fully considers the national, international, and current contexts.

The standard is completely fulfilled.

Quality standard 2.06:
The consideration of all guidelines valid in Switzerland on the professional qualification of graduates in the study programme is documented.

Description and self-assessment

The Vetsuisse Curriculum is based on VET-PROFILES (according to the Prüfungsverordnung MedBG and the Prüfungsformenverordnung) which builds the legal framework for the learning outcomes. The learning outcomes conform to the requirements of the MedPA in that students who successfully complete the Master programme are prepared to sit the federal licensing examination. The Vetsuisse Curriculum exceeds the minimum hours of training requirement, and the minimum requirements for recognition of the Swiss diploma throughout the EU.

The Vetsuisse Curriculum is accredited by the EAEVE which specifically considers all EU requirements, such as Directive 2005/36/EC of the EU Parliament and of the EU Council and Article 4, paragraph 2. The curriculum covers all clinical Day -1 Competences (outlined in ESEVT SOP 2019; Annex 2).

Swiss federal diplomas in veterinary medicine are recognised as equivalent in the EU member states. This allows practicing the profession independently in an EU country. The process for the renewal of the EAEVE accreditation is ongoing; the respective self-evaluation report has been submitted and the respective site visit will take place in early October 2024. We expect the decision on renewal of the accreditation by the EAEVE/ESEVT in November 2024.

Other requirements met by in the study programme are linked at the VSF website.

The Vetsuisse study regulations defining the curriculum were put in place based on federal legislation (MedPA), the “Interkantonales Konkordat” defining Vetsuisse and university regulations of the respective Cantons.

A maximum number of 700 hours (years 1-4) of classroom teaching, group sessions and practicals per year was pre-defined when implementing the present curriculum. A weekly volume of 25 hours lecturing should not be exceeded.

In the Bachelor period lectures and corresponding practical courses or group sessions are planned, with time dedicated to the preparation of the practicals / group sessions. The introduction to clinical work in the 2nd year is arranged the same way. First, theory is presented in the propaedeutics lectures, the students then have the practical course where they apply the theory under guidance of clinicians. During the final clinical rotations, students participate in all clinical activities and spend time thinking and reading to understand their cases and be able to present them to peers, supervisors, and to inform clients.

Table 2.06.1. Curriculum hours taken by each student

Bern								
Subjects	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H
Basic subjects								
Medical physics	27	27	4	0	0	0	0	58
Chemistry (inorganic and organic sections)	42	0	0	0	0	0	0	42
Animal biology, zoology and cell biology	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Feed plant biology and toxic plants	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Biomedical statistics	4	1	8	0	0	0	0	13
Basic Sciences								
Anatomy, histology and embryology	194	2	4	58	152	0	0	410
Physiology	80	0	0	0	0	0	0	80
Biochemistry	58	0	0	0	0	0	0	58
General and molecular genetics	32	2	0	0	0	0	0	34
Pharmacology, pharmacy and pharmacotherapy	41	0	10	0	0	0	0	51
Pathology	42	3	5	0	2	0	0	52
Toxicology	10	0	0	0	0	0	0	10
Parasitology	61	6	0	16	0	0	0	83
Microbiology	96	0	12	12	0	0	0	120
Immunology	45	6	0	0	4	0	0	55
Epidemiology	11	13	6	0	0	0	0	30
Information literacy and data management	6	6	6	0	0	0	0	18
Professional ethics and communication	28	57	0	0	0	0	0	85
Animal health economics and practice management	18	12	0	0	0	0	0	30
Animal ethology	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	2
Animal welfare	52	2	0	0	0	0	0	54
Animal nutrition	56	3	0	0	0	0	0	59
Clinical Sciences								
Obstetrics, reproduction and reproductive disorders	58	5	0	0	0	2	0	65
Diagnostic pathology	44	2	4	3	11	0	0	64
Medicine	229	149	125	2	0	7	0	512
Surgery	79	2	2	0	0	8	0	91
Anesthesiology	31	0	0	4	0	0	0	35
Clinical practical training in common animal species	10	9	0	4	0	7	0	30
Preventive medicine	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	2
Diagnostic imaging	34	8	28	14	0	0	0	84
Therapy in common animal species	8	0	0	0	0	0	0	8
Propaedeutics of common animal species	64	1	73	0	2	56	0	196
Animal Production								
Animal Production, including breeding, husbandry and economics	28	1	0	0	0	0	0	29
Herd health management	75	10	3	0	0	0	0	88
Food Safety and Quality, Veterinary Public Health and One Health Concept								
Veterinary legislation including official controls and regulatory veterinary services, forensic veterinary medicine and certification	22	0	0	0	0	0	0	22
Control of food, feed and animal by-products	3	0	0	0	0	0	0	3
Zoonoses	10	5	0	0	0	0	0	15
Food hygiene and food microbiology	8	0	0	0	0	0	0	8
Food technology	6	0	0	0	0	0	4**	6
TOTALS	1616	332	290	113	171	80	0	2602

*A: lectures; B: seminars; C: supervised self-learning; D: laboratory and desk-based work, E: non-clinical animal work; F: clinical animal work; G: *Test, **Excursion, ***Demonstration; H: total*

Zurich								
Subjects	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H
Basic subjects								
Medical physics	43	23	27	15	0	0	0	108
Chemistry (inorganic and organic sections)	58	0	0	15	0	0	0	73
Animal biology, zoology and cell biology	33	0	0	0	0	0	0	33
Feed plant biology and toxic plants	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Biomedical statistics	6	0	0	0	0	0	0	6
Basic Sciences								
Anatomy, histology and embryology	156	1		55	112		5*	329
Physiology	160	1		25	1		1***	188
Biochemistry	112	4	2					118
General and molecular genetics	20							20
Pharmacology, pharmacy and pharmacotherapy	60							60
Pathology	115			21	11			147
Toxicology	14							14
Parasitology	58			11	2			71
Microbiology	104	17		4				125
Immunology	35	8						43
Epidemiology	40	4		5				49
Information literacy and data management	10	15	2					27
Professional ethics and communication	25	23	1		11	10		70
Animal health economics and practice management	17	8				1	2**	28
Animal ethology	2							2
Animal welfare	50							50
Animal nutrition	57				3			60
Clinical Sciences								
Obstetrics, reproduction and reproductive disorders	80		2		5	20	2**	109
Diagnostic pathology	52	9	12	21	1		2*	97
Medicine	215	15	10			32		272
Surgery	109				13	15		137
Anesthesiology	31		4			2		37
Clinical practical training in common animal species	3	5				29		37
Preventive medicine	25							25
Diagnostic imaging	36	3	2					41
Therapy in common animal species	9	18	122					149
Propaedeutics of common animal species	33		1	3	7	41		85
Animal Production								
Animal Production, including breeding, husbandry and economics	43				3		1**	47
Herd health management	34	2	2	18			1**	57
Food Safety and Quality, Veterinary Public Health and One Health Concept								
Veterinary legislation including official controls and regulatory veterinary services, forensic veterinary medicine and certification	22							22
Control of food, feed and animal by-products	3							3
Zoonoses	10	5						15
Food hygiene and food microbiology	8							8
Food technology	6						4**	10
TOTALS	1894	161	187	193	169	150	18	2772

*A: lectures; B: seminars; C: supervised self-learning; D: laboratory and desk-based work, E: non-clinical animal work; F: clinical animal work; G: *Test, **Excursion, ***Demonstration; H: total*

Table 2.06.2. Curriculum hours in each academic year taken by each student

Bern										
Academic years*		Core/Track	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H
Year 1 (Semester 1+2)		Core	484	42	49	19	86	10	0	690
Year 2 (Semester 3+4)		Core	475	50	95	28	38	39	0	725
Year 3 (Semester 5+6)		Core	504	61	31	46	47	29	0	718
Year 4 (Semester 7+8)		Core	178	163	120	20	0	0	0	481
Year 4 (Semester 8)	Horse	Track	97	63	1	4	2	55	0	222
	Small animals	Track	88	28	19	0	0	32	0	167
	Farm animals	Track	119	33	1	0	0	16	0	169
	VPH	Track	57	36	23	70	11	0	3	200
	Pathobiology	Track	0	0	9	86	168	0	0	263
	Biomedical Research	Track	0	0	53	86	115	0	0	254
Year 5-5.5 (Semester 9-11)	Master Thesis	Core	9	14	2	0	0	2	573	600
Year 5-5.5 (Semester 9-11)	External practical training	Core	0	0	0	0	0	0	450	450
Year 5-5.5 (Rotation time)	Rotation intra-mural									
	Horse	Track		200	315		223	642		1380
	Small animals	Track		200	315		193	752		1460
	Farm animals	Track		200	320		195	746		1461
	VPH	Track		155	230		165	450	400	1400
	Pathobiology	Track		155	230		165	450	400	1400
	Biomedical Research	Track		155	230		165	450	400	1400
TOTAL 1-11 semester	Horse		1747	593	613	117	396	777	1023	5266
	Small animals		1738	558	631	113	364	864	1023	5291
	Farm animals		1769	563	618	113	366	842	1023	5294
	VPH		1707	521	550	183	347	530	1426	5264
	Pathobiology		1641	471	534	199	504	528	400	5327
	Biomedical Research		1650	485	580	199	451	530	1423	5318

*A: lectures; B: seminars; C: supervised self-learning; D: laboratory and desk-based work, E: non-clinical animal work; F: clinical animal work; G: *Test, **Excursion, ***Demonstration, ****work on Master Thesis, *****external training; H: total*

Zurich											
Academic years*		Core/Track	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	
Year 1 (Semester 1+2)		Core	469	26	29	78	66	0	3	671	***
Year 2 (Semester 3+4)		Core	579	23	2	22	64	29	3	722	*
Year 3 (Semester 5+6)		Core	503	21	11	58	30	34	10	667	**
Year 4 (Semester 7+8)		Core	309	61	133	18	9	87	1	618	*
Year 4 (Semester 8)	Horse	Track	70	4	0	6	5	72	0	157	
	Small animals	Track	67	29	11	42	0	43	0	192	
	Farm animals	Track	95	4	0	17	11	70	0	197	
	VPH	Track	57	36	23	70	11	0	3	200	**
	Pathobiology	Track	57	36	23	70	11	0	3	200	**
	Biomedical Research	Track	53	20	21	76	33	0	1	204	***
Year 5 (Semester 9)	Introduction	Core	34	30	12	17	0	0	2	95	*
Year 5-5.5 (Semester 9-11)	Master Thesis	Core	10	13	0	0	0	0	577	600	****
Year 5-5.5 (Semester 9-11)	External practical training	Core	3	4	0	0	0	0	497	504	*****
Year 5-5.5 (Rotation time)	Rotation intra-mural										
	Horse	Core/Track					168	1344		1512	
	Small animals	Core/Track					168	1344		1512	
	Farm animals	Core/Track					168	1344		1512	
	VPH	Core/Track					840	672		1512	
	Pathobiology	Core/Track					840	672		1512	
	Biomedical Research	Core/Track				672	168	672		1512	
TOTAL 1-11 semester	Horse		1977	182	187	199	342	1566	1093	5546	
	Small animals		1974	207	198	235	337	1537	1093	5581	
	Farm animals		2002	182	187	210	348	1564	1093	5586	
	VPH		1964	214	210	263	1020	822	1096	5589	
	Pathobiology		1964	214	210	263	1020	822	1096	5589	
	Biomedical Research		1960	198	208	941	370	822	1094	5593	

*A: lectures; B: seminars; C: supervised self-learning; D: laboratory and desk-based work, E: non-clinical animal work; F: clinical animal work; G: *Test, **Excursion, ***Demonstration, ****work on Master Thesis, *****external training; H: total*

External practical training (EPT) *is incorporated in* ***Bern*** *into the practical skills modules from 2nd to the 4th year with protected time scheduled in each semester. Students are allocated to a place of their choice. Students in* ***Zurich*** *must get experience in veterinary clinics during the 1st year. These small series of EPTs are introduced to create understanding of veterinary clinical practice prior to the main EPTs in the final year. Learning outcomes for these early EPTs are largely in the affective domain of communication, workplace ethics, and teamwork. Moreover, the VSF requires that students of the farm animal track undertake an EPT at an agricultural training placement. Here they become familiar with husbandry and handling of farm animals as well as and general workflows in this field. During the last three semesters (9-11), students complete 12-weeks EPT. The VSF imposes no specific rules on these EPTs; most students chose EPTs in clinical disciplines. The emphasis is on clinical skills such as client communication, history taking, record keeping, clinical examination and procedures. This provides access to clinical material that is seldom seen in the VSF teaching hospitals. Students can divide the 12 weeks (60 working days) into shorter EPTs, but each one must have a minimum of 20 working days. For EPTs in private clinics, students have access to the listed contractually agreed practical placements.*

Table 2.06.3. Curriculum days of External Practical Training (EPT) for each student

Fields of Practice	Minimum duration (weeks)	Year of programme
Production animals (pre-clinical) *	BE: 3/ ZH: 2	1 to 3
Production animals / Companion animals (clinical)	BE: 2 / ZH 2 days	2 to 4
Extra-mural training in any area of veterinary medicine	12	5
FSQ & VPH**	10	4+5

**Obligatory for students choosing the farm animal track, **for students choosing the VPH track*

EPT providers in Switzerland, such as private primary healthcare clinics, rural practices, private specialty clinics, have a contractual arrangement with the VSF for supervision of students. One contract is between the EPT provider and the VSF, the other between each individual student and the respective EPT provider. The contracts regulate expectations of the placement, the obligations of both parties with respect to health and safety, indemnity, and expected student behavior/performance. At each EPT provider, a responsible practitioner is nominated as an extramural supervisor who assesses the student; they act as the student's mentor and have a minimum of 5 years professional experience in the field, and are responsible for negotiating the goals and expectations of both parties. To empower supervisors in EPT, the VSF in cooperation with the GST offers a specific CPD activity regarding goal, expectation and student assessment during an EPT.

Expert group assessment

The expert group found the legal requirements to be fully embedded within the programme and intended outcomes, with all teaching hours demonstrating this compliance. Whilst there is a minor discrepancy in hours across the two campuses, this does not negatively impact students, or their outcomes, and is still in line with the national and international requirements for veterinary training.

Practical training is effectively covered with both clinical rotations within the campus veterinary settings, and extra-mural placements.

The programme is mapped to the international requirements it is attempting to meet, i.e., EAEVE, and students are undertaking training in a safe and effective way in compliance with these guidelines and Swiss legislation.

The standard is completely fulfilled.

Quality standard 2.07:
The form of assessment of the students' performance is adapted to the learning objectives.

Description and self-assessment

General student's assessment strategy

Students are regularly assessed according to the Bologna based ECTS system (Study regulations) and local university regulations. Strategic processes regarding assessment, such as changes of examination formats, are developed in close cooperation between the Curriculum Committee and the student affairs offices. The local student affairs offices are responsible for conducting the assessment process (information to teaching staff and students, exam administration and evaluation, etc). VET-PROFILES serves as the basis for the selection of assessment methods. Learning outcomes are mapped to the taxonomy and permit further refinement of the modules and the selection of appropriate assessments of skills. The VSF includes different types of assessments depending on the competencies and levels of training to be tested, e.g. written tests of cognitive achievement, oral examinations, observational methods and performance examinations for assessments of practical clinical skills. For all exams, a blueprint defines and outlines the sampling plan for the subcategories and subclassifications of module content and the cognitive level to be achieved. Examinations during the Bachelor and Master course follow the topics of the modules. They take place each semester after completion of the respective module.

Methodologies for assessment

Written examinations *are mainly used for testing theoretical knowledge and processes of diagnostic reasoning. The format is computer-based in the languages predetermined by the respective university (Bern: German and French; Zurich: German). Question types include type A, Kprim, open-ended short-answer, selected-response, and key-feature questions. The database, software and hardware for the exams is provided by IQuL following the quality standards according to Swiss legislation (registered at the data collections database of the Canton of Bern). Other modules are assessed by* ***oral examination*** *with two examiners and an external co-examiner using an interview format probing the student's depth of knowledge, understanding and decision-making process.*

Different ***performance tests*** *are used to elicit students in action while they are performing practical (actual or simulated) tasks. Carried out formatively, they provide opportunities for feedback and coaching, for example during clinical skills lab. They are also provided in a summative format, for example when observing students performing clinical task that involve interaction with animals or animal owners.*

Bern: *A summative objective structured pre-clinical examination (OSPE) takes place at the end of the 3rd year and includes learning objectives of the practical modules of the Bachelor course, e.g. performing a physical examination and common clinical procedures, hands-on manipulation of clinical instruments and equipment, handling and restraint of animals, communication and interpersonal skills with clients.*

Zurich: *Pre-clinical practical skills are examined at the end of the 3rd year of study. The examination is a practical and oral examination that covers modules of the 2nd and 3rd year of studies (propedeutics of the organ blocks, module practical propaedeutics where the stations of the skills Lab are also included).*

Furthermore, the VSF uses ***observational work-based assessment (WBA)*** *methods which are mainly used to observe, assess, and improve student performance in patient care settings during their clinical rotations in the last 3 semesters of study. Students perform a collection of different formative dynamic tests, including the mini-clinical exams (mini-CEX), direct observation of procedural skills (DOPS) or a case presentation, so that students will be directly observed more frequently by a supervising clinician, usually guided by a structured checklist or rubric. Students therefore receive continuous feedback focused on learner growth and change collected in their e-portfolio (EPASS). Supervising staff includes clinical technicians, clinicians following a residency programme and senior assistants who are recorded as examiners in the EPASS system. Furthermore, during the external practical training in the 5th year, observational work-based assessments are conducted formatively by the responsible external supervisors, e.g. feedback on communication skills, teamwork, dealing with pressure, work ethics, positive mental attitude, flexibility, time management, self-confidence, and dealing with criticism.*

Clinical simulation *encounters using standardized clients is implemented from the 2nd to the 4th year to evaluate students' procedural skills, critical thinking and responses to changing circumstances, behaviour under stress, and teamwork. After performing the simulated encounters, students are evaluated by observing peers, facilitators, and the simulating clients guided by a checklist.*

Since 2024, the ***Federal Licensing Examination*** *is composed of two parts, a MCQ exam for testing clinical knowledge and an objective structured clinical examination (OSCE) with the use of standardized clients and sophisticated mannequins for testing practical veterinary skills. The format of the licensing examination is very similar to the format used in Swiss Federal Licensing Examination in human medicine. The procedures are the same and conducted at the same time in Bern and Zurich: In the MCQ exam, all candidates are presented with the same questions and for the OSCE exam all students have to manage the same tasks and assessment criteria. The pass mark is set by the Examination Committee. The legal basis and the other relevant principles for the federal examination in veterinary medicine are set out in the guidelines of the Medical Professions Commission (MEBEKO). The requirements are adapted annually and published on the website of the FOPH.*

The purpose of the federal examination is to determine whether candidates have the specialist knowledge, skills, and abilities as well as the behavioural and social skills required to practise the relevant medical profession. The general blueprint - weighted table of contents of the entire examination - is based on the VET-PROFILES catalogue of learning objectives.

The federal examination in veterinary medicine is passed if both individual examinations (MCQ and OSCE individual examination) are passed. No marks are awarded for either the MCQ or OSCE individual examinations. The federal examination is passed or failed. Compensation between the two individual examinations is not possible.

The licensing examination is supervised by the Federal Examination Committee and is coordinated and organized by the VSF in close collaboration with the Institute of Medical Education (IML, UniBE) that is responsible for the analysis of results according to the Medical Profession Act (MedPA), the Prüfungsverordnung MedBG and the Prüfungsformenverordnung.

Expert group assessment

A wide variety of assessment methodologies are used to align the most appropriate assessment type to the intended learning outcome, whilst also factoring the level of study at which the assessment sits. During the on-site visit, the experts were told that the lecturers can suggest proposed assessment approaches, if they feel that a better approach can be employed, which is then reviewed by the Curriculum Committee, again demonstrating the developmental mindset evident in the faculty. There are effective quality assurance processes in place to ensure the chosen assessment meets the requirements of the programme.

Nonetheless, students did report to the experts that they felt a level of assessment overwhelm during clinical rotations; the teaching personnel described these work-based assessments as a developmental aspect of clinical training, with students able to re-take the assessment as many times as necessary to pass the mandatory elements. It is unclear whether students fully appreciate this attitude. The experts, therefore, suggest that this is better communicated from the outset, to ease students' concern regarding the volume of assessments. The same small communication problem seems to affect the formative assessment strategy, which does not appear to be as clear to students as is likely intended; if these are seen as additional assessments, without an appreciation of the development opportunity, this is likely contributing to the feelings of overwhelm. Therefore, whilst the experts appreciate the intentions of both the formative and the practical assessment strategies, they recommend that the faculty considers how this is communicated and applied, so students are able to appreciate the advantages this can offer, as opposed to merely viewing it as too many assessments.

Of particular note, the experts were impressed with the introduction of the EPASS e-portfolio system and felt that this clearly aligned with individual development and progress, whilst also ensuring that the necessary skills are assessed. This offers a clear example of the university ensuring that the most appropriate methodology is used for student assessment. Additionally, it was clear to the experts that external experts are utilised, as required, to ensure those with the specific expertise and experience undertake the relevant assessments.

The standard is largely fulfilled.

Recommendation 3: Consider the assessment load and the communication of the formative assessments to students.

Quality standard 2.08:
The admission requirements and the conditions for obtaining diplomas are regulated and published.

Description and self-assessment

Admission to veterinary medicine *is defined in the regulations for admittance at the university level Bern and Zurich. Due to the high number of applications of students who want to study veterinary medicine (approx. 550-600 per year) the Universities of Bern and Zurich enforced a* ***numerus clausus system*** *which allows only a predefined number of students to initiate their studies. These numbers are currently set to 82 new students in the first year of the curriculum in Bern, and 90 in Zurich. This corresponds to the capacity for high quality clinical training at the VSF. Admission procedures and requirements for both domestic and international students are overseen by the local admissions offices of the respective home universities, working closely together with the corresponding local student affairs offices. The VSF provides links to the official university procedures and requirements for locations in (Bern/Zurich). Both websites offer information regarding tuition fees, the academic calendar, and more. The VSF advertises detailed information about its programme and links to admissions procedures on the web pages of both locations (Bern/Zurich) and the respective university homepages Bern and Zurich. In Zurich the study programmes are also clearly described in the course catalogue. In addition, swissuniversities publishes all study programmes offered in Switzerland by all Swiss Universities: studyprogrammes.ch. Study programmes on all levels of veterinary medicine are listed (BA, MA, PhD).*

Students have to sign in for the ***aptitude test*** *at the swissuniversities-website until February 15 of the respective year. The aptitude test is developed and organised by an institute at the University of Fribourg on behalf of swissuniversities. Therefore, there is no specific selection committee, and the result of the aptitude test is the only criteria employed for the selection of students. The test is offered in German, French and Italian at 8 different locations across Switzerland on a single day in early July of the respective year. The aptitude test is identical for students who apply for human medicine, dentistry or veterinary medicine, but the results are separately evaluated within these three cohorts. Hence, the pass level for students in veterinary medicine may differ slightly from the level required to study human medicine or dentistry. A positive test result is communicated in August and is valid for one year. Students who fail the test can reapply the year after. The aptitude test is not a knowledge test. It tests the applicant's capacity to acquire new knowledge. All information about criteria, procedures and timelines are published on the website of swissuniversities. Specific rules apply to students who request to enter the programme at a later stage (Admission requirements UniBE/UZH).*

Progression criteria *are defined by the study regulations and the study plan (Bern: Studienplan; Zurich: Studienordnung), provided in Appendix 2. Basically, all examinations of a specific year of study have to be passed in order to move on to the next year (there are some exceptions between years 2 and 3 of the Bachelor curriculum). This means that the defined number of ECTS points for the academic year must be acquired and all courses must be successfully completed. In case of failure, examinations can be repeated twice, except for the master thesis (only once).*

Students are provided with optimal frameworks that present them with their possibilities. Professional advice is offered by the Counselling Centre Universities of Bern / Zurich Student

Advisory Services. Furthermore, the Student Affairs Offices of both locations offers personal mentoring, counselling sessions and assessments by appointment. We collaborate with students to find solutions and support them in pursuing their goals and aspirations. Students who consistently perform poorly in their bachelor's studies can seek counselling at multiple levels. They can review completed exams to gain insight into areas where they might have difficulties. They receive exam results at the module or course level, enabling them to assess where they can improve their performance.

During the clinical rotation in the 5th year of studies, students are closely monitored by supervisors. Faculty staff have been increasingly trained in a feedback culture in recent years and can therefore provide valuable feedback to students on any remaining deficits, which they can then address. The e-portfolio for students (EPASS), in which students can upload all important documents, provides an overview of the tasks to be completed during the year and the status of their performance. The student affairs office has insight into the portfolio and is always available for queries and assistance.

Since summer 2023, the University of Zurich offers students the administrative tool "Self Audit / Degree Audit." In this tool, students can view their academic progress at any time and review their achievements and study advancements. The Passing requirements are clearly presented. When students attain the required ECTS credits to complete their study level, they are requested to submit their graduation documents to the faculty.

The Bachelor's and Master's degrees in veterinary medicine are awarded by the respective local universities. The Federal Diploma is then awarded by the Federal Office of Public Health. The award of the Diploma as veterinarian is controlled by the MedPA. The MedPA sets the rules for the federal examination in veterinary medicine; the necessary precondition to sit the federal examination is the completion of a veterinary curriculum accredited by Swiss authorities. This examination is a requirement for graduates from the Vetsuisse Faculty to practice veterinary medicine (licensure examination). It is based on the VET-PROFILES as published on the site of the Federal Office of Public Health (FOPH) and the Vetsuisse Faculty. Graduates from the VSF are entitled to sit the federal examination once they successfully completed the Master of Veterinary Medicine; hence, the degree of Master of Veterinary Medicine is not yet the legal qualification to practice veterinary medicine. The federal examination is identical for all students, irrespective of their track in the Master curriculum.

Expert group assessment

The expert group found the admissions process to be clear and easy to follow, with a justifiable rationale for the approaches used. Equally, the progression criteria align with the demands of the programme, and ensures prerequisites are met before entry onto the next relevant module.

The programme outcomes meet the national requirements, and all students are assessed federally before being awarded the degree classification or joining the MedPA register. This standardised approach ensures that fair and consistent mechanisms are followed, with quality assurance processes a key step in the outcomes.

The experts observe that all the requirements for this standard are in place.

The standard is completely fulfilled.

Area III: Implementation

Quality standard 3.01:
The study programme is conducted on a regular basis.

Description and self-assessment

The bachelor's and the master's degree programmes start annually in the fall semester. The programmes and the modules are published early before the start of the studies in the course catalogues of both Universities. The requirements for promotion to the respective next year of the programme is published in the study regulations (Appendix 2). Full completion of the Bachelor programme is necessary for entering the Master programme.

Expert group assessment

Delivery of the programme is both regular and routine, following a standard academic year, with modules and clinical training periods integrated as required. The requirements and timings of the programme are accessible for prospective and enrolled students.

The standard is completely fulfilled.

Quality standard 3.02:
The available resources (supervision and material resources) allow students to achieve the learning objectives. The higher education institution shall specify how the number of students in all phases of the curriculum is determined and to what extent it is aligned with the capacity of the educational institution.

Description and self-assessment

Resources for the Veterinary Curriculum are provided by the two Universities to their respective Faculties. Although different between the two locations, both budgets are sufficient to provide high quality training for veterinary students and excellent student-to-staff ratios. The available facilities in terms of learning environment, lecture halls, small group rooms, Skills Labs, virtual and digital technology are appropriate for a modern curriculum. However, they have now reached their capacity limits.

At both locations WIFI coverage (including eduroam access) is complete on the campus of the faculties. Off campus students access learning material via internet. VPN is available for staff and students. Established software solutions, including a large range of software packages and platforms such as Microsoft Teams and ZOOM are free to all staff and students of the two universities, and are in use to enable remote lectures and their recordings to be made available.

Learning resources

The VSF is committed to align the learning resources with the learning objectives, and help students to achieve the desired outcomes with materials that facilitate learning. Students have 24/7 access to the faculty library, space to learn in tranquility and in groups, access to online libraries, E-learning resources, and course material on the local learning management system (Bern: ILIAS, Zurich: OLAT). Students at both locations have access to the learning management system of the other location with their login. In recent years, as part of the university's digitalization efforts, E-Learning has become increasingly established and intensified. The use of virtual classroom is established via video communication platforms, in addition to live broadcasts, slide casts, pod casts and online learning materials.

Table 3.02.1. Description of the main library:

	Bern	Zurich
Staff	3 (on site), total 7 involved (scientific staff)	2 (on site), total 5 involved
FTE	50%	110%
Qualifications	Information and documentation specialist	Information and documentation specialist
Opening hours and days	Service hours for students: 6h/week, e-mail is always attended to during office hours	Service hours for students: 31h/week, e-mail is always attended
Students and members of the faculty	24 hours/7 days a week	24 hours/7 days a week
Public	10.5 hours/5 days a week	12 hours/5 days a week
Annual budget		
2023	Euro 36'900 CHF + contributions to eLibrary for ZS packages and licences approx. Euro 60'000	212'015 CHF in total has been transfered to the new builded Library of the University Zurich
Facilities		
Location in the campus	Länggassstrasse 120, 3012 Bern	Winterthurerstrasse 260, TFA 01.51, 8057 Zürich
Global space	409 square meters	477,96 square meters Public space: 298,7 square meters Archive space: 179,26 square meters
Number of rooms	2 (reading room, group area)	4 (library, reading room, group area)
Number of seats	62 + 2 standing desks	102
Equipment		
Number of computers	3 (bring your own device)	4 (bring your own device)
Number of electrical connections for portable PC	power outlets (60x3), wireless	power outlets (60x3), wireless
Learning material	virtual dissecting table	
Softwares available for bibliographical search	29 databases licensed and OA	20 databases licensed and OA
Number of veterinary books print	8945 including archive, clinic and departmental libraries	24247 including archive and departmental libraries
Number of veterinary periodicals print (closed and running)	325	657
Number of veterinary periodicals print (running)	171	63
Number of veterinary e-learning films	135 (predominantly online resources)	265 (112 online resources)
Number of veterinary e-books	3172 (incl. Thieme VetCenter)	586 (incl. Thieme VetCenter)*
Number of veterinary e-periodicals (closed and running)	717**	668**
Number of veterinary e-periodicals (running)	631	563

** Location-specific specialized books in individual offices. Access for employees and individual collaborations with students*

At both VSF locations, multiple small libraries are available within the institutes and clinics. These libraries serve as convenient resources for students and staff, offering on-site access to books and the ability to make photocopies as needed. Additionally, individual offices may house specialized books, further catering to the specific needs of employees. This access to diverse library resources facilitates collaboration between employees and individualized support for students.

Animal resources

The faculty's global strategy is that students receive a broad education and have access to common animal species. The curriculum stipulates that every master student undergoes the core rotations, enabling them to experience the core duties of veterinary work in the different clinics and, consequently, all types of animals. During these rotations, they acquire the most essential skills for each case and gain insights into a wide range of different diseases and treatments. The objective is to implement theoretical knowledge into practical application, reinforcing and deepening their understanding through direct contact/use. Students are encouraged to take responsibility for ensuring that they have encountered a wide variety of cases that reflect the objectives to be achieved in the last semesters of study. Animals and animal material reflect the diversity of animal patients treated in the clinics and examined in pathology. Even though the clinics primarily handle referral cases, the curriculum covers all clinical Day -1 Competences (outlined in ESEVT SOP 2019; Annex 2). Several internally developed projects such as the castration project (BE, ZH) and Vethopes (BE), and the introduction of clinic days and additional practical days in external veterinary practices, broadened the spectrum of cases. In Zurich an emergency clinic was established in July 2019. Ambulatory service and heard health management are an integral part of the study programme. One of the primary objectives of the ambulatory clinic is to provide fieldwork training to students in their final three semesters and to prepare them for future work.

Table 3.02.2. Cadavers and material of animal origin used in practical in anatomical training

	Bern				Zurich			
Species	**2023**	**2022**	**2021**	**Mean**	**2023**	**2022**	**2021**	**Mean**
Farm animals								
Ruminants (cattle, goat sheep)								
_locomotory system (forelimb, hindlimb, stemm/incl. clinic animals)	5	6	22	11	46	46	46	46
_internal organs	174	222	184	193	172	172	172	172
_head	2	2	2	2				
_situs animals (abdomen, pelvic region, thorax)	4	2	3	3	6	6	6	6
_plastinated specimen (situs, all isolated organ systems)	complete set of all organs, multiple exemplars				complete set of all organs, multiple exemplars			
Pigs								
_locomotory system (forelimb, hindlimb, stemm)	0	0	0	0	6	6	6	6
_internal organs	68	166	102	112	93	93	93	93
_head	1	1	1	1				
_situs animals (abdomen, pelvic region, thorax)	5	4	1	3	1	1	1	1
_plastinated specimen	complete set				complete set of all organs, multiple exemplars			

Companion animals								
Dogs and Cats								
_dissection course	22	23	30	25				
_locomotory system (forelimb, hindlimb, stemm/incl. clinic/private animals)	4	2	8	5	30	30	30	30
_internal organs	2	1	3	2	89	89	89	89
_head	4	4	4	4				
_situs animals (abdomen, pelvic region, thorax)	18	15	4	12	8	8	8	8
_plastinated specimen	complete set				complete set of all organs, multiple exemplars			
Equine								
_locomotory system (forelimb, hindlimb, stemm/incl. clinic animals)	30	36	22	29	24	24	24	24
_internal organs	11	6	3	7	83	83	83	83
_head	3	3	4	3				
_situs animals (abdomen, pelvic region, thorax)	2	2	0	2	10	8	8	9
_plastinated specimen	complete set				complete set of all organs, multiple exemplars			
Others								
Bones/Skeletons	multiple complete sets from all animals species				multiple complete sets from all animals species			
Other companion animals (poultry, rabbits),	0	0	0	0	14	14	14	14
situs and organ systems	0	0	0	0	6	6	6	6

Table 3.02.3. Healthy live animals used for pre-clinical training

	Bern				Zurich			
Species	**2023**	**2022**	**2021**	**Mean**	**2023**	**2022**	**2021**	**Mean**
Farm animals								
Cattle	400	400	400	400	344	344	354	347
Small ruminants	5	5	5	5	7	7	7	7
Pigs	10	10	10	10	14	14	12	13
Poultry	45-50	40-45	40-45	44	40-45	40-45	45-50	44
Companion animals								
Dogs and cats	65	65	65	65	61	61	98	73
Equine	4	4	4	4	163	163	148	158
Other companion animals*	0	0	0	0	36	36	16	29
Others								
Laboratory animals	37	37	37	37	20	20	20	20

**Pet birds, guinea pigs, rabbits, rats/mice*

Table 3.02.4. Number of patients seen intra-murally

	Bern				Zurich			
Species	**2023**	**2022**	**2021**	**Mean**	**2023**	**2022**	**2021**	**Mean**
Farm animals								
Cattle	831	1145	1254	1077	1378	1401	1462	1414
Small ruminants	74	99	89	87	122	161	183	155
Camelids	102	89	77	89	89	86	74	83
Pigs	127	204	244	192	20	40	104	55
Poultry & rabbits	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Farmed deer, bison, eg	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	1
Total farm animals	1134	1537	1664	1445	1610	1688	1823	1707
Companion animals								
Dogs and cats	9144	9911	10399	9818	20377	23083	24155	22538
Equine	2135*	2067*	2126*	2109*	2613	3273	3281	3056
Other companion animals** (incl. exotics, etc.)	14	3	4	7	2535	2436	2115	2362
Total companion animals	13425	14119	14846	14130	25525	28792	29551	27956
Others								
Zoo animals and wildlife	0	0	0	0	120	120	84	108

**ISME; BE = Bern; AV = Avenches*

BE: 1757 AV: 378	BE: 1714 AV: 353	BE: 1739 AV: 387	BE: 1737 AV: 373

***Pet birds, guinea pigs, rabbits, rats/mice*

Table 3.02.5. Number of patients seen extra-murally

	Bern				Zurich			
Species	**2023**	**2022**	**2021**	**Mean**	**2023**	**2022**	**2021**	**Mean**
Farm animals								
Cattle	2254	1360	1375	1663	4824	5806	8216	6282
Small ruminants	35	0	0	12	479	697	666	614
Camelids	3	0	0	1	53	56	15	41
Pigs	485	473	491	483	0	0	0	0
Poultry & rabbits	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Others (farmed deer, bison, eg)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Total farm animals	2777	1833	1866	2159	5356	6559	8897	6937
Companion animals								
Dogs and cats	0	0	0	0	64	77	94	78
Equine	0	0	0	0	597	824	886	769
Other companion animals* (incl. exotics, etc.)	0	0	0	0	96	82	103	94
Others								
Zoo animals and wildlife	0	0	0	0	8	3	6	6

**Pet birds, guinea pigs, rabbits, rats/mice, pet pigs*

Table 3.02.6. Cadavers used in necropsy

	Bern				Zurich			
Species	**2023**	**2022**	**2021**	**Mean**	**2023**	**2022**	**2021**	**Mean**
Farm animals								
Cattle	226	250	253	243	310	370	434	371
Small ruminants	86	120	123	110	97	193	146	145
Camelids	38	34	18	30	29	15	24	23
Pigs	58	77	96	77	123	252	325	233
Poultry & rabbits	210	240	246	232	75	55	90	73
Aquatic animals (fish)	487	494	485	489	0	0	0	0
Others (farmed deer, bison, eg)	2	3	2	2	4	4	1	3
Companion animals								
Dogs and cats	184	240	246	223	248	331	374	318
Equine	76	77	96	83	133	133	135	134
Other companion animals* (incl. exotics, etc.)	78	116	111	102	163	176	181	173
Others								
Zoo animals and wildlife	430	449	557	479	169	196	223	196
Laboratory animals	70	56	27	51	0	0	0	0

**Pet birds, guinea pigs, rabbits, rats/mice, reptiles*

Table 3.02.7. Number of visits to herds/flocks/units for training in Animal Production and Herd Health Management

	Bern				Zurich			
Species	**2023**	**2022**	**2021**	**Mean**	**2023**	**2022**	**2021**	**Mean**
Cattle	924*	924*	924*	924	65	63	60	63
Small ruminants	0	0	0	0	1	1	1	1
Pigs	116	106	187	136	32	30	20	27
Poultry	4	2	2	3	3	2	2	2
Rabbits	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Additional elective courses								
Aquatic animals	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4

** 33 Farms visited every two weeks*

The staff-student ratio is calculated based on the number of FTE teaching staff involved in veterinary training and the number of undergraduate students.

In Bern the staff-student ratio is 1 : 2,1; in Zurich: 1 : 1,2.

As additional information we provide the list of indicators of VSF current EAEVE self-evaluation report in Appendix 3.

*The **group size for the different types of clinical training** depends on the teaching format. It varies from one-to-one teaching for practical and clinical exercises (e.g. skills lab, clinical days, paraclinical days, individual propaedeutic exercises, elective courses, rotations, etc.) to small groups of 2 - 6 students in some elective subjects, and depending on the animal species, also*

propaedeutics and owner communication. In clinical courses group size is about 8-15 students (classes divided in 5 to 8 groups). The group sizes depend on the size of rooms, instruments/machinery and the size of animals, and are adapted accordingly. The rotation programmes in the different clinics are individually set up along the capacity of the respective clinic which may vary from 1-2 students for small units to 6-10 students per week for larger clinics/institutes. For demonstrations or other events with a seminar character, group sizes are ca. 15 - 20 students.

Admission number of students *per programme is restricted. The current capacity of 172 places (Bern 82; Zurich 90) corresponds to the capacities and resources of the two locations, in particular for the clinical training of students. The number of new students admitted to the two locations is expected to remain unchanged for the next years.*

The 1st year is officially considered as assessment year (all ECTS credits must be earned within no more than 2 years). Students need to pass the 1st year of study to enter the next academic year. The 2nd and 3rd year have less strict barriers. Students need to pass all modules of the second academic year. If they fail in a few modules only, they are allowed to participate in selected modules of the 3rd academic year. This helps weaker students not to repeat more than one year to achieve the bachelor's degree.

The capacity in the master's degree programme is also de facto restricted, but all students completing the Bachelor degree can directly enter the Master program. This capacity has been set as the major criteria for the overall admission numbers (see above).

Expert group assessment

The number of students accepted per annum is capped; this number is based on the critical mass which can be supported at each campus and ensures there is sufficient teaching personnel available in all areas. This is an area that particularly impressed the experts, with a calculated ratio of FTE teaching staff : students of 1 : 2.1 in Bern and 1 : 1.2 in Zurich. Additionally, the lecturing expertise influences the number of students, particularly regarding the electives and clinical pathways, which ensures that no student is prevented from undertaking their desired route.

This consideration of personnel availability is further demonstrated by the group sizes designated for practical teaching, again ensuring that all students have equality of opportunity. This is supported by a good range and availability of animals and species, covering all of the required elements of teaching, including cadavers. Additionally, the new skills lab at the Zurich campus is an excellent resource for students and enables them to practice a wide variety of skills on their own campus, without needing to travel to Bern as was previously the case. The experts noticed that the room in which the numerous simulators were housed would be quite cramped when used by a large number of students and that there was probably also a considerable noise level. However, during the visit, VSF admitted that the new skills lab is underutilised at present and that teachers might consider better integrating this practical capability into their teaching sessions.

The library resources are all fit for purpose, effectively updated and maintained. Updates are routinely considered regarding all resource areas, for example there has recently been a specific focus on virology and parasitology, to ensure all students have the best possible development opportunities in these areas.

The only area about which the expert group noted concerns relating to this standard focuses on the allocation of master's theses. Whilst there is clearly sufficient expert personnel and supervisors, and a good range and number of topics - albeit more clinical subjects would be appreciated - the process of allocation of topics appeared to be confusing and frustrating for those involved. The issue seemed to focus on the specific platform being used; the university has made advancement in other areas, such as augmented reality, and the LOOOP platform, but this issue is a cause of frustration for students. The consensus was that the platform, and process, is not effectively managed; with consideration of other technological advancements made recently, this problem should be easily remedied.

The standard is largely fulfilled.

Recommendation 4: Review and update the platform, and particularly the process, for the allocation of master's theses.

Quality standard 3.03:
The teaching staff has competences that correspond to the specifics of the study programme and its objectives.

Description and self-assessment

The existing faculty staff adequately cover all veterinary programme subject areas; basic sciences like chemistry and physics are covered by the Science Faculties of the Universities Bern and Zurich via long-term agreements. Most academic staff of the VEE involved in veterinary training are veterinarians. Several professors have a background in science, especially in preclinical teaching subjects of the bachelor programme. Both universities are dedicated to professional development, and offer various continuous professional development programmes for improving the instructional competencies, and the institutional policies required to promote academic excellence.

All faculty members involved in teaching are aware of the catalogue of learning objectives of veterinary education (VET-PROFILES).

***Recruitment processes** of staff are subject to Swiss laws and the regulations of the two Universities Bern and Zurich. Advertisements for positions of lecturers and professorships must be open and transparent. Recruitment is based on the skills and qualifications required for the respective position. Once a job vacancy at the professorial level has been defined, the VSF faculty assemblies elect an appointment committee. The committee oversees and manages the recruitment process. Candidates are selected based on transparent, pre-defined criteria. Candidates have the opportunity to present themselves through a lecture and subsequent interviews with the committee and other staff and students of the faculties. After receiving feedback from the Vetsuisse faculty members, the committee ranks the candidates. Finally, the Dean's office submits the list for approval to the local university and the Vetsuisse Council. Candidates must provide proven experience in teaching and didactic courses or equivalent experience.*

At the junior faculty level internal recruitment of new teaching staff is initiated by the respective head of the clinic/institute. New teaching staff members receive formal information from the responsible local Student Affairs Office about the teaching framework. Furthermore, they are introduced and trained in currently performed assessment processes. If more assistance is needed, the local student affairs offices offer individual instruction/training. During the first four semesters of their teaching new instructors are obliged (ZH)/recommended (BE) to take part in teaching courses of the local University.

Lecturers are responsible for teaching that is based on the latest scientific knowledge and didactic principles. The teaching includes disciplinary and interdisciplinary training, further education, and advanced training in the supervised field of study. The nature and scope of the teaching are based on the performance agreement and strategic instruments of the faculty. Every professorship requires a structure (personnel and resources, space requirements) that must be defined through a structural report.

In Bern ***didactical training*** *is provided by the Center for Continuing Education of the University of Bern. Prospective lecturers must follow a training in instructional design. In Zurich teaching staff at all levels are obliged to update their didactical skills regularly. The UZH offers a broad selection of courses at the UZH Continuing Education.*

Expert group assessment

The faculty has well demonstrated that it has successfully recruited, and retained, the relevant expertise to support the development, delivery and assessment of this programme. According to the experts, there is an excellent variety of expertise: they noticed the high proportion and diversity of diplomates from European Colleges in the staff, with a clear attitude of personnel development from the commencement of employment, in both subject matter areas as well as didactic training. The training required and undertaken for pedagogical development is mandatory and set at different levels, depending on the individual's experience; this is also undertaken during working hours, not an additional strain on already busy workloads.

The standard is completely fulfilled.

Quality standard 3.04:
The educational institution pursues a sustainable junior staff policy, which includes education and training, development and assessment of the teaching staff. The criteria applied take into account both research performance and teaching qualifications.

Description and self-assessment

In ***Bern*** *and* ***Zurich*** *the work contract for academic staff is subdivided according to the level of education/training and employment possibilities of the respective university. The permanent positions within the intermediate academic staff, lecturers, and research assistants/scientific officer (excluding tenure track assistant lecturers, assistant professors and clinical specialists) account for a maximum of 40% of the intermediate academic staff. This ensures sufficient*

permanent positions to secure best practice teaching, and enough temporary rotational position for junior staff development for the scientific community.

Education, training and development of junior/teaching staff

The VSF provides concepts for the acquisition, monitoring, assessment, and further development of all employees. This forms the basis for further professional development prospects with a particular focus on promoting the career of young researchers. The goal is to enable them to achieve outstanding work in their academic career by providing suitable measures.

Postgraduate Veterinary Specialization

The VSF offers multiple continuing education opportunities to train specialists in a vast variety of veterinary disciplines as well as biomedical research. This includes a variety of internships, national specialization (FVH), and most of the EBVS and ABVS accredited college training programmes.

Both local faculties run nationally and internationally accredited continuing education programmes (Swiss Veterinarians Association, European and American Colleges of different specializations). Taken together, the VSF offers 27 European or American residency programmes in nearly all the fields recognized by the EBVS/ABVS and reflecting all the areas of specialisation of the veterinary field. Residents and graduates of these colleges give public talks and are well-respected speakers at congresses.

The VSF offers two distinct ***academic qualification paths.*** *In the Educator track, the focus lies on teaching and service, while the classical Habilitation track emphasizes research and teaching comprising the typical career path towards achieving a full professorship. Lecturers who opt for the Educator track are required to complete a minimum of 8 days of training in higher education didactics by the end of their training period. Most "educators" are indeed highly motivated and have achieved qualifications well beyond the requirements through the completion of a Certificate of Advanced Studies (CAS) in Higher Education Teaching. For those aiming for a "Habilitation", a minimum of 5 days of training in higher education didactics is required.*

Both VSF locations organize and/or host many continuing education and further training courses in the field of veterinary medicine. For ***Mentoring and promoting junior faculty staff****, there are special programmes in both locations available:*

Bern:

VetMENT is a mentoring programme offered by the VSF Bern tailored specifically for doctoral students, PhDs, postdocs, residents, and assistants/senior assistants. This programme aims to offer personalized guidance to early-stage researchers fostering networking and connections between emerging scientists and outstanding national and international researchers.

COMET Career Programme: This University of Bern career programme supports female post-doctoral researchers in successfully pursuing their academic careers by means of an individually customized programme to allow the participants enhance their skills, know-how and motivation.

120% care model: Employees in trainee or early career positions with care responsibilities (e.g. parents) are allowed to reduce their own workload and hire support staff with the freed-up resources plus an additional bonus of 20%. Finances derive from dedicated faculty/university resources.

Zurich:

VetCareer is a mentoring programme offered by the VSF with participation of the division of Gender Equality and Diversity of the UZH. It is available to all students (master and doctoral) and all levels of academic staff. The focus is on introducing students to academic careers and supporting young scientists in furthering their academic careers. VetCareer organizes workshops for all staff concerning parenthood, leadership and mental health.

Assessment of teaching staff

At the faculty, a long-term planning for the evaluation of all lecturers and teaching has been established for many years.

Bern: *Evaluations of the teaching activities at the faculty are conducted at regular intervals according to guidelines using standardized questionnaires provided by the Teaching Evaluation Office of the Vice-Rectorate for Quality Assurance of the University of Bern. Every teaching activity listed in the Core Teaching System (CTS) is required to undergo a final evaluation at least every 3 years. In general, new teaching staff at the faculty is evaluated by students in the first semester of teaching. Instructors in specific qualification positions (e.g., Assistant Professors) are required to undergo annual evaluation. The electronic questionnaires are automatically processed and instructors receive a report. Results are discussed with the students in a feedback session. The student affairs office provides information about measures that have been decided based on the evaluations from the previous semester. Additionally, the results of the evaluations are presented in the teaching committee. If a teaching activity receives an inadequate rating by the students, it will be re-evaluated at the next opportunity. Furthermore, a discussion with the Q-responsible in teaching or the scientific officer-Q-teaching is scheduled.*

Zurich*: The Quality Management Education and Teaching (QMSL) of the UZH offers instruments on all levels of teaching. They help the faculties to establish monitoring cycles to collect data, and if necessary to optimize the teaching and the contents of the modules. This includes regular course evaluations of modules by the module coordinator (every two years) and the quality meetings (done every year by the Vice Dean Teaching). During these meetings, peer groups of students discuss pre-defined topics and modules in the quality meetings at the end of each academic year. These discussions with the students are very valuable and more important than any other evaluation; the discussions are protocolled and are handed over to the UZH on a yearly basis; collectively, these protocols are the basis for the evaluation of the QMSL office. The UZH introduced additional evaluations of students' assessments/examinations in January 2024.*

Expert group assessment

During the visit, the experts observed that VSF pursues a sustainable personnel development policy and enables its young staff to develop skills in both research and teaching. Residency programmes, programmes conducted by specialists in the field for didactical competences and excellent mentoring are provided at both locations of VSF. The experts noted, that supporting programmes like VetMent, COMET and a 120% care programme in Bern as well as VetCareer in Zurich was well known by young researchers, clinicians and the supporting staff. During the visit, PhD students confirmed the useful support to develop the respective skills for remaining in academia.

In this sense, the group of experts was impressed by the supportive and adequately financed approach the faculty is able to take with its junior staff, for example to support promotion, staff are hired to support routine work at the university to increase specialized research work for the respective person. Promotion is indeed well supported by gaining fixed positions (up to a maximum of 40%) and assistant professorship.

The junior staff testified that they were pleased with the options available to them relating to part-time work and indicated that their work-life balance genuinely felt like a priority to the faculty. This proactive attitude towards the changing culture surrounding working hours will likely increase the sustainability of the ongoing recruitment for this type of role and career path.

The standard is completely fulfilled.

Area IV: Quality assurance

Quality standard 4.01:
The governance of the study programme takes into account the interests of the relevant stakeholders, and allows the necessary developments to be realised.

Description and self-assessment

The VSF has a culture of QA and continued enhancement of quality. Staff – academic as well as technical – are aware of the concepts of QA in teaching and research.

The different stakeholders (Professors, intermediate staff, administrative staff, and student representatives) are members of the faculty assemblies and all standing committees of the VSF.

Technical staff are represented in Bern in the extended Departmental management Board of the DCVS, the Construction and Building Committee, and the Committee for Young Academics and Equality (KANG). In Zurich, representatives of technical staff are involved in all bodies and committees at the Faculty and University level.

***Teaching staff** and **students** are involved in the different levels of quality assurance, most obviously in the evaluation of teaching within the curriculum. Furthermore, the implementation of initiatives of teaching staff and students to adjust the curriculum to new needs are continuously discussed in the Curriculum Committee and communicated to the faculty assemblies. Students convey information to the student council (Bern: Fachschaft; Zurich: Fachverein).*

The VSF collects, analyses, and uses relevant information from internal and external sources for the effective management of their programmes and activities (teaching, research, services).

A long-term planning for the evaluation of all lecturers and teaching has been established for many years, including all modules after introduction of the Curriculum 2021. The faculty regularly analyses the outcomes of all examinations. Results are discussed in the Curriculum Committee, feedback is provided to the teaching staff, and measures are decided within the Curriculum Committee. Where possible, the measures are then directly integrated into the

continuous development of the curriculum. Extra-mural trainings are evaluated through an external process.

*In addition, the **FOPH** has commissioned the **IML** (Bern medical faculty) to monitor the quality of the federal license exam. The results of the assessment of the examination are communicated by the IML to the Examination Committee.*

*The Federal Statistical Office (FSO) regularly performs outcome studies including university graduates. These surveys are supplemented by specific questions from the Universities. Furthermore, the VSF closely collaborates with the **GST** which performed a survey on the optimization of veterinary training and the working situation for veterinary practitioners in Switzerland.*

*The VSF operates ad hoc, cyclical, sustainable and transparent outcome assessment, QA, and quality enhancement mechanisms. The VSF closes the loop of the **QA Plan-Do-Check-Act (PDCA)** cycle (Fig. IV.1). Planning based on inputs of the faculty's staff and students is at the beginning of the QA-cycle. Input is discussed in the different committees of the VSF, where measures to be implemented are discussed. Depending on the topic and the organizational or financial impact, the plan has to be submitted to the faculty assemblies. Curricular changes are evaluated by the Curriculum Committee and adapted if considered appropriate (Fig.IV.2). Often, students are questioned informally and communicate their appreciation of changes through their representatives in the Curriculum Committee.*

Figure IV.1 PDCA -cycle of Quality Assurance for the development of strategy and goals

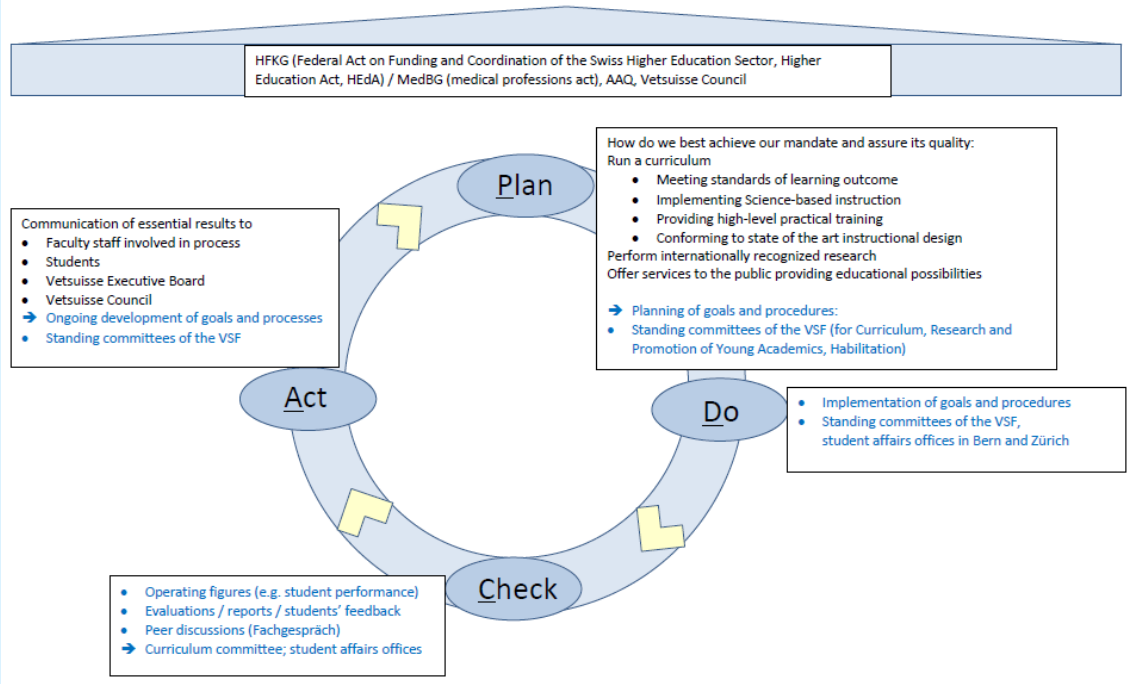
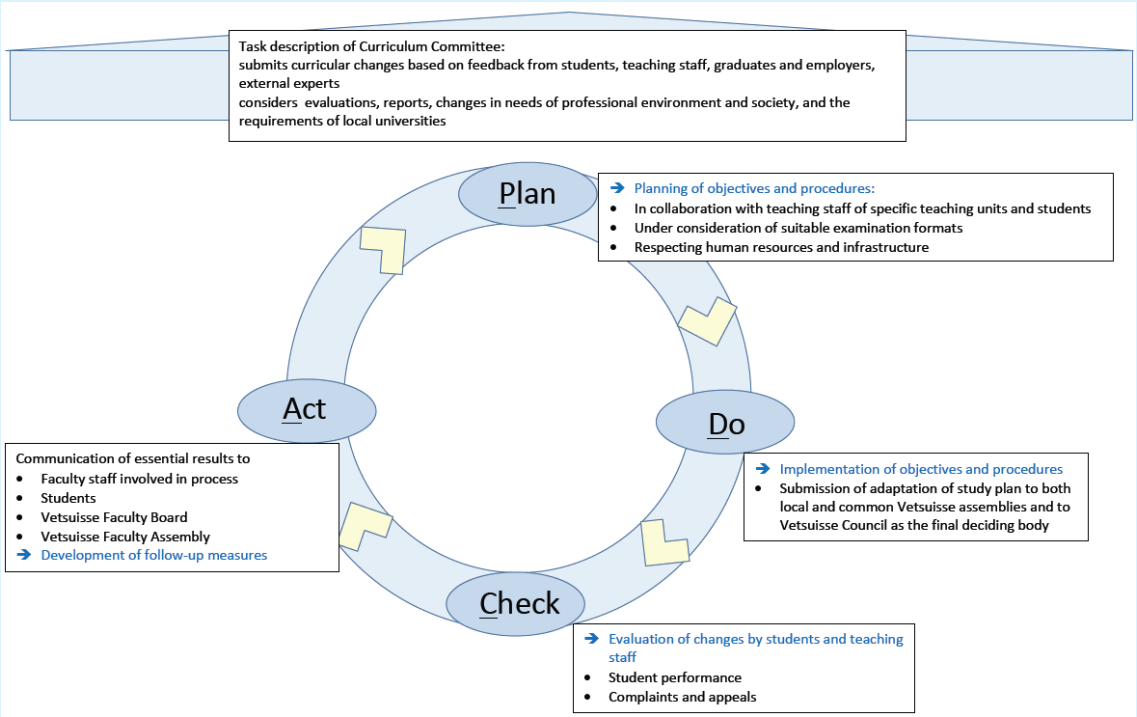


Figure IV.2 PDCA -cycle continuing development of the curriculum



Information and involvement in QA-Processes

The VSF informs staff, students, and stakeholders regularly and involves them in the QA processes. Teaching staff is informed about quality assurance processes at the faculty assemblies, the Curriculum Committee and in the respective units. Technical staff are regularly informed about and trained in quality processes by their divisions. Students are in constant contact with the quality assurance processes at the faculty through their representation in all standing committees and via the student councils of both locations.

The VSF is in close contact with the GST to supervise the need of specialists in specific fields; several VSF senior academics are members of the GST Board, and a member of the GST board is also non-voting guest member of the VSF Curriculum Committee, emphasizing the strong connection between the two institutions. Results of a GST survey among recently graduated and established veterinarians to define the needs of the field, for example, was taken into account for the development of training programmes and the Curriculum 21/VET-PROFILES.

Expert group assessment

The expert group ascertained that there is strong commitment to stakeholder engagement, across the faculty, both internally and externally. There are good relationships with GST and federal bodies, and both parties appear to actively address feedback from external sources. The feedback and evaluation mechanisms that are in place was another key area that the expert group was impressed by; the faculty was able to demonstrate a structured and considered approach to close PDCA cycles.

Nevertheless, whilst the mechanisms are in place, it became apparent during the visit that some stakeholders do not feel that they are really being heard by the faculty, even though they have adequate representation on the various committees. This is the case, for example, with students, who seem to have complained about the stress caused by the assessment load, but with little consideration of amendments. Staff have also expressed the impression of not being considered when complaining, for example, about their stress and workload. The experts therefore recommend that VSF pay closer attention to feedback from its various stakeholders, and respond and communicate appropriately, thus respecting the intentions of the PDCA cycle.

The standard is largely fulfilled.

Recommendation 5: Ensure that outcomes from quality improvement and review processes are effectively communicated, ensuring all stakeholders understand their contribution has been considered.

Quality standard 4.02
The study programme is covered by the quality assurance system of the higher education institution or the other institution of the higher education sector.

Description and self-assessment

The Universities of Bern and Zurich were both accredited by the Swiss Accreditation Council in 2021/22. The respective experts gave both universities a very good rating in their report and confirmed that both universities have an effective quality assurance system that covers all areas and processes of the university. Quality assurance (QA) of the VSF complies with the local universities' concepts for quality assurance:

***Bern:** Quality assurance at the University: Participate. Develop. Communicate.*

***Zurich:** Quality Strategy of the University of Zurich 2020-2026.*

The VSF and its home Universities are part of swissuniversities and hence compliant with the ESG standards.

As described, the QA strategy is defined at the level of the home Universities. The local faculties are in charge of adapting the university's strategy to their level.

*At the **Bern** location annual operational meetings are held prior to the strategy meetings with the University. The focus of these conversations is to review the implementation of the measures set forth in the Faculty Action Plan. Based on this the University adapts the yearly Action Plan, whereas the faculty adapts the Faculty Action Plan. QA guidelines for the core tasks of teaching, research, continuing education, and services were developed based on the QA guidelines of the University of Bern. A QA-Circle for monitoring the QA at the faculty was implemented in 2023. The Board is composed of the presidents/chairs of the three local standing Committees (Curriculum, Research and Promotion of Young Talents, Business Promotion), the Committee of Young Academics and Equality (KANG), one intermediate-staff member, the dean, three scientific officers for QA, and one student. The committee appoints a chairperson who represents the faculty as a Q-representative at the university (Q-Beauftragte/r). QA in teaching is monitored directly by the president of the Curriculum Committee and the*

scientific officer for quality in teaching (member of the student affairs office). Results of Analyses and decisions taken are communicated on a regularly basis to faculty members and students via the executive board and faculty meetings. Changes in the curriculum that affect regulations are publicly available on VSF webpage.

*At the **Zurich** site, strategy meetings are held once a semester with the Executive Board of the University, and separately with the Vice Presidents Education or Research. The Faculty Council reports on what has been achieved and new goals are defined. In addition, strategy meetings are held with the respective Vice President in the areas of education and research. The faculty is based on the quality strategy of the University of Zurich. The University of Zurich is committed to achieving the highest standard of quality in all its activities. This principle is anchored in both the mission statement and the strategic principles of the University. Via the University Act, the Executive Board of the University is mandated to make provisions to secure the quality of UZH's research, teaching and services. The quality strategy defines five goals for quality assurance and development at UZH in the period 2020–2026. The UZH Evaluation Office audits organizational units at UZH using a multi-step procedure every six to eight years. The student affairs office at the Zurich location was evaluated in 2023.*

Expert group assessment

The Universities of Zurich and Bern are both accredited by the Swiss Accreditation Council. VSF therefore benefits from the assurance that effective quality assurance is undertaken across both campuses. Furthermore, the European Standards and Guidelines are effectively embedded within the programme and the faculty, thus ensuring that the European Higher Education Area considerations are fulfilled.

During its assessment, the expert group found the quality assurance processes to be robust and fit-for purpose.

The standard is completely fulfilled.

Quality standard 4.03:
The training institution regularly reviews the students' results (including at the federal examination) and documents the consequences derived from this for the study programme.

Description and self-assessment

Assessment procedure, review of teaching outcomes, and mechanisms to change assessment strategies

The students' assessment strategy is defined in the local study plan. The study plan is regularly reviewed by the Vetsuisse Curriculum Committee based on curriculum development and curriculum mapping results of content, learning outcomes, and student performance, and in interaction with the respective Vice rectorates for teaching of the home universities. The Curriculum Committee elaborate adjustments subsequently passed by the VSF Assembly and finally ratified by the VSF Council. The current version has been approved by the VSF Council

on Aug 01, 2022. The annexes were revised and approved by the VSF Council on June 28, 2023. Dissemination of assessment related information follow the appropriate communication channels via websites and e-mail to intra-faculty and other stakeholders, and in person during students' information sessions or module information sessions with involved teaching faculty. The VSF gets support from experts of the IML during implementation of new assessment methods. A quality control process for reviewing and evaluating test items of assessments is in place. The process includes several review panels that critically review draft items by formal standards, and by a subject-matter expert regarding content before the test, and a psychometric item analysis and student comments after the test. Test validity and reliability are continuously monitored and evaluated by the student affairs office or IML. Results are sent to the Curriculum Committee to initiate steps for quality assurance of the teaching.

The federal examination is identical for all students, irrespective of their track in the Master curriculum. The format of the examination changed from a practical examination in 4 disciplines (small animals, equine, farm animals, pathology) to a combined MCQ and clinical skills test (OSCE), with a first run in February/March 2024. The new format is very similar to the licensing examination in human medicine. The licensing examination is done in close collaboration with the IML and is supervised by a specific federal examination committee. The IML coordinates the preparation of exam questions and the quality control system. This includes several review panels composed of experts from IML and both locations, that critically review draft items; formally and content. Both, for the MCQ exam and the OSCE. Students' results of the federal examination are evaluated by the IML, mandated by the FOPH.

The Examination Committee (Strategic Commission) assigns the task to a working group (operational group) with overlapping participants (e.g., members of the IML, curriculum planning, selected representatives of the faculty, ...). Based on the evaluation of the exams by the IML, the working group receives feedback on the quality of the MCQ questions and OSCE cases and instructions on how to improve the content of the exam questions. This is done through continuous professional exchange between the respective experts of Bern and Zurich. The results of the review process are presented to and finally ratified by the Examination Committee.

Initial results of the new examination format conducted in February and March 2024 show that students of both locations perform equally well. The OSCE has shown that the competencies/skills of the students at both locations were equivalent.

Successful candidates of the federal examination are entitled to work in all areas of veterinary medicine in Switzerland and Liechtenstein. According to agreements between Switzerland and the EU, the degree is also acknowledged in the EU. Successful candidates are obliged to pursue continuing education, i.e. lifelong learning is required by law.

Expert group assessment

The faculty undertakes a clear process for assessment analysis, including item analysis and statistical review; external review is also undertaken should this be necessary. These processes are being applied consistently across the provision, allowing the faculty to start gathering data on the comparative outcome across the two campuses delivering the new programme. At present, the outcomes appear to be comparable, and ongoing future reviews will provide more data for this comparison, allowing adjustments to be made if necessary.

The federal exam has also been updated recently, which the faculty believes will offer a better comparison of outcomes. Specifically, it was noted that the process is fairer for candidates and promotes an improved consideration of contemporary practice. Presently, the outcomes for the federal assessments are comparable across the two campuses, aligning with the conclusions the faculty has drawn from its own assessments.

During the on-site visit, the experts were assured of the assessment standards, and the comparability across the two campuses. In electronic assessment items are controlled by formal and content reviews, other assessments are controlled by the responsible committees, by multiple examiners and external people involved in the procedure.

The standard is completely fulfilled.

4. Action plan for the further development of the study programme and its quality assurance system

The action plan for the further development of the study programme is based on a SWOT Analysis:

Strengths

- Teaching: High-quality curriculum based on international standards, good supervision ratio, international connections, and generally good infrastructure. Wide clinical teaching expertise with 27 accredited specialist college programmes which is among the largest selection possibilities in Europe. Unique educational position with only one establishment for veterinary education in Switzerland.
- Research: Very strong research background in veterinary related basic science. High quality of research and thus international competitiveness; development of new subject areas (e.g. animal welfare, veterinary public health, bee health, one health) was successful.
- Freedom of research, which allows lighthouse projects outside the traditional fields of research (e.g. cancer research/precision medicine).
- Services: Excellent clinical and diagnostic services.
- High standard clinical facilities.
- Large patient population.
- Visibility of the VSF to the relevant target groups.
- Excellent cooperation with federal agencies (Federal Food Safety and Veterinary Office FSVO, Federal Office for Agriculture FOAG, Federal Office of Public Health FOPH).

Weaknesses

- Weaknesses in infrastructure:
    - Infrastructure for independent learning is limited.
    - Limited availability of laboratories for student training.
    - Infrastructure for dealing with epidemics, especially in the area of livestock.
- Difficulties in the recruitment of young academics which may lead to a lack of specialists in the academic and professional environment.

- Low student mobility in the first four years of the curriculum.

Opportunities

- Increasing importance of interdisciplinarity in teaching and research; cooperation with other disciplines allows new teaching content and concepts, and new research topics.
- Further expansion of internationality creates access to new resources in research and teaching.
- Great potential for the promotion of young academics in veterinary medicine.
- Alliances and networking within and outside the university (e.g. companies) offer opportunities for acquiring third-party funding and transfers into practice.
- Good contacts with veterinary practices offer market and networking potential for teaching, research, and knowledge transfer.
- Digitalisation of teaching and research allows new forms of cooperation across locations.

Threats

- High demand for Veterinary graduates on the job market might not be met with the current number of graduates from the Vetsuisse Faculty.
- Infrastructure: The limited amount of space will not be easily resolved. The processes responsible for this can only be partially influenced by the faculty.
- Increasing time and effort for education could reduce the capacities of faculty staff for research.
- High administrative workload for staff while maintaining caseload and keeping up with teaching responsibilities.
- Students' expectations of their studies and future field of work are changing (e.g. part time work, preference for specific areas within veterinary medicine).
- Increasing competition from private practices for staff recruitment and retention.

Based on the identified strengths and weaknesses, as well as external opportunities and threats, the VSF identified the following potential strategic priorities:

- Enhancing collaboration and exchange to develop a common identity.
- Maintaining and expanding high-quality research and education.
- Increasing cooperation with industry and practice partners to generate external funding and enhance knowledge and technology transfer.
- Strengthening existing collaborations with federal institutions.
- Maintaining and further expanding the visibility of the VSF and offering attractive career opportunities.
- The opportunities of digitalisation in research and teaching should be used to strengthen cooperation between the locations.
- Maintaining and strengthening the One Health concept for collaboration with other disciplines, particularly human medicine, as well as agricultural, natural, and social sciences.
- Improving the infrastructure to avoid short- and medium-term bottlenecks.

The specific action plan for the next 4 years in regard to curriculum development contains the following points:

Measures to further develop and strengthen the study programme and its quality assurance system	2024	2025	2026	2027
Evaluation of all modules of the Curriculum 21 will be evaluated	x	x	x	x
Incorporation of evaluations into the improvement and, if necessary, new planning of the teaching modules	x	x	x	x
Adaption of the curriculum following the evaluation of the study programme		x	x	x
Recognising excellence in teaching to close the loop of teaching evaluations	x	x	x	x
Promotion of innovative teaching / Faculty teaching development	x	x	x	x
Monitoring and evaluation of student wellbeing	x	x	x	x
Monitoring and evaluating of student performance in VSF modules	x	x	x	x
Monitoring and evaluation of student performance by EPT providers		x	x	x
Request and support cantonal and national activity regarding limited Infrastructure and number of veterinary graduates	x	x	x	x
Reaccreditation (EAEVE: 2024; AAQ: 2024)	x			

5. Expert group's overall evaluation and accreditation recommendation

Strengths

The expert group was very impressed with the self-assessment report and its annexes presented for the accreditation of the study programme, supported by the interviews and review of facilities conducted onsite. The collaboration within the faculty was well evidenced, and extended to the GST, enabling stakeholder engagement and considerations for programme improvement which have been considered and addressed. The quality assurance and improvement processes further promote this aspect, with robust procedures in place.

The expert group found the curricula and assessments to be well formulated and delivered, enabled by an excellent staff to student ratio across the faculty. This is further supported by a clear commitment to technological development, for example, implementation of the self-assessment tool for students and development of generative artificial intelligence based teaching methods where appropriate, and advancement both on campus and practically. The

caliber of teaching expertise was clearly demonstrated, with a robust attitude towards junior staff and young scientist development, both research focused and pedagogically, and an excellent international standing providing ongoing opportunities for graduates.

The practical teaching is an area specifically commended by the expert group; this approach enables students to feel prepared for their future roles as veterinarians, whilst meeting the national requirements of the training programme.

There are, however, a small number of recommendations for the faculty to address, minor weaknesses which when acted upon will only further strengthen the existing provision.

Weaknesses

The expert group found that internal communication could be improved upon, particularly with regard to informing students about learning outcomes and ensuring that the information is accessible. The introduction of the LOOOP platform should support this aim, however, the utilisation of this platform does not yet appear to be fully embedded, and students require support to effectively use the technology. Additionally, the group considered that the volume of assessments and learning objectives may be overwhelming for students and challenging to deliver. This again relates to improving communications, as some of the issues seemed to stem from students not understanding the formative nature of some assessments, particularly those undertaken in clinical rotations.

The most significant area for improvement noted by the expert group relates to the updates required to the platform used for the master's thesis allocation, and the process that is followed. It was clear that there was dissatisfaction across the board with the current process, which could be improved to support student access to projects and the administrative workload that accompanies the current process. This area for improvement offers an opportunity to consider the final recommendation, which relates to the quality improvement cycle currently employed, and ensuring stakeholder feedback is considered and addressed, ensuring updates and outcomes are effectively communicated.

On the basis of the self-assessment report of the study programme in veterinary medicine of the Vetsuisse Faculty of the universities of Bern and Zurich, dated from June 2024 and the on-site visit of 5 and 6 September 2024, the expert group proposes that a formal pronouncement should be made to grant accreditation of the study programme in veterinary medicine of the Vetsuisse Faculty of the universities of Bern and Zurich without conditions.

However, the group of experts make five recommendations:

Recommendation 1: Better inform students about the implementation of the LOOOP, so they have ready access to the course requirements and intended outcomes.

Recommendation 2: Consider the time commitment requirement for delivering the intended outcomes, and the student workload implications.

Recommendation 3: Consider the assessment load and the communication of the formative assessments to students.

Recommendation 4: Review and update the platform, and particularly the process, for the allocation of master's theses.

Recommendation 5: Ensure that outcomes from quality improvement and review processes are effectively communicated, ensuring all stakeholders understand their contribution has been considered.

6. AAQ's accreditation proposal

Starting point

The study programme in veterinary medicine offered by the Vetsuisse Faculty of the universities of Bern and Zurich has already been accredited in 2011 and 2018. In 2021, the most recent reform of the curriculum has been implemented, prolonging the study programme from 10 to now 11 semesters.

Vetsuisse Faculty has two sites and thus offers the study programme at two sites, the university of Bern and the university of Zurich. Collectively, Vetsuisse Faculty offers 172 places per cohort, 90 in Zurich and 82 in Bern. It is compliant with the Bologna Reform, including a bachelor's and a master's degree. Students that have achieved a master's in veterinary medicine are eligible to take the federal examination.

The Vetsuisse Faculty applies for accreditation of the study programme in veterinary medicine for an accreditation period of seven years.

Considerations

In its evaluation, the expert group highlights the practical training, the curriculum, the staff to student ratio, the competent teaching staff, the development of staff and the promotion of young talent, the willingness to use and implement technological developments (including artificial intelligence) for evaluation and teaching as strengths of the study programme.

Overall, the expert group judges the study programme to be very well equipped for future challenges and makes recommendations in the following areas: platform used for the master theses allocation, internal communication, the quantity of assessments that students have to undertake and learning objectives they have to achieve (i.e., student's workload) as well as the quality improvement cycle.

The expert group's analysis is coherent, covering all aspects of every quality standard.

Accreditation proposal

On the basis of the self-assessment report of the study programme in veterinary medicine of the Vetsuisse Faculty of the Universities of Bern and Zurich dated 18 June 2024, the expert report of 1 November 2024, the statement of the Vetsuisse Faculty of 19 November 2024 and the above considerations, the Swiss Agency of Accreditation and Quality Assurance (AAQ) proposes that accreditation of the study programme in veterinary medicine of the Vetsuisse Faculty be granted without conditions.

7. Statement of the study programme in Veterinary Medicine (Vetsuisse)

Universität Bern | Universität Zürich

vetsuisse-fakultät

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Thomas Lutz, Prodekan Lehre
Prof. Dr. med. vet.

AAQ
schweizerische agentur für akkreditierung und qualitätssicherung
Dr. Christoph Grolimund / Livia Lüthi
Effingerstrasse 15
3001 Bern

Nur per E-Mail

Zürich, 19. November 2024

Akkreditierung nach HFKG und MedBG – Stellungnahme Vetsuisse-Fakultät

Sehr geehrte Frau Lüthi,
Sehr geehrter Dr. Grolimund

Besten Dank für die Möglichkeit zur Stellungnahme zum Bericht der externen Evaluation zur Akkreditierung nach HFKG und MedBG des Studiengangs in Veterinärmedizin der Vetsuisse-Fakultät (UNIBE und UZH). Nachfolgend finden Sie die entsprechenden Voten zu den Empfehlungen:

Recommendation 1: Better inform students about the implementation of the LOOOP, so they have ready access to the course requirements and intended outcomes.
We thank the evaluators for their comment, and we agree. Improving communication about learning objectives, desired outcomes, day-1-skills etc. from faculty to students has been an important goal in the curricular development since the start of the planning phase of the Curriculum 21. It is clear to everyone that this is an ongoing process and further improvements will be implemented gradually. Now, that the curriculum is fully established, the VSF, and in particular the Curriculum Committee and student affairs offices, will allocate more resources to improving this communication, and to finetune the match between the teaching program and communicated learning outcomes.

Recommendation 2: Consider the time commitment requirement for delivering the intended outcomes, and the student workload implications.
Recommendation 3: Consider the assessment load and the communication of the formative assessments to students.
Please allow us to comment on both points together. We agree that this is important. This is in fact a constant and continuous topic discussed in the Curriculum Committee and the entire VSF. We will use and potentially adapt our QA system to be able to optimize the ratio between timely requirements for students, number of assessments, learning outcomes and stress put upon students. Currently, several formative assessment methods are still experienced like summative assessments by the students, especially in the final clinical rotations. One focus will be to change this mindset and make students better aware of this.
We would however also like to state that, in agreement with the experience of some (if not all) members of the expert committee, we are increasingly experiencing student expectations that in our opinion do not match with the amount of work and commitment required to train in medical professions and to become a competent professional. One important part of our work will therefore also concentrate on informing students and future students about the required commitment to succeed in a veterinary curriculum, and later in the profession. The current development with political decisions/discussions on entry requirements for medical professions will influence our approaches.

Recommendation 4: Review and update the platform, and particularly the process, for the allocation of Master's theses.
We fully agree. This is work in progress. We are currently in the process of recruiting a digitalization specialist whose task will be to provide a more modern set of (interacting) digital tools for the student affairs offices. This is supported by a 2-year project grant.

Recommendation 5: Ensure that outcomes from quality improvement and review processes are effectively communicated, ensuring all stakeholders understand their contribution has been considered.
We agree. This has been previously addressed and improved but it is clear that this is still to be improved. We also want to stress, however, that it is also all stakeholders' duties to actively inform themselves about the available information that is communicated via diverse routes, e.g. faculty meetings, specific student information etc.

Wir bedanken uns ebenfalls für die sehr gute und angenehme Zusammenarbeit.

Freundliche Grüsse

Prof. Dr. Thomas Lutz
Prodekan Lehre Vetsuisse-Fakultät

8. Hearing of the Commission for Medical Professions

Schweizerische Eidgenossenschaft
Confédération suisse
Confederazione Svizzera
Confederaziun svizra

Eidgenössisches Departement des Innern EDI
Medizinalberufekommission MEBEKO
Ressort Ausbildung

CH-3003 Bern, BAG **A-Priority**

Schweizerische Agentur für Akkreditierung
und Qualitätssicherung (aaq)
Effingerstrasse 15
Postfach
3001 Bern

Referenz/Aktenzeichen:
Ihr Zeichen:
Unser Zeichen: REB/MAG
Bern, 31. März 2025

Akkreditierung des Studienganges Veterinärmedizin an der Vetsuisse-Fakultät der Universitäten Bern und Zürich

Sehr geehrte Damen und Herren

Im Namen der Medizinalberufekommission (MEBEKO), Ressort Ausbildung, wird wie folgt Stellung genommen:

1. Rechtsgrundlagen der Akkreditierung:
   - Nach Artikel 12 Absatz 1 Buchstabe b des Bundesgesetzes über die universitären Medizinalberufe (Medizinalberufegesetz, MedBG, SR 811.11) erhalten namentlich diejenigen Personen Zutritt zur eidgenössischen Prüfung einer der universitären Medizinalberufe, die einen nach dem MedBG akkreditierten Studiengang absolviert haben.
   - Die Artikel 23 und 24 MedBG regeln die Akkreditierungspflicht und die Akkreditierungskriterien. Die Studiengänge müssen nach den Anforderungen des Hochschulförderungs- und Koordinationsgesetz (HFKG, SR 414.20) und des MedBG akkreditiert sein. Die anzuwendenden Qualitätsstandards sind entsprechend einer Kombination der Anforderungen dieser beiden gesetzlichen Grundlagen. Das Verfahren richtet sich nach Artikel 32 HFKG. Nach Artikel 19 der Verordnung des Hochschulrates über die Akkreditierung im Hochschulbereich (Akkreditierungsverordnung HFKG, SR 414.205.3) gilt die Akkreditierung für sieben Jahre ab Akkreditierungsentscheid.

2. Aufgaben und Vorgehen der MEBEKO, Ressort Ausbildung, im Akkreditierungsprozess:
   - Nach Artikel 50 Absatz 1 MedBG kommen der MEBEKO im Bereich der Akkreditierung zwei Aufgaben zu. Sie berät verschiedene Gremien (darunter auch das Akkreditierungsorgan) in Fragen der Aus- und Weiterbildung (Buchstabe a). Die MEBEKO nimmt zudem Stellung zu Akkreditierungsanträgen im Bereich der Aus- und Weiterbildung (Buchstabe b). Das Ressort

Bundesamt für Gesundheit
Geschäftsstelle MEBEKO, Ressort Ausbildung
Schwarzenburgstrasse 157, CH-3003 Bern
Tel. +41 58 462 94 83
MEBEKO@bag.admin.ch
www.bag.admin.ch

Ausbildung der MEBEKO ist für die Akkreditierungsverfahren betreffend Ausbildungsgänge, das Ressort Weiterbildung der MEBEKO ist für diejenigen hinsichtlich Weiterbildungsgänge zuständig. Die Stellungnahme der MEBEKO, Ressort Ausbildung, erfolgt nach Erhalt des Berichtsentwurfs des Akkreditierungsorgans, welcher auf der Beurteilung der Selbst- und Fremdevaluation beruht.

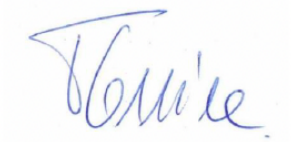
– Jeweils zwei Mitglieder der MEBEKO, Ressort Ausbildung, bereiten gestützt auf sämtliche Dokumente der Selbst- und Fremdevaluation (inklusive Expertenvisitation) sowie des Berichtsentwurfs des Akkreditierungsorgans die Diskussionen der Kommission vor. Sie berichten der Kommission schriftlich und mündlich und schlagen ihr eine Stellungnahme vor.

3. Die MEBEKO, Ressort Ausbildung, stellt fest, dass das Akkreditierungsverfahren des Studienganges Veterinärmedizin an der Vetsuisse-Fakultät der Universitäten Bern und Zürich korrekt nach den geltenden Rechtsgrundlagen und Standards durchgeführt worden ist. Die von den Experten ausgesprochenen Empfehlungen werden von der MEBEKO ebenfalls unterstützt.

4. Stellungnahme der MEBEKO, Ressort Ausbildung, bezüglich der Akkreditierung des Studienganges Veterinärmedizin an der Vetsuisse-Fakultät der Universitäten Bern und Zürich:
   - Der Selbstevaluationsbericht und der Expertenbericht aaq werden zustimmend zur Kenntnis genommen.
   - Die Beurteilung des Studienganges durch die Experten ist korrekt und empfiehlt eine Akkreditierung ohne Auflagen.
   - Die MEBEKO, Ressort Ausbildung, unterstützt die Empfehlung der Experten, den Studiengang Veterinärmedizin an der Vetsuisse-Fakultät der Universitäten Bern und Zürich zu akkreditieren.

Freundliche Grüsse

Medizinalberufekommission
Der Vizepräsident



Dr. med. Tiziano Cassina

9. Accreditation decision by the Swiss Accreditation Council

The Swiss Accreditation Council publishes its accreditation decisions:
https://akkreditierungsrat.ch/entscheide/

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