

Integrated development project for accreditation of the training of veterinary medicine in Sardinia according to European standards

Partnership:

Autonomous Government of Sardinia
University of Sassari
Department of Veterinary Medicine.

(Contextual framework)

The Degree Course in Veterinary Medicine at the University of Sassari has strategic relevance as a reference for the Sardinia Region, with repercussions of its activity on the production chains, the context of human-animal relations that are expressed in the social, economic, environmental and public health spheres.

The training of the Veterinary doctors in Europe refers to the Directive 2005/36/EC of the European Parliament and the Council of September 7, 2005 (subsequently modified by Dir. 2013/55/EU of November 20, 2013), related to the recognition of professional qualifications. The quality of veterinary education at the University of Sassari has received recognition from the national (ANVUR, 2018) and European (EAEVE¹ approval, 2013) evaluation systems.

University facilities where the Veterinary Medicine Degree program is activated are subject to periodic accreditation by the European Association of Establishments for Veterinary Education (EAEVE²), founded in 1988.

EAEVE's mission is to assess and promote the quality and standard of veterinary medical education, in the European Union and third countries. In this context, EAEVE aims to ensure the harmonization of veterinary curriculum and training to the minimum standards set by European Union Directive 2005/36. EAEVE manages, together with the Federation of European Veterinarians (FEV³) with joint liability, the evaluation and accreditation activities of facilities with reference to the European System for Evaluation of Veterinary Training (ESEVT⁴) through peer review. The requirements which veterinary training facilities must obey are defined in the Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs⁵).

The accreditation of the veterinary training facility is achieved by the successful completion of SOPs assessment of compliance and is carried out by an international commission of experts which, previously received a self-assessment report, conducts a 5-day visit.

Upon completion, the Commission proposes accreditation, provisional suspension of accreditation, or non-accreditation. The European Committee of Veterinary Education (ECOVE⁶) is the third Committee that receives the Commission's proposed evaluations for confirmation or revision of the final judgment. EAEVE provides a list of evaluated and approved institutions⁷.

Accreditation currently lasts for 7 years and at the end of this period it is renewable through a new visit. The accreditation process requires that the Veterinary Medicine graduate's educational process would be assessed through 10 Standards, and it is necessary to provide the evidence of the application of quality assurance for each of these standards. The educational process must be capable of documenting and tracking the student's achievements from the very first day (Day One Competence⁸).

¹European Association of Establishments for Veterinary Education <https://www.eaeve.org/>

²<https://www.eaeve.org/>

³ [Federation of Veterinarian of Europe](#)

⁴ [ESEVT](#)

⁵ [ESEVT Standard Operating Procedure 2019 \(rev. 2021\)](#)

⁶ [ECOVE](#)

⁷ [EAEVE Establishments' Status](#)

⁸ [Day One Competence](#)

(General objectives)

The project aims to provide support and development to the veterinary education of the Region of Sardinia, drawing motivation and urgency due to the needs arising from EAEVE visit to Sassari scheduled from 20 to 24 March 2023.

The operational context of the Department of Veterinary Medicine of the University of Sassari has been made complex by the difficulties occurring from the current pandemic and economic crisis, although continuity must be ensured in the implementation of care activities (through the University Veterinary Teaching Hospital) and teaching, especially those aimed at acquiring practical skills. The teaching activity is required to be more focused on the achievement of the skills which are valued and taken as a reference by the EAEVE standards to assess the quality of veterinary education; this approach is in line with and frequently requested by stakeholders working in the region. The Degree Course in Veterinary Medicine is required to speed up the entry of graduates into the profession which is also achieved through the recognition of the qualifying value of the degree in Veterinary Medicine. In view of the importance of European recognition of the quality of veterinary training at the Sassari Department by the EAEVE, taking into account the current lack of resources, a framework must be guaranteed for ongoing support to ensure a level of excellence.

The planning must provide resources capable of sustaining the Department to face the accreditation visit in March 2023, but also to guarantee continuity and the possibility of taking quick corrective actions, in case of indications that might result from a partially negative EAEVE Commission evaluation. These actions are to be completed within two years in order to resolve any non-conformities; the resolution will be established during another Commission visit.

(Specific objectives and actions envisaged)

The project proposes the adoption of support measures to facilitate the organic restructuring of the Degree Course in Veterinary Medicine education, making the practical training of students more effective and innovative. The aim is to take actions in the short term to increase the Course's level of compliance with European standards (EAEVE) and lay the basis for implementing best practices and innovative solutions in the organisational and educational processes.

The interventions proposed for the restructuring of the education and the improvement of teaching will be divided into two main areas:

a) University Veterinary Teaching Hospital

The University Veterinary Teaching Hospital (UVTH), launched in 2012, is a central facility for the training of veterinary doctors which provides support staff, particularly in clinical disciplines. For these reasons this structure needs highly qualified personnel and requires a significant part of resources, however, it lacks in terms of the availability of adequate staff.

The teaching activities carried out at the UVTH must suit precise requirements dictated by the EAEVE SOPs, the failure to satisfy represents a "major deficiency" and, therefore, can lead to non-accreditation.

The UVTH must also comply with the minimum requirements for veterinary facilities defined in the agreement of the State-Regions Conference of 26 November 2003 "Definition of the Minimum Structural, Technological and Organisational Requirements Required for the Provision of Veterinary Services by Public and Private Facilities" (no. 1868).

Among the requirements for emergency services, it is essential to guarantee the presence of at least one veterinary doctor 24 hours a day, with economic and organisational burdens that make the UVTH's managerial and economic sustainability difficult, not only in Sassari but at the various universities engaged in veterinary training in Europe. Teaching activities are carried out with the direct participation of students (on-the-job training) in the various fields of surgery (orthopaedics and traumatology, oncological and soft tissue surgery) and advanced diagnostic imaging, internal medicine (gastroenterology, urology, cardiology, respiratory medicine, dermatology, endocrinology) and gynaecology. The service is provided to private individuals and institutions (Autonomous Region of

Sardinia, Local Health Authorities), with agreements in several areas, in particular in the management programmes for the control of stray animals, and the development of experiments, also in collaboration with Human Medicine, together with initiatives for ongoing professional education.

b) Other teaching facilities of the Department and quality assurance

The Department of Veterinary Medicine requires teaching cost support to sustain European standards, where excellence, innovation and quality assurance are crucial. The lack of resources and the constraints resulting from the containment of public expenditure had an impact on the availability of human resource to support the management in different areas (transport of students to the teaching sites, tutoring, internal and external communication, quality assurance). The proposed interventions are aimed at resolving evident non-conformities compared to the EAEVE standards, and those will be subject to assessment for accreditation purposes. The weaknesses directly affect basic requirements for the implementation of educational processes, such as the lack of transport for students (compared to approximately 70-80 visits/year to farms and holdings) and the management of dissection and necropsy rooms. In other cases, is necessary to address the lack of dedicated staff in areas that have become critical for education, such as the management and reporting of teaching and Quality Assurance processes and activities.

Funding required and spending plan

The Department of Veterinary Medicine of the University of Sassari is requesting from the Autonomous Region of Sardinia a multiannual intervention, aimed to guarantee the quality of veterinary doctor training in compliance with the European standards defined by EAEVE. The Department has mobilised its limited resources to sustain current costs in 2022 to support its assistance and teaching activities, but in the next three-year period it is necessary to deal with the exceptional costs arising from the visit(s) of the EAEVE Commission, entirely borne by the Department and estimated at €25,000 for the accreditation visit in 2023, and for the foreseeable subsequent visit to verify that the non-conformities have been resolved (2025). It is, therefore, necessary to plan current expenditure interventions, in order to reactivate the University Veterinary Teaching Hospital and guarantee its full operation, together with the adjustment of the teaching management to meet EAEVE standards.

Expenditure Plan

I) Extraordinary expenditure

1) advances 2022

a) **Improvement of teaching and quality assurance 2022**

€ 20,000 (personnel)

€ 10,000 (consumables)

b) **2022 operation of the ODVU**

€ 40,000 (consumables)

2) EAEVE accreditation visits

c) **EAEVE accreditation visit costs (travel, accommodation and transport of EAEVE Commission members, fully borne by the Department)**

accreditation visit 2023 (20-24 March): € 25,000

non-conformity resolution visit 2025: € 25,000

*(Partial total **120,000**)*

II) Current expenditure (amount per year in the three-year period 2023, 2024, 2025)

3) University Veterinary Teaching Hospital

a) contract staff covering 24-hour emergency room for 365 days/year (€ 120,000)

b) management and administration support (process management, front-office and related administrative tasks, such as invoices and management of consumable and drug stock) (€ 40,000)

c) additional resources for on-call and emergencies (surgical team), technicians and support specialists (70,000 €)

d) contribution for ordinary and extraordinary maintenance (€30,000)

e) stipulation of support contracts for practical teaching with professionals working in the area (€35,000)

f) ODVU consumables (70,000 €)

g) ODVU management software (5,000 €)

(Subtotal 370,000)

4) Other teaching facilities of the Department and quality assurance

a) rental of means of transport (n.2) and related costs (63,000 €)

b) tutor contract to support teaching organisation, activity management and training network (18,000 €)

c) technical support for teaching activities in septic and necropsy rooms, including the procurement of material for practical teaching (€18,000)

d) support for the creation of additional teaching resources (digitisation, teaching aids, interactive tools, management of IT platforms to support teaching) and internal and external communication (€25,000)

e) contract for quality assurance manager departmental processes and EAEVE accreditation (22,000)

f) project manager for monitoring, verification and reporting activities (24,000)

(Subtotal 170,000)

Expected results.

The actions envisaged are necessary to ensure the correction and consolidation of the training activities carried out within the framework of the Degree Course in Veterinary Medicine at the University of Sassari. The proposed actions are aimed at ensuring compliance with European requirements and, with the achievement of EAEVE accreditation, the maintenance of the educational standard of a degree course unique to Sardinia. Support for the re-establishment of full functionality of the UVTH will promote greater cooperation with veterinary surgeons and institutions in the area, not only to adapt the training processes of graduates, but also to provide qualified support for initiatives concerning animal health and public health in the Autonomous Region of Sardinia.

Il Direttore
(Prof. E.P.L. De Santis)

Expenditure Plan 2023-2025

	2022	2023	2024	2025
1) extraordinary expenses				
1. EAEVE accreditation visits		25.000		25.000
2. Educational Quality Assurance	20.000			
3. Consumables	10.000			
4. UVTH operation	40.000			
<i>Subtotal</i>	<i>70,000*</i>	<i>25.000</i>		<i>25.000</i>
2) Current expenditure				
<u>University Veterinary Teaching Hospital</u>				
5. Contract staff 24-hour first aid coverage for 365 days / year		120.000	120.000	120.000
6. contract staff for UVTH management and administration (process management, front-office and related administrative obligations, such as invoices and warehouse management of consumables and medicines)		40.000	40.000	40.000
7. availability and emergencies (surgical team), technicians and support specialists		70.000	70.000	70.000
8. Contribution to ordinary and extraordinary maintenance		30.000	30.000	30.000
9. Practical teaching support contracts with professionals operating in the area		35.000	35.000	35.000
10. UVTH consumables		70.000	70.000	70.000
11. UVTH management software		5.000	5.000	5.000
<i>Subtotal</i>		<i>370.000</i>	<i>370.000</i>	<i>370.000</i>
<u>Other teaching facilities of the Department and quality assurance</u>				
12. rental of means of transport students (n.2) and related costs		63.000	63.000	63.000
13. tutor contract (support for didactic organization, activity management and training network)		18.000	18.000	18.000
14. Technical Teaching Activities Sectoral Rooms and Necroscopies		18.000	18.000	18.000
15. additional digital teaching resources (digitization, teaching aids, interactive tools, management of IT platforms to support teaching) and internal and external communication		25.000	25.000	25.000
16. contract for quality assurance manager departmental processes and EAEVE accreditation		22.000	22.000	22.000
17. Project Manager for monitoring, verification and reporting of project activities		24.000	24.000	24.000
<i>Subtotal</i>		<i>170.000</i>	<i>170.000</i>	<i>170.000</i>
Grand total	70.000	565.000	540.000	565.000