



Interim Report

Name and location of the Veterinary Education Establishment (VEE)

University of Padova – Department of Animal Medicine, Production and Health

Name and details of the current VEE's Head and the head(s) of the VTH

Prof. Alessandro Zotti (Head of the VEE); Prof. Michele Berlanda (Head of the VTH)

Date of the completion of the Interim Report (*five years after the Full Visitation at the latest*):

28th October 2025

Date of the previous visitation(s)

19th – 23rd October 2020

Any major changes which may affect the compliance with the ESEVT Standards since the previous (R)SER/IR

- The number of students in the DCVM programme has increased from 75 (AY 2020-21) to 100 (AY 2023-24) due to the national regulation as per Ministerial Decree n.75, 10.02.2023. As a consequence, the number of students per *Tirocinio* (i.e. practical rotations) group was raised from 4 to 5, ensuring that the quality of *Tirocinio* activities is maintained. Simultaneously, the number of teaching staff was increased (see raw data 1 in the attached ESEVT Indicators) to support the larger number of groups and uphold high teaching standards, also involving teachers who had not previously participated in *Tirocinio* activities.
- Due to the African swine fever outbreak, access to swine farms could not be guaranteed. To compensate for the decrease of practical learning, alternative activities were implemented: interviews with farmers, instructional videos and case studies from farms, and virtual farm tours were prepared and made available on the Moodle e-learning platform. With regard to avian influenza, access to poultry farms was ensured by rescheduling *Tirocinio* activities after emergency measures were lifted.
- The Italian Ministry of University and Research has recently introduced Ministerial Decree No. 418 (30.05.2025), abolishing entrance exams for Medicine and Surgery, Veterinary Medicine, and Dentistry, replacing them with an "open semester" (*semestre aperto*). The *semestre aperto* has been introduced as an experimental admission model, under which all students attend the

same three foundational courses (chemistry and propaedeutic biochemistry, physics, and biology), each worth 6 ECTS, regardless of their intended degree programme (Medicine and Surgery, Veterinary Medicine, or Dentistry). These courses are organized by the University of Padova and are delivered in a hybrid format, both online and in person. At the end of the *semestre aperto*, students undertake standardized national examinations in these subjects; the successful completion of these exams determines admission to the full degree programmes based on a merit-based national ranking. Following this selection process, 100 students will be admitted to the DCVM. As a consequence of this Ministerial Decree, the VEE promptly reorganised its teaching schedule: courses of the first year that include laboratory activities have been rescheduled to occur during the second semester to ensure continuity of practical training and compliance with curriculum requirements.

- During the 2024–2025 academic year, the VTH emergency service for weekends was temporarily suspended due to organisational constraints, mainly related to the shortage of veterinarians and consequent difficulties in recruitment, a challenge currently shared by several veterinary clinics in Central and Northern Italy. In an effort to address this issue, a new organisational model has been implemented to ensure the continuity of hospitalisation services 24/7, thereby providing senior veterinary students with sufficient exposure to emergency-type cases and procedures. The measures undertaken to improve emergency service provision and continuity of patient care are based on the involvement of contract staff already employed in other veterinary services of the VTH. At the same time, efforts to recruit dedicated staff are ongoing.

Progress in the correction of:

-) Major Deficiencies (non-compliance with the ESEVT Standards)

No Major Deficiencies were reported during the last visitation.

-) Minor Deficiencies (partial compliance with the ESEVT Standards)

Substandard 4.3 (Facilities and equipment):

Since the last Interim Report, the tender for the construction of an enlarged VTH (about 1,000 m²) has been completed and the winning contractor selected. Construction work is scheduled to begin in February-March 2026, with completion expected by the end of 2027. For the other planned buildings, namely a large lecture hall (approximately 300 m²) and a room for practical activities (approximately 180 m²), an executive project has been completed and the tendering process is scheduled for the next months.

Substandard 8.8 (Student assessment):

A dedicated committee reviewed and standardized course syllabi and assessment methods within the degree programme, ensuring compliance with institutional requirements. As a result, all syllabi are now fully compliant and published in the University of Padova course catalogue of the University of Padova (<https://didattica.unipd.it/>). The student questionnaire, revised after its initial version, has demonstrated improved reliability. Data collection is currently ongoing, with the objective of attaining a sufficient sample size to support a statistically valid analysis.

Plans for the near future

i) The construction of a new facility including examination rooms for equine patients is planned as part of the forthcoming infrastructure development. The executive project has already been

completed and formally submitted, with the next phase involving the tendering and contracting procedures.

ii) Following the previous IR, meetings are currently taking place with the University of Padova's facility development office to plan the refurbishment of teaching facilities at the university farm, ensuring compliance with biosafety standards for students, animals, and teaching and support staff.

iii) One permanent staff member, specialized in transmissible diseases and pathology of non-traditional companion animals (rabbit, rodent, bird, and exotic patients), was hired in June 2025. In addition, an external veterinary practitioner, specialized in clinical management of non-traditional companion animals, has been contracted since October 2024 to provide practical, case-based teaching to senior veterinary students, which has contributed to increasing the number of cases (see raw data 17 in the attached ESEVT Indicators). Furthermore, a new track on non-traditional companion animals has been approved, enhancing the educational offer by providing a more comprehensive focus on species that are only superficially covered in the standard companion animal curriculum. It has been approved for students enrolled in the current academic year (2025-2026) and will become available starting from their fourth year of study, i.e. in the academic year 2028-2029.

Proposed dates for the next Full Visitation which should be completed:

-) **at the latest two months before the date of the ECOVE meeting preceding the end of granted status;**

-) **during a period of full teaching activities.**

Please propose a minimum of two different weeks to allow the EAEVE Office to select a week which is still available in the ESEVT diary.

Week 1: 10th – 14th May 2027

Week 2: 17th – 21st May 2027

Annex: Updated Excel table with ESEVT Indicators