Department of Veterinary Medicine
Information for students

Attendance and absence

In order to meet Royal College of Veterinary Surgeons requirements, and Vet MB Regulations, evidence of ‘diligent attendance at courses of instruction’ is required before you may sit Part II or Part III of the Final Vet MB examination.

Clinical rotations
All rotation sessions in the 4th and 5th years are compulsory and will require a signature of the instructor in your ‘black book’ to certify attendance. Responsibility for obtaining a signature lies with you.
In the case of an absence of more than one half day in any two-week rotation in the 6th year, even if this absence has been certified (see below), you will be required to retake the part of the rotation that has been missed before you can be considered to have passed the rotation. This will include taking any missed test or presentation that is an integral part of a rotation.

During final year rotations, if there is any ‘Cause for Concern’ indicated on the rotation assessment sheet, depending on the nature of the issue, you may be asked to undertake remediation, the nature of which would be discussed and agreed by the rotation organisers. This may take the form of further training in the Clinical Skills Centre or you may be asked to repeat part, or all of a rotation.

Lecture courses
You are expected to attend all lectures, as these form an important part of your clinical training.
Lectures often provide a different, more focused and critical, viewpoint than the simple factual information presented in handouts. They also often present visual information vital in veterinary education. The discussion and presentation of this material will not be available elsewhere, and knowledge and understanding of it will be assumed, particularly in the final examination.
It is a dangerous and shortsighted strategy to consider that lectures can be missed because a handout has been provided. No guarantee is given that only material presented in the handout will be tested in examinations, as some examination material may only be presented during a lecture. The handout is provided as guidance to the material covered and to save excessive writing of factual information. Persistent absence may also mean that you will not be entered for the appropriate examination.

Attendance and progress review
Your VSCS will review your black book at your termly meeting, and will review your performance in the Part I and Part II examinations. If attendance or examination performance is inadequate, you will be invited to discuss your progress with the Director of Teaching. If your attendance continues to be unsatisfactory, you will be advised in writing that permission to enter a Final Vet MB examination may be withheld, and the matter may be referred to the Faculty Board of Veterinary Medicine.
**Illness**

If you are ill and absent from the course, you should inform the Academic Support Office or the Director of Teaching at the first opportunity and also the relevant rotation organizer(s).

If you are absent for more than two consecutive days in the 4th and 5th years, you must complete a self-certificate when you return to the course. If you are absent for more than seven consecutive days (including weekends), a doctor’s certificate must be submitted to the Academic Support Office, for the attention of the Director of Teaching.

If you are absent for more than half a day and less than two days in the 6th year, you must provide a Tutor’s note to certify your absence when you return to the course. If you are absent for more than two consecutive days, a doctor’s certificate must be submitted to the Academic Support Office, for the attention of the Director of Teaching.

In all cases of absence through illness, the Director of Teaching will decide if remedial attendance is required and how it will be arranged.

**Leave of absence**

The clinical veterinary course is intensive and tightly timetabled. Student groups and rotation schedules are mapped out for the entire course well in advance and cannot be changed easily. If you need to be absent for a reason other than illness, you must seek written permission in advance from the Director of Teaching, who is the only person authorised to give such permissions.

Final year students can request a one day absence from rotations to take part in a University or national team level event. No more than two of these requests is allowed for each student. These absences must be on non-consecutive days. All requests for absences other than illness must be brought to the attention of the Director of Teaching as stated above; other staff are not authorized to give you permission. It is your responsibility to arrange to catch up with what you have missed from the rotation, by arrangement with the rotation organizer(s).

In the event that the Director of Teaching allows an absence of more than two days to attend a national or University level event, you should consider that it would be best to change rotation groups altogether. All requests for absence should be brought to the attention of the Director of Teaching as early as possible; certainly before you start your final year rotations. You should also consider that even once you have arranged to make up the time that you have missed, there is still the possibility that you might not pass that rotation.

Absence from rotations will mean that you have to catch up with what you have missed, which might have implications for your EMS completion. You should therefore aim to have completed a sizeable number of EMS weeks before starting your final year rotations, as described in the current EMS guidelines.

The Director of Teaching will consider requests for absence made for grave personal reasons, (including illness or bereavement) or if you are required to attend a course of
study directly related to the clinical veterinary course and pre-approved by the Department. Requests made for any other reason are likely to be declined.

You will appreciate that, as a veterinary surgeon, you will, at times, have to make a decision not to do what you want when you want because of your clinical duties and responsibilities to your patients, clients and colleagues.