

Feedback from on-going twinning project between University of Peradeniya and Massey University including the importance of involving other authorities

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The University of Peradeniya (UP) is the only institution in Sri Lanka that educates veterinarians. Under the auspices of an OIE VEE Twinning Project, in conjunction with the veterinary school at Massey University, New Zealand, FVMAS has initiated a 'ground-up' review of its veterinary curriculum and associated functions.

Stakeholder inputs were obtained from graduates, students, veterinarians (private and government) and livestock producers. Internal reviews by FVMAS academic staff were distilled into a Self-Evaluation Report, from which a gap analysis was performed by IVABS staff. Using these inputs (and the OIE Graduate Competencies), a graduate profile has been developed as the basis for a new curriculum. The instructional approach will be student-centred, outcomes-based and aligned with the graduate profile; and there will be concurrent development of the extension activities of FVMAS to increase the competence of veterinary graduates in agricultural extension. Key curricular developments include (i) introduction of a lecture-free final year of clinical rosters; (ii) horizontal and vertical integration of courses between and within curriculum years; (iii) early introduction of courses in animal handling and farm production; (iv) introduction of case-based, experiential-learning courses through each year of the programme; and (v) development of a new programme stream in core professional 'soft' skills.

The ramifications of this redevelopment of the programme were far wider than the twinning partners first envisaged, extending well beyond the internal approval processes of UP. Opinion, consent and permission have had to be sought from the Veterinary Council of Sri Lanka, government Department of Animal Production & Health, University Grants Commission and Ministry of Education. Partnership with commercial livestock enterprises, private and corporate veterinary practices and the DAPH has been sought to enable delivery of the extended clinical final year. Indeed, these activities have proved at least as critical to the outcome of the twinning programme as has the internal process of curriculum revision.

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