



## Enhancing the quality of veterinary medical graduates to meet tomorrow's food security challenge



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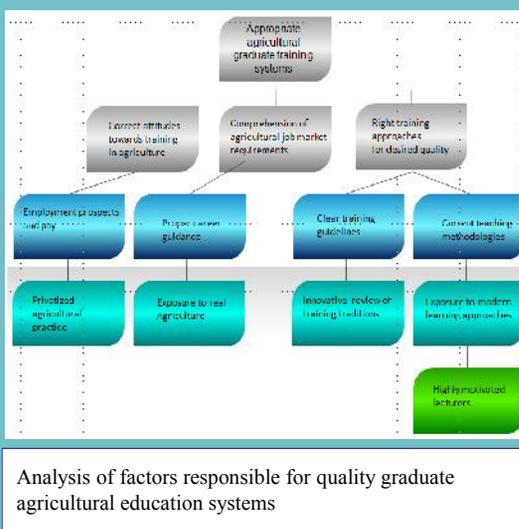
### Abstract:

To enhance veterinary graduate performance, pre-university, within university and post-university baseline surveys were conducted to determine factors for competence of veterinary graduates. A majority of secondary schools students have no information on veterinary careers. In spite of the fact that over 60% of the lecturers believe in the usefulness of their teaching in influencing societal change, they feel inadequate to the teaching responsibility and desire didactic training. This may explain the observation that >40% veterinary students are poorly motivated to learn. Consequently, 50 employers (>90%) surveyed, stated that new veterinary graduates lack adequate requisite skills. Three leading universities in Eastern Africa are implementing a project to address the shortcomings cited above in partnership with the Department of Science Education at the University of Copenhagen, Denmark. The best practices developed through the project including learning approaches, student mentorship, industrial linkages and pre-university student mind-set change approaches will be widely disseminated.

**Keywords:** veterinary education – education quality, – mentorship – experiential learning.

### Introduction

An appropriate veterinary education can ensure holistic and competent graduates possessed of relevant knowledge, skills, attitudes and aptitude to promote animal health, animal welfare, veterinary public health and food safety. Current university educational system is admitting students who have varied academic capabilities and cultural backgrounds. In addition, rapid expansion in student numbers has stretched facilities and staff capacities to train. Universities receive students (raw materials) and mold (process) them, as in a "factory", into graduates (products) that consumers (employers) and veterinary statutory bodies want. However, employers frequently find the new graduates to be of lower quality than desired. This brought about the need to identify factors responsible for graduate quality and develop approaches to address them. The University of Nairobi led a partnership comprising Sokoine University of Agriculture, Makerere University and the University of Copenhagen (Department of Science Education) in efforts to improve and regionally harmonize quality of university agricultural education. PREPARE –BSc. project addresses student, staff and administrative challenges in order to enhance the quality of graduates of agriculture.



Activity	Key Observation/challenge(s)	Project approach to address the challenge(s)
Secondary School survey	Majority have inadequate information on agricultural programs	❖ University student ambassadors; Brochures; Socio-media discussion fora
University wide KAP survey	> 40% of the students have negative attitudes towards agriculture including veterinary sciences	❖ Industry captains as mentors/ role models ❖ Current and future careers opportunities information provided ❖ Cross-age peer student mentorship program enhanced
Didactic training session	> 50% of the lecturers are poorly exposed to modern learning approaches	➤ Lecturers trained in modern learning approaches such as engaging and activating students, problem based learning, mentorship, curriculum aligned to required competencies, assessment and feedback for and of learning
Bench-marking tour DSE - UC, Denmark	Administrative procedures fail to respond adequately to learning needs	✓ Review and update rules and regulations governing the programs ✓ Creation of awareness on rules, regulations and teaching procedures ✓ Appropriate lecturer evaluation and graduate quality monitoring tools
Employers	Mismatch of labor market skill demand with current graduate competencies	o Participation of industry partners in curricula development and review o Stronger and more focused internship program during training period o Guest lectures by industry captains

### Conclusion

This project will raise academic standards in veterinary education through improved learning governance procedures based on best practices from willing sharing among partners and other relevant regional higher education institutions. We expect that, at the end of the project, young people will have improved attitudes towards careers in agriculture, be motivated to learn thus acquiring competencies required in the labour market.

Acknowledgement:

This project supported by the European Union under contract No. FED/2013/320-109; EuropeAid /132023/D/ACT/ACPTPS EDULINK II.

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