

CURRICULUM WORKSHOP

22-23 FEBRUARY 2009

The Curriculum Development Committee (CDC) is in the process of developing the outcome-focussed curriculum which is a key component of the School's Vision. This means the core content that the students' learn, and competencies they develop, will be relevant to the ultimate role of a veterinarian following graduation. The structure of this curriculum is based on a model which was developed by Professor Newble and his colleagues in the UK ('The Sheffield Model'), and has been successfully applied in both medicine and dentistry curricula in Europe and Australia (Newble et al, 2005).

The first stage in this process was to develop the outcome-based learning objectives which the students must acquire during the course. These objectives are covered under three broad categories: Adelaide University's graduate attributes; veterinary clinical competencies; and underpinning veterinary sciences, full details of which can be found on the Curriculum Development website. A provisional list of veterinary problems/ presentations faced by veterinary practitioners for all species (eg cough, abnormal behaviour, abdominal pain, abnormal flight etc) was constructed, based on the veterinary literature and lists such as the "United Kingdom Veterinary Group Diagnostic Codes" (Royal Veterinary College, personal communication) and "The Programme Outcomes of the Veterinary Curriculum" (University of Utrecht, 2006). This list was refined after consultation with local veterinary practitioners. For each of these individual problems/presentations on the list, a draft blueprint was created outlining the core content in more detail. The outcome objectives were used as the framework to develop these content blueprints. For each, the underpinning knowledge and specific competencies required to understand, diagnose and manage the clinical problem are identified. These blueprints will be used to define and map the course content of the overall 6 year programme.

The workshop was attended by veterinary professionals representing private practice, research facilities and industry. Academics from South Australian Universities also attended. There was a wide range of expertise. The purpose of this conference was to revise all the blueprints to ensure the content was of the highest standard and reflected the requirements of modern veterinary practice. All the blueprints were thoroughly reviewed and necessary changes recorded. The general points being raised at each table were consistent and were reflected in changes made to each blueprint. The conference was highly successful and the process generated much discussion, not only about the specific blueprints but also the curriculum in general.

The final editing of the problem/presentation blueprints is currently in being undertaken by the Curriculum Development Committee. Once completed, the problem/presentation list and each blueprint will be available on-line in a searchable core curriculum database, to be called Chiron, for use by staff and students.

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Reference: Newble D, Stark P, Bax N & Lawson M. Developing an outcome-focussed core curriculum. Medical Education, 2005; 39: 680-687.

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