



Regulator accreditation criteria

ACOVENE's principal aim in setting criteria for accreditation and evaluating organisations against them is to ensure that the organisations and their associated schools;

- are well managed;
- run sustainably;
- have the appropriate resources (people, facilities and animals);
- provide a relevant curriculum;
- provide appropriate support to students in their learning;
- operate fair, valid and reliable assessment systems;
- operate robust quality assurance and quality enhancement mechanisms.

This is what lies behind the ACOVENE criteria for accreditation, adapted from the Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area (ESG). Compliance with all the criteria provides an assurance that the organisation and its associated schools meet the needs of the veterinary profession.

To be accredited by ACOVENE, the organisation must meet all the standards set out below including:

- ensuring that students meet the ACOVENE Dossier of Competences for veterinary nurses;
- ensuring associated schools meet the ACOVENE Accreditation Policies and Procedures;
- complying with other policies published by ACOVENE from time to time relating to veterinary nurse education.

Criterion 1 – The organisation

1.a	A senior member of staff (the official correspondent) responsible for the overall administration and delivery of external quality assurance mechanisms must be designated.
1.b	Details of the associated school(s) at which veterinary nurse qualifications are administered must be provided.
1.c	Applications must be made by the principal or chief executive of the organisation.
	Guidance
1.a	Please provide the name, address and contact details of the organisation seeking ACOVENE accreditation.
1.b	Append a list of all locations (associated schools) delivering veterinary nurse qualifications. The list should include name, address and contact details for each school. Schools must meet ACOVENE Accreditation Policies and Procedures.
1.c	The application must be signed by the principal or chief executive of the organisation. The name, position and contact of the official correspondent must also be provided. This is the person that ACOVENE will correspond with in relation to the accreditation application.

Criterion 2 – Consideration of internal quality assurance

2.a	External quality assurance must address the effectiveness of the internal quality assurance processes within its associated schools.
	Guidance
2.a	Quality assurance is based on institutions' responsibility for the quality of their provision; therefore it is important that external quality assurance recognises and supports this responsibility.

Criterion 3 – Designing methodologies fit for purpose

3.a	External quality assurance should be defined and designed specifically to ensure its fitness to achieve the aims and objectives set for it, while taking into account relevant regulations.
	Guidance

3.a	<p>In order to ensure effectiveness and objectivity it is vital for external quality assurance to have clear aims and objectives. These should:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ bear in mind the level of workload and cost that they will place on schools; ▪ take into account the need to support schools to improve quality; ▪ allow schools to demonstrate this improvement; ▪ result in clear information on the outcomes and follow-up.
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Criterion 4 – Implementing processes

4.a	<p>External quality assurance processes should be reliable, useful, pre-defined, implemented consistently and published. They must include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ a self-assessment; ▪ an external assessment including a site visit; ▪ a report resulting from the external assessment; ▪ a consistent follow-up and review of actions.
	<p>Guidance</p>
4.a	<p>External quality assurance carried out professionally, consistently and transparently ensures its acceptance and impact. The school provides the basis for the external quality assurance through self-assessment or by providing supporting evidence. Written documentation can be complemented by interviews with school staff and students during a site visit. The findings of the quality assurance activity must be summarised in a report.</p> <p>The completed report must provide clear guidance for school action. Organisations must have a clear follow-up process for considering the action taken by the school.</p>

Criterion 5 – Peer review experts

5.a	<p>External quality assurance must be carried out by suitably trained and qualified personnel.</p>
	<p>Guidance</p>

5.a	<p>At the core of external quality assurance is the wide range of expertise provided by peer experts, who contribute through input from various perspectives, including those of schools, academics, students and employers/professional practitioners.</p> <p>In order to ensure the value and consistency of the work of the experts, they must</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ be carefully selected; ▪ have appropriate skills and be competent to perform their task; ▪ be supported by appropriate training and/or briefing. <p>The organisation must ensure the independence of the experts by implementing a mechanism of no-conflict of-interest.</p>
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Criterion 6 – Criteria for outcomes

6.a	<p>Outcomes and judgements made as the result of external quality assurance must be based on explicit and published criteria that are applied consistently.</p>
	<p>Guidance</p>
6.a	<p>External quality assurance and in particular its outcomes have a significant impact on schools that are evaluated and judged.</p> <p>In the interests of equity and reliability, outcomes of external quality assurance must be based on pre-defined and published criteria, which are interpreted consistently and are evidence-based. Depending on the external quality assurance system, outcomes may take different forms, for example, recommendations or conditions.</p>

Criterion 7 – Reporting

7.a	<p>Full reports should be published, clear and accessible to the academic community, external partners and other interested parties. If the organisation takes any formal decision based on the reports, the decision should be published together with the report.</p>
	<p>Guidance</p>
7.a	<p>The report must provide the basis for the school's follow-up action therefore, it must be clear, concise in structure and language and cover:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ description of the quality assurance procedure, including the visitors involved; ▪ evidence, analysis and findings; ▪ conclusions;

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ features of good practice, demonstrated by the school; ▪ recommendations for follow-up action. <p>Reports should be forwarded to the schools for comment of factual accuracy.</p>
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Criterion 8 – Complaints and appeals

8.a	Complaints and appeals processes should be clearly defined as part of the design of external quality assurance processes and communicated to the associated schools.
	Guidance
8.a	<p>In order to safeguard the rights of schools and ensure fair decision-making, external quality assurance must be operated in an open and accountable way.</p> <p>Schools need to have access to processes that allow them to raise issues of concern with the organisation; the organisation needs to handle such issues in a professional way by means of a clearly defined and consistently applied process.</p>

Criterion 9 – Self-evaluation and reporting

9.a	Organisations must evaluate the administration and delivery of quality assurance mechanisms, along with compliance with ACOVENE Standards of Accreditation across all associated schools and provide a report to ACOVENE annually or when otherwise required to do so.
	Guidance
9.a	<p>ACOVENE requires organisations to provide a self-evaluation (SER) report annually. This must contain the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ details of organisational non-compliance with ACOVENE Criteria for Accreditation; ▪ details of school non-compliance with ACOVENE Criteria for Accreditation; <p>A template for the report is available from ACOVENE.</p> <p>The organisation must have mechanisms in place to inform ACOVENE of any proposed changes to its structure and/or administration and delivery of external quality assurance mechanisms.</p>