

# **Development and evaluation of Peer Assisted Learning (PAL) in the veterinary curriculum: platform for a new Undergraduate Certificate in Veterinary Medical Education (UCVME)**

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## **FINAL REPORT TO THE PTAS**

The aims of our project were:

- *To evaluate the use of **Peer Assisted Learning (PAL)** within the BVM&S curriculum, identify potential benefits to the student learning experience, and explore student and staff perceptions about PAL methodology with a view to developing and supporting further PAL activities.*
- *To develop a novel **Undergraduate Certificate in Veterinary Medical Education (UCVME)**.*
- *To recruit and develop a **postgraduate** with an interest in veterinary education, thereby adding to an increasing pool of experience and interest in veterinary education as a specialist discipline within the profession. Further to this, to develop their skills in both qualitative and quantitative research methodologies.*

The project proceeded smoothly and achieved all of our aims, with some minor amendments to methods as the project progressed.

## **Peer Assisted Learning (PAL)**

Results of our study supported our research hypothesis that PAL is a valuable teaching methodology, which enhances the teaching/learning experience of participants. Analysis of the post-PAL intervention feedback data obtained from 1<sup>st</sup> year/Graduate Entry Programme (GEP) tutees and 4<sup>th</sup> year tutors showed that PAL was perceived as a valuable teaching methodology. The results also suggested that the PAL clinical skills course provided a valuable opportunity for students to enhance their examination and tutoring skills and knowledge. Tutee feedback also suggested that, at the point of execution, 4<sup>th</sup> year tutors had the skills required to deliver effective PAL interventions.

For logistical and curricular reasons, it was elected to change the evaluation of PAL impact from an OSCE style assessment to a Multiple Choice Question paper evaluation. First year/GEP tutees and 4<sup>th</sup> year tutors were asked to complete one set of multiple choice questions before the canine clinical skills PAL session and a different set of questions immediately after the intervention. The results from the study were inconclusive but did highlight several areas for future research; PAL interventions were linked with improved knowledge in some groups of students but this was not statistically significant.

## **Undergraduate Certificate in Veterinary Medical Education (UCVME)**

Through this project, the UCVME was designed and introduced successfully into the Vet School in 2014/15. This novel Certificate training programme is believed to be the first of its kind in the veterinary sector. This optional programme is modular and aligned with the UK Professional Standards Framework (UKPSF). Students enrol in their third year, undertaking core and elective components, with completion over the final three years of the degree. The UCVME has been positively received, with 30 of 160 third year students enrolling in the programme's first year. In 2015/16, 43 of the 161 third year students enrolled. Five of the 2014/15 intake have embarked on the **Higher Education Academy** Associate Fellowship application pathway. Mentored by the UCVME team, these students will complete their Certificate to evidence their teaching and learning support practice and submit an additional portfolio application aligned to HEA Associate Fellow status. We are just about to admit 5 of the 2015/16 intake into this HEA pathway.

Activities receiving credit and designed in partnership between staff and students have included: PAL sessions, widening participation school educational workshops and client education events. This initiative has created numerous student-driven educational opportunities. It is hoped that this programme will facilitate the educational training of students and enhance employability and career satisfaction. One educational strand implemented is the opportunity for our veterinary students to become involved in **Widening Participation** workshops and school visits to foster the link with young people aspiring to enter higher education. As an illustration of this impact, in the first year of running the UCVME, 26 of our students have been involved in a total of 9 outreach educational activities, with exposure to over 650 school pupils. Some of our UCVME students are involved with the LEAPs and Pathways to the Profession schemes. There is significant scope for institutions to develop their outreach and public engagement activities through student-centred initiatives such as this Certificate. We have developed an ongoing outreach partnership with **Liberton High School** through this novel UCVME (see Liberton High School newsletter May 2015, attached).

### **Postgraduate Student**

We successfully recruited a postgraduate student into this project (NS, a clinically qualified small animal veterinarian). The student was involved in and pivotal in all aspects of the study, presented a research abstract at the VetEd 2014 Conference and is just about to submit an MSc thesis on this work. The student received training in the educational research aspects of the project.

## Outputs

### ***Presentations, Workshops, Websites***

<b>School</b>	<b>Detail</b>	<b>Timing</b>
Presentation to discipline lead for the Higher Education Academy (HEA)	Showcased PAL and UCVME project	Sept 2013
Veterinary Medical Education Division Journal Club (JC)	JC on topic of PAL and Healthcare Professionals as Educators	June 2015
<b>University</b>		
UoE CMVM QA Executive report to UoE Senate	UCVME highlighted as an example of best practice	2015
UoE <i>Teaching Matters</i> website: <a href="http://www.ed.ac.uk/staff/teaching-matters/focus-school/royal-dick-vet/developing-teachers">http://www.ed.ac.uk/staff/teaching-matters/focus-school/royal-dick-vet/developing-teachers</a>	UCVME featured: 'Developing Teachers of the Future'	February 2016
<b>National/ International Conferences</b>		
VETED 2014 (Veterinary Education Conference)	2 Short communications/posters on PAL <sup>1</sup>	Bristol, July 2014
INVEST 2014 (International Veterinary Simulation in Teaching Conference)	Short Communication on PAL	St. Kitts, 2014
Association for Medical Education in Europe (AMEE)	Short Communication on the UCVME	Glasgow, Sept 2015

### ***Papers/Reports***

<sup>2</sup>*Published paper:* Hudson, N., Stansbie, N., Rhind, S., Brown, G., Handel, I., Mellanby, R. and Bell, C. (2015). Recognising and developing students as teachers: introduction of a novel Undergraduate Certificate in Veterinary Medical Education. *Medical Teacher*. Doi:10.3109/0142159X.2015.1078891.

<sup>3</sup>*Published report:* N. Hudson (2015) 'Crucial role of vets as teachers.' *Veterinary Times* 22 October 2015: <http://www.vettimes.co.uk/article/crucial-role-of-vets-as-teachers/>

*Paper in preparation:* Bell, C., Stansbie, N., Rhind, S., Hudson, N. Getting started with Peer Assisted Learning (PAL) in a veterinary curriculum.

### ***Abstracts***

Hudson, N.P.H., Stansbie, N.H., Rhind, S.M., Handel, I.G., Mellanby, R.J. and Bell, C.E. (2014) Peer assisted learning (PAL) in veterinary clinical training: an increasing role in the Edinburgh veterinary undergraduate curriculum. *Proceedings of the 2014 Veterinary Education (VetEd) Conference*, Bristol, UK.

Stansbie, N.H., Hudson, N.P.H., Rhind, S.M., Handel, I.G., Mellanby, R.J. and Bell, C.E. (2014) Evaluation of peer assisted learning (PAL) as a teaching methodology for veterinary clinical examination training. *Proceedings of the 2014 Veterinary Education (VetEd) Conference*, Bristol, UK.

Bell, C.E., Stansbie, N.H. and Hudson, N.P.H. (2014) Peer assisted learning (PAL) in clinical skills training: the student perspective. *Proceedings of the 2014 INVEST (International Veterinary Simulation in Teaching) Conference*, St. Kitts.

### **Newsletters**

<sup>4</sup>Liberton High School, Edinburgh, *Newsletter May 2015*: featured Dick Vet visit as part of UCVME workshops. <http://libertonhigh.org/news/newsletters/>

<sup>1,2,3,4</sup> *Conference posters, Medical Teacher paper, Veterinary Times Report and Liberton High School Newsletter attached to PTAS report email.*

### **Concluding Remarks**

We are extremely grateful to the PTAS for the support for this work, which we believe was very successful. The PAL and UCVME go from strength to strength as a result of this work and the scope for outreach and public engagement is an exciting development for the Vet School and the University. We believe that the educational benefits of this work will be helpful to educators and learners in many sectors. In addition, as an indirect but tangible benefit of this project, NH was able to develop a case study on PAL and the UCVME as part of his successful 2015 application for Senior Fellowship of the Higher Education Academy (SFHEA).

With many thanks again.

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