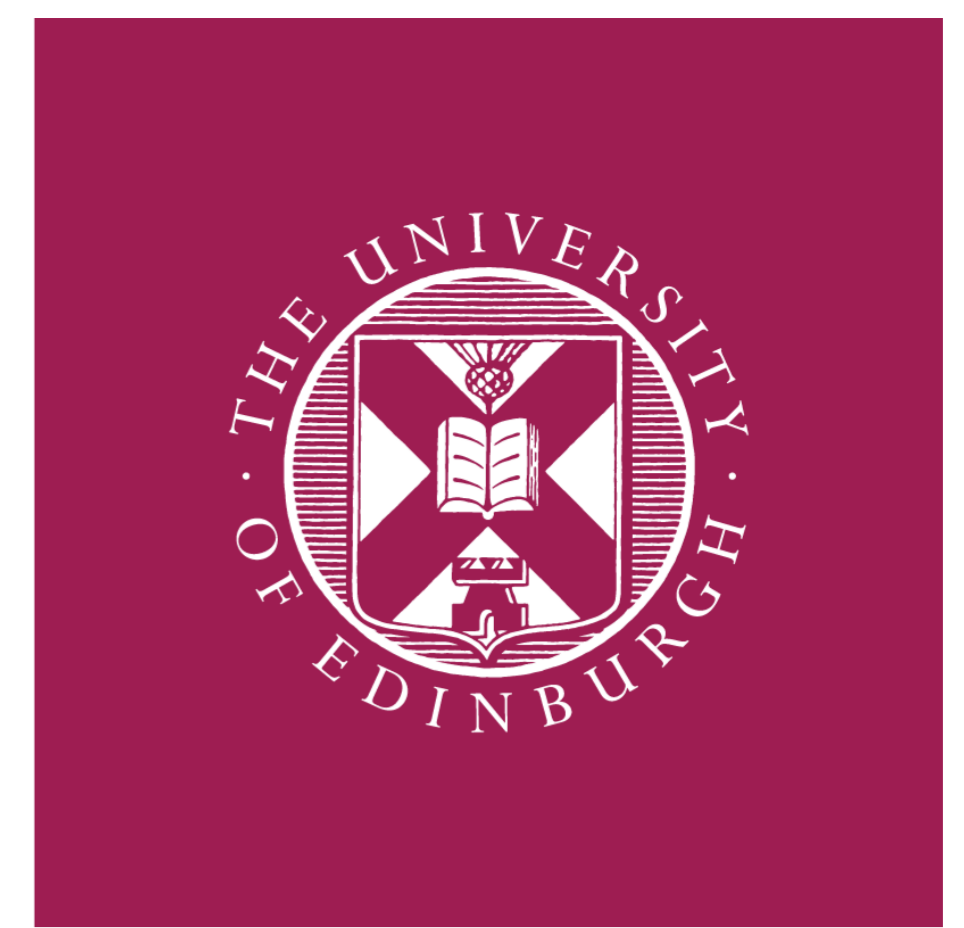# THE ROYAL (DICK) SCHOOL OF VETERINARY STUDIES

Peer Assisted Learning (PAL) in veterinary clinical training: an increasing role in the Edinburgh Veterinary Undergraduate Curriculum

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Introduction

Peer Assisted Learning (PAL) is increasingly being used in healthcare professional training, including veterinarians.[1,2]

At the R(D)SVS, PAL has been used informally in clinical training for a number of years, but more recently has been formalised into the curriculum. Initial evaluation has shown that PAL is a rewarding teaching methodology, positively received both by tutors and tutees alike.[3] This poster summarises the clinical PAL activities in place within the R(D)SVS curriculum.

PAL at the R(D)SVS

At the R(D)SVS, PAL is used to consolidate the clinical skills required for performing canine, equine and farm animal clinical examinations.

Small Animal: In the first year at vet school, students are taught the basic clinical examination using healthy dogs. PAL is used to consolidate these skills. Trained 4th year 'PAL tutors' deliver a PAL clinical examination teaching session for a small group of 1st year/Graduate Entry (GEP) students. In addition, Final Year tutors are involved in small group clinical examination teaching to 3rd year students. Participation as a PAL tutor in these parts of the curriculum is mandatory.

Large Animal: A similar process is repeated on a voluntary basis for 4th year tutors, during which they teach 2nd year/GEP students clinical examination of healthy horses.

Also, Final Year tutors on clinical rotations (farm animal & equine) facilitate clinical training sessions to 3rd and 4th year tutees, based on their hospitalised clinical cases.

PAL Tutors facilitating the teaching of clinical examination

PAL Tutors using quizzes & teaching aids to reinforce clinical examination skills

Summary of PAL utilisation at the R(D)SVS

Topic	Tutors	Tutees	Format
Canine Clinical Exam	4th Year	1st Year/ Grad. Entry	Healthy dogs; small groups; teaching aids.
Canine History & Clinical Exam	Final Year	3rd Year	Healthy dogs; small groups
Equine Clinical Exam	4th Year	2nd Year/ Grad. Entry	Healthy horses; small groups
Equine Medicine/ Clinical Exam	Final Year: Equine Medicine	3rd Year	Equine hospital case-based; small groups
Equine Surgery	Final Year: Equine Soft Tissue & Orthopaedics	4th Year/ 3rd Year	Equine hospital case-based; diagnosis and therapy
Farm Animal Medicine/ Clinical Exam	Final Year: Farm Animal (FA)	4th Year/ 3rd Year	FA hospital case-based; diagnosis and therapy

Therefore, PAL is increasingly being used within the Edinburgh veterinary curriculum in a variety of formats. Initial evaluation has shown the methodology to be well received and of considerable benefit both to PAL tutors and tutees.

Peer Assisted Learning (PAL) is used to complement and reinforce the teaching of clinical examination to students by Faculty, who supervise the PAL classes

References
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2. Salomäki, T., Laakkonen, J., Ruohoniemi, M. (2014). Students as teachers in an anatomy dissection course. *Journal Veterinary Medical Education*, 41: 60-67.
3. Stansbie, N.H., Hudson, N.P.H., Rhind, S.M., Handel, I.G., Mellanby, R.J., Bell, C.E. (2014) Evaluation of PAL as a teaching methodology for veterinary clinical examination training. *Poster Presentation VetEd 2014*