

## 8. Student assessment

### 8.1. Factual information

#### 8.1.1. Description of the global student's assessment strategy of the Establishment

The first *Regulation for the Learning Assessment of Students* was approved in 2003 and later modified ([link](#)). The current regulation for the number of examining sessions available for students is included in the *Regulation for Students' Academic Progress and Permanence* approved by the Social Council ([link](#)). This Regulation is mandatory for every Faculty or School at our University. It is particularly remarkable the following aspects:

- There is a limit of 6 examining sessions for every subject (2 per academic year). The 7<sup>th</sup> is the last opportunity to pass any subject.
- The ULPGC Government Council approves the Academic Calendar every year, which includes the final examination period in each semester (January and June). An 1 resist session is offered in July in accordance with the *Regulation for the Academic Planning* ([link](#)). Also, another special examining session is offered in November. It is assumed that students enrolled in the subjects for a second time can decide when to sit the exams by choosing two of these sessions (2 per academic year).

The ULPGC, in its commitment to the spirit of the [European Higher Education Area](#) (the so-called Bologna Process), has encouraged Academic Staff to use of continuous or summative assessment methods, as preferred (Article 16.1 for the *Regulation for the Learning Assessment of Students* - [Link](#)). As such, the final examinations are not used with those students who receive positive continuous assessment results during the semester.

Student can lose the right for continuous assessment if their class attendance is not regular. The Faculty Board has defined 'regular attendance' as follows: a minimum of 50% for theoretical activities and a minimum of 90% for practical activities. To calculate this, the 'Academic' software permits very fast registration of attendance using a code generated by the software for every teaching session. Students are self-registered using a specifically designed application (available for Android or IOS) or using a browser on any electronic device. Therefore, the subject coordinator can easily monitor the student attendance. This procedure is in accordance with the *ULPGC Regulation for the control of the student attendance* ([link](#)).

The educational programme approved by the Faculty Board, the ULPGC, and later by the Ministry of Science, Innovation and University (formerly the Ministry of Education) includes a minimum (3%) and a maximum (10%) of the hours for assessment and tutorials in core subjects. For the Module called 'Supervised Practical Training and Final Degree Project' (30 ECTS), the percentage of hours dedicated to assessment should vary to 10-15% for Practical Training and 90-100% for the Final Degree Project.

In the description of the activities for the student assessment, the Faculty has approved weighing of the assessment for the different teaching/learning activities applicable for all the core subjects as follows:

- For the assessment of 'knowledge' (theoretical training) oral or written examinations may be used. These activities represent 40-60% of the final grade for each subject.
- For the assessment of 'learning skills' (practical training), a document for evidencing the learning outcomes of every student must be used. These activities should represent 30-50% of the final grade for the subject.
- The assessment of 'attitudes and values', including the attendance and participation levels of students in their learning activities, should represent 5-10% of the final grade of the subject.

For the module called 'Supervised Practical Training', the percentages described above change as follows: 0-10% for the assessment of knowledge, 80-90% for the assessment of learning skills and 5-10% for the assessment of attitudes and values, including the attendance in the theoretical and practical session.

### **8.1.2 Description of the specific methodologies for assessing:**

Competences are divided into nuclear, transversal and specific competences (See ANNEX X). The nuclear competences are those defined by the ULPGC for all the Degrees. The transversal competences are defined in terms of general professional knowledge, such as working in groups, communication skills, ethical commitment, etc.

The specific competences to be defined are those directly related with the content/scientific area of subjects in the Veterinary Medicine *Curriculum* and described in the Spanish law ([Order ECI/333/2018](#)).

In order to guarantee that the acquisition of the competences is completed, the competences have been split up and assigned to several subjects (See ANNEX IV).

#### **-) theoretical knowledge;**

The most frequent method for the assessment of theoretical knowledge is the written examinations. Written examinations can vary from a long description of a topic to short questions that require very short, specific answers. In other subjects, the preferred examination is the test type. The best method used depends on the nature of the subject and is freely proposed by academic staff in the teaching guide. In addition, Departments propose the assessment system for each subject and teaching guides need to be approved by the Committee of Academic Affairs (May, 20<sup>th</sup> as limit) as well as later by the Faculty Board (June, 10<sup>th</sup> as limit).

Seminars are also used for the assessment of theoretical knowledge. In this kind of activity, interaction and participation of the students is encouraged. These supervised academic activities promote the learning process by using and applying knowledge in a more practical or realistic way.

The writing of documents and PowerPoint/Keynote presentations are other kinds of activities used for the assessment of theoretical knowledge.

A detailed description of student assessment procedure, including the method, assessment criteria and grading system to be used, is included in every Subject Guide. Diversity in assessment methods promotes the acquisition of different transversal competences, such as writing and oral communication skills.

A minimum of 50% attendance in theoretical training sessions is mandatory for all students in all the subjects. In the case this minimal attendance is not evidenced, students lose the right to continuous assessment and only a final examination (theoretical and practical) is provided for them.

#### **-) pre-clinical practical skills;**

Depending on the nature of the subject, different assessment methods could be used.

Problem solving tasks are completed in the class sessions, i.e. in Chemistry, Agronomy, Biochemistry, Genetics, Animal Breeding, or Animal Production. After these activities which are scheduled to take place in class, a written examination is also completed as evidence of successful learning (i.e. Physiology).

Computer models are also used in several subjects such as Epidemiology, or Animal Nutrition.

Oral examinations are very useful for the identification of anatomical structures or tissues under the optic microscopy; and are used in several subjects such as Anatomy, Cytology and Histology, or Pathology.

Oral presentation on different topics are also prepared by the students in seminars and are used in other subjects, such as Pharmacology and Pharmacy, Food Hygiene, among others.

Another very common method for the assessment of learning is the Laboratory Report. Students present the results of the different activities carried out in the lab. (i.e. Biochemistry, Microbiology, Agronomy, Food Technology, or Food Hygiene, among others).

Activities completed in groups or individually (lab skills) is another kind of evaluation tool used in Cytology and Histology, Physiopathology, Aquaculture, among others.

On-line questionnaires are used for the evaluation of practical skills, i.e. Cytology and Histology, Parasitology.

Written examinations are also used for the assessment of the practical learning activities, i.e. Anatomy, Biochemistry, Physiology, Animal Welfare, Epidemiology, Microbiology, Animal Production, Veterinary Legislation, Veterinary Certification and Report Writing, among others.

A minimum of 90% attendance in practical training sessions is mandatory for all students in all the subjects. In the case this minimal attendance not being fulfilled, the student loses the right to continuous assessment and only a final examination (theoretical and practical) is permitted.

### **-) clinical practical skills**

In the majority of subjects, a checklist using oral examination procedures or observation methods is used for the assessment of students in the practical clinical skills, for example, techniques used for doing a necropsy, physical examination or the collection of samples for diagnosis, radiographic and ultrasonographic studies, and surgery workshops. Assessment is usually completed at the end of scheduled practical activities; however, some subjects carry out assessment during practical training.

Additionally, the writing of clinical records is part of the final assessment in clinical training; included in the 5<sup>th</sup> year (Clinical Practices, or Small and Large Animals Rotatory Clinics), which include clinical cases presentations. In such activities, the Transversal competences such as communication skills are trained and assessed. This assessment method is also used in Radiology and other subjects.

Written examinations for the assessment of clinical skills are used as well. For example, Clinical Pathology is assessed using a written examination in which clinical lab results are analysed and discussed. Toxicology is assessed using written examinations focusing on the practical activities carried out by students in the labs or on the e-learning platform.

Written examinations are also used for the assessment of practical training skills in several

subjects such as Internal Medicine (i.e. fluid-therapy calculations, prescription writing, etc.) which is completed by other methods, such as the portfolio.

For Preventive Veterinary Medicine, specific software for Herd Health Management and final reports related to farm visits are used for evaluating student's learning outcomes.

We would like to highlight the use of the portfolio ([link](#)) as a method for the assessment of learning skills which is completed in the final year. Assessments criteria for every learning outcome are used for the final assessment of competences included in the Module 'Tutored Practicum and Final Degree Project' as described in the Spanish law ([Order ECI/333/2018](#)). This document develops student responsibility for the assessment and learning processes.

The e-learning platform is also used in several subjects for completing the learning outcomes. Different methods are used for the communication between students and academic staff, such as the delivery of reports, chats, on-line questionnaires, and others. For more details, please consult the teaching guide for every subject ([link](#), only available in Spanish).

### **8.1.3 Description of the assessment methodology to ensure that every graduate has achieved the minimum level of competence, as prescribed in the ESEVT Day One Competences**

The specific competences described in the Spanish legislation ([Order ECI/333/2018](#)) are included in the educational program and fully distributed in all the different subjects.

The Day-One Competences, as described in the SOP for the ESEVT, are also included in the educational program. More specifically, the description of the learning outcomes for the subject 'Final Degree Project' are expressed in the following way:

*'Day-one competences defined by the EAEVE. Consult the website [www.eaeve.org](http://www.eaeve.org) for more details'.*

For this purpose, a portfolio which describes and defines the learning outcomes for each of the day-one skills to be acquired has been edited ([link](#)). Every year, a revision of the portfolio is also undertaken. During the writing-up of the present SER, the Faculty has also been designing an e-portfolio; therefore, paper formats will not be used in the next future.

### **8.1.4 Description of the processes for:**

#### **-) ensuring the advertising and transparency of the assessment criteria/procedures;**

As previously mentioned, the Teaching Guide for every subject ([link](#), only available in Spanish) describes the assessment methods used, as well as the assessment criteria and the grading systems used.

The timetable for mid-term and final examinations is included in the software called 'Academic'. The timetable is also published on the Faculty Website.

The ULPGC has approved a specific *Regulation for the Learning Assessment of Students* for all the university degree programs ([link](#)), which includes the procedure for the full number of examining sessions, assessment by means of tribunals, assessment methods, examination duration or length, absence motivated by illness, the grading system, the timeframe for the publication of results, appeal procedures, assessment records, etc. Also, the QAS includes a Key Procedure for the Teaching/Learning



Activities and the Students Assessment ([PCC05](#)).

According to the *Regulations of Academic Planning* ([link](#)), approved by the ULPGC Governing Body, any proposed examinations have to take place within a period of time which is established in the academic calendar for this purpose. It must contain the day and time of the examination for every subject. Two members of the Academic Staff, named by the department, are designated for assessment activities.

It has also been established that the dates of the examinations can only be modified in the justified reasons and only up to one month before the initially established date. In any case, the modifications can only cause a delay (and never an advance) in the start dates and must be communicated to the students and published using 'Academic'.

The examination calendar for every academic year is approved by the Committee of Academic Affairs before the 15<sup>th</sup> March in the year prior to beginning of the academic year in question. In the academic calendar, which is annually approved by the ULPGC, periods are reserved in which no other type of activity can be programmed apart from examinations, except in the Special examining session in November.

The Teaching Guide is revised and approved by the Departments and passed to the Committee of Academic Affairs and Faculty Board every year. After its approval, it is published on the ULPGC Website and is communicated to students during the presentation of the different subjects (on the first day of class in every semester).

#### **-) awarding grades, including explicit requirements for barrier assessments;**

The *Regulation for the Learning Assessment of Students* includes the grading system. The word and numerical classifications as outlined in the academic records are as follows:

- P (Absent)
- S (Failed) less than 5 marks.
- A (Passed) 5 or more marks, less than 7.
- N (Good) 7 or more marks, less than 9.
- E (Outstanding) 9 or more marks.
- M.H. (Highest Honours), which can only be obtained by 5% of the students enrolled in a subject, who had previously been classified with an Outstanding (E), and who stand out from the rest due their exceptional proficiency.

The number of M.H. (Highest Honours) grades awarded may not exceed five percent of those enrolled in a subject in the corresponding academic year, unless the number of students enrolled is less than 20, in which case a single 'M.H.' may be awarded.

The final grading for every subject is completed by the academic staff team with assessment evidences recorded during the teaching/learning activities. Then, the subject coordinator includes this final grade on an official record sheet which certifies that each student has been assessed as defined in the Teaching Guide of each subject.

#### **-) providing to students a feedback post-assessment and a guidance for requested improvement;**

The examination review session is an essential part of the learning process and the starting point for post-assessment feedback.

The deadline for the publication of examinations results is 10 days (in subject with fewer than 75 enrolled students) or 15 days (in those subjects with more than 75). Students must be offered at least two appointments for individual revision of the examination. During this interview a complete revision of the learning outcomes is revised with the student. Finally, 5 days before the official recording of the assessment in the academic records, the results must be communicated to all the students.

The Academic Staff must keep examinations or tests in their custody for one academic year, as outlined in Procedure [PCC05](#) related to the teaching and student assessment included in the QAS. The exam model must be kept for 6 years.

PCC05

### -) appealing

In the event that the student does not agree with the final grade obtained in a subject, a claim may be presented to the Dean. The academic staff responsible for the examination are required to write a report in order to justify the awarded grade and the student assessment procedure. In addition, a tribunal composed of three members of the Department (from the same scientific area) can reassess the evaluation documents completed by the student. The tribunal can either maintain or raise the grade, or even propose a new examination procedure, however this should be based on the teaching guide officially approved for the subject. This is regulated by the Regulation for the Learning Assessment of Students.

Furthermore, in the event that the student does not agree with the result of the Dean or the tribunal appealing decision, the student can appeal to the Rector of the ULPGC. This second appeal process has never happened in our Faculty. This activity is regulated by the QAS procedure [PAC06](#), related to Academic Incidences. However, any kind of incidence related to academic activities and those regulated by the ULPGC can be reported to the Dean's Office for their assessment and possible solution.

PAC06

### 8.1.5. Description of how and by who the student's assessment strategy is decided, communicated to staff, students and stakeholders, implemented, assessed and revised

The different methods for the assessment of the students are described in the study plan project presented to the Ministry of Education. However, every subject can freely design the best assessment procedure for learning outcomes and learning activities. For this purpose, all subjects must include the different assessment methods, assessment criteria and a grading system in the teaching guide. As previously mentioned, the teaching guides are revised and approved annually by the Department Board, the Committee of Academic Affairs and, finally, by the Faculty Board. Academic Planning takes place in accordance with ULPGC regulations and the QAS Key Procedure for the Academic Planning ([PCC02](#)). Teaching/Learning Activities and Students Assessment Procedure are conducted in accordance with ULPGC regulations and the QAS Key Procedure for the Teaching/Learning Activities and the Students Assessment ([PCC05](#)).

PCC02

PCC05

For students' assessment in the 5<sup>th</sup> year practical subjects, a portfolio has been designed by the Final Degree Project Committee. The proposal of the assessment criteria and objectives for every competence are also defined by the specific members of the academic staff in relation to competences assessment.

With regard to students assessment strategies, a **Tutorial Action Plan** ([link](#)) has been designed by the Tutorial Action Committee and approved by the Faculty Board. The main related programs are: the **Subjects Tracking Program** and the **Tutorial Program**:

The **Subjects Tracking Program** includes those subjects with a Success Ratio (passed/taken) below 70% and those with an Efficiency Ratio (passed/enrolled) below 60%. These subjects must present a plan of action designed to improve the ratio which is aimed at encouraging students to take the examinations and/or to improve the ratio by focusing on improving student learning outcomes. The Coordinator and the member of staff responsible for practical training in subjects with low ratios results are summoned for interview with the Tutorial Action Committee. In addition, a number of students from the previous academic year, with low and good grades are cited. The main problems are then presented, and the subject Academic Team are invited to solve the problems.

Similarly, the **Tutorial Program** consists of the monitoring of students who have used up more than 3 expired examination sessions in a subject. The Dean's Office, during the first weeks of every semester, sends the list of candidate students to every Subject Coordinator. The Coordinator must present a 'Subject Tutorial Plan' to the 'Committee for the Tutorial Action'; and must contact these students in order to offer them the Tutorial Plan. In order to facilitate the writing of the Subject Tutorial Plan, the Committee has approved a non-mandatory template ([link](#)). The Student must also sign a commitment document for his/her inclusion in the Program ([link](#)).

Every year the results of the Tutorial Action Plan are presented to the Tutorial Action Committee for the continuing assessment of the program and subjects results. The Tutorial Action Plan is defined in the Key Procedure for Student Orientation ([PCC03](#)). The member of staff responsible for the PCC03 is the Vice-Dean of Academic Affairs.



## 8.2. Comments

The global effect of the Tutorial Action Plan on subject results has been considered to be positive. The number of subjects included in the Subject Tracking Program have been diminished over the last few years. Likewise, the results of the Tutorial Program have also been positive; however, the number of students included in this program has increased over recent years, motivated by the implementation of the Regulation of the Academic Progress and Permanence (See Chapter 7.2).

An e-portfolio is currently being implemented to replace the previous paper format, since the Faculty is committed to reducing the use of paper for greater environmental sustainability and also to promote the use of IT for establishing an easier and more feasible procedure.

## 8.3. Suggestions for improvement

The e-portfolio project, designed initially for the 5<sup>th</sup> year subjects, includes the on-line assessment of competences and could be used in any of the *curriculums*' core subject. In this way, the Faculty could improve their provision of transversal and specific competences assessment.