

UNISS
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DEGLI STUDI
DI SASSARI



DIPARTIMENTO DI
MEDICINA VETERINARIA

Re-visitation Self Evaluation Report

Sassari VEE 2025



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Introduction

The Sassari VEE underwent an ESEVT full visitation from March 20 to 24, 2023. The visitation team identified 11 commendations, 8 minor deficiencies, and 3 major deficiencies. The recommendation to ECOVE was for the status of “pending accreditation”.

Commendations included:

- Highly committed staff and excellent open interactions between students and staff
- Innovative and informative digital communication with the students, public, and stakeholders
- Excellent working environment - High level of biosecurity in the intra-mural facilities
- Advanced opportunities for students to learn about wildlife
- Excellent staff-to-student ratio during practical and clinical training
- High number of e-books available for staff and students
- Innovative self-learning space for animal nutrition
- Efficient retrieval of information from the VTH patient management software with easy online access for all students.
- Dedicated efforts to develop a QA culture.

The VEE was **partially compliant** with the standards:

- 2.1 due to suboptimal distribution of funding, resulting in inadequate staffing
- 3.1.1 due to suboptimal distinction between core, elective and optional activities in the curriculum
- 3.1.3 due to suboptimal clinical training in companion animals
- 4.2 due to the insufficient number of lockers for students and suboptimal onsite food services
- 4.8 due to suboptimal transportation of students to extramural facilities
- 6.3 due to suboptimal access of students to equipment for the development of procedural skills
- 8.1 due to suboptimal strategy to ensure coherence of the overall assessment regime
- 9.1 due to suboptimal compulsory training in teaching and assessment for all teaching staff

The VEE was **not compliant** with the standards:

- 4.4 due to the absence of 24/7 emergency services
- 5.1 due to an insufficient caseload of companion animal patients in the VTH and an inadequate number of necropsies for both companion and food-producing animals
- 9.2 due to the insufficient number of teaching and support staff in the VTH

The VEE immediately began working on the major deficiencies and putting into place an ongoing process to correct the deficiencies. On June 7, 2023, ECOVE confirmed the visitation team’s recommendation for pending accreditation and included **two additional** minor deficiencies:

- 3.1.2 suboptimal teaching of some essential basic subjects
- 4.3 suboptimal organisation of the hospitalisation spaces for companion animals

The VEE submitted a request for re-visitation on January 31, 2024. The formal re-visitation agreement was signed by the VEE on February 6, 2024.

In the present Re-visitation Self Evaluation Report (RSER), we provide evidence that the Major and Minor Deficiencies identified by the visitation team have been corrected and/or that an ongoing process to correct them is in place. Finally, we provide several documents as appendices with supporting evidence to changes that have been implemented and/or planned.

1.0 Correction of Major Deficiencies

1.1 The VEE is not compliant with Standard 4.4 due to the absence of 24/7 emergency services.

1.1.1 Factual information

Immediately following the ESEVT full visitation in March 2023, and based on the ESEVT visitation team's final report (draft C), the VEE head, the VTH Director, and EAEVE committee met to discuss the proposals for correction of the Major Deficiency: *"The VTH meets the National Practice Standards but was closed during the COVID-19 pandemic and has only re-opened from 09.00 to 14.00 Monday-Friday. It can no longer hospitalize patients overnight nor offer a 24/7 emergency service because of insufficient numbers of clinical and technical staff to provide adequate patient care. Out-of-hours emergencies are referred to a local 24/7 practice which students can attend. However, there is no academic oversight, and this experience cannot be classified as PPT. The absence of a 24/7 service by the VTH is a major issue which may affect the acquisition of some D1Cs. This is linked to insufficient clinical and support staff at the VTH (see also Standard 9.2). It is suggested that the 24/7 emergency services be reopened as soon as staffing allows"* (Final report Sassari VEE, 2023).

Short terms actions

The VEE manages this deficiency in the short term, by providing first compensative training for students by making an agreement with an external private veterinary clinic, the "[Città di Sassari](#)" which is the only veterinary clinic that provides a 24/7 emergency room service. The clinic is only 2 kilometers from the VEE campus and in the city center, well connected with public transport services. The feedback from students was good, as well as from the veterinary practitioners involved in the training. The agreement is in place since 2021 and the VEE board has already approved (VEE board of 17.12.2024) its renewal until 28 February 2028 ([Link to agreements list](#)).

Students are allowed to practice in the clinic under the supervision of the veterinary staff trained according to the VEE needs and in particular to D1Cs and EAEVE SOPs. A training course ([Link to training booklet](#)) provided to veterinary practitioners is available on the VEE website along with a free podcast available on [Spotify](#) and [Anchor](#) ([Website link](#)). The activity of students in the external clinic is closely monitored and their work is tracked in a specific [web form](#).

In addition, two calls for hiring veterinary teaching staff with experience in emergency care and 24/7 clinical settings were activated in January 2025 ([LINK](#)) to ensure 24/7 clinical training (Approved in the VEE board of 17.12.2024). The two veterinarians will operate in their own private veterinary clinic - also enhancing the collaborations with external clinics - and will be trained initially in-line with D1Cs and EAEVE SOPs.

Short /Medium terms actions

The Regional Government of Sardinia, as a result of the UNISS Rector and VEE director's joint request, provided funding of 1.740.000 euros from 2024 to 2026, to support the accreditation process of veterinary training in Sardinia (Law N. 1 del 21/02/2023 art. 5 comma 21, published 23 feb 2023 su Supplemento ordinario n. 1 del BURAS, Integrated Development Project for the Accreditation of Training of Veterinary of Sardinia according to European Union standards) for VTH services, particularly for 24/7. The above mentioned project was also mentioned in Sassari VEE SER and was provided to EAEVE commission as Appendix 29 ([LINK](#)).

The first action, immediately following the ESEVT full visitation, was to solicit the availability of funding and, at the same time, to identify the figures needed for a VTH open 24/7.

1. Correction of Major Deficiencies

On November 22, 2023 a first agreement was signed between VEE and Regional Government of Sardinia (Convenzione RAS Rep. 45 del 23/11/2023, between Regione Autonoma della Sardegna - Assessorato dell'Igiene e Sanità e dell'Assistenza Sociale e Università degli Studi di Sassari - Dipartimento di Medicina Veterinaria). The addendum to the agreement was signed on April 11th, 2024.

In April 2024, an open list of veterinary positions for 24/7 was published as an open call. The list is open until December 31, 2026. Any vet practitioner can apply and be hired by VEE ([LINK](#); [LINK](#)), similar to other universities, such as in Milan and Turin.

In August 2024, the first contractual arrangements were made with enrolled veterinarians to support 24/7 activities of the VTH: 2 practitioners in emergency room and critical care, 1 in anesthesiology, 2 in internal medicine.

As of August 2024, VTH's opening hours have been extended to the evening: Mon-Fri from 08:30 to 20:30, with emergency service until 14:00.

Students can handle emergencies until 14:00 in VTH, and attend all other clinical activities, including specialist visits, and day hospital until 20:30.

The next step, to be achieved in the first months of 2025, when the full recruitment of personnel will be completed, is to open the VTH 24/7 for ordinary hospitalizations and critical care. The general lack of veterinary practitioners affected their participation in the DMV call for 24/7 emergency veterinary services, however the VEE is still looking for recruiting new staff.

For this purpose, the VEE organized an important advertising campaign on the web, as well as on social networks ([LINK 1](#) - [LINK 2](#)), and developed a [cartoon-like video](#) for explaining and advertising the hiring process. Additionally, VEE organized [a meeting with Q&A open session](#) with VEE head, VTH manager, and communications officers.

The 24/7 activities will also be supported by the enrollment of n.2 permanent support staff units having a veterinary degree and experience in clinical activities to be assigned to the VTH (anesthetist and internal medicine). The opening of the call is expected in 2025 - see major 1.3.

Long terms perspectives

The final step anticipated is to open the VTH with emergency room service operating 24/7, as soon as the on-call staff enrollment is completed.

The VEE management, supported by the University of Sassari, believes that the cooperation between public institutions and private companies is essential to support 24/7 services. This is also required to address the costs of 24/7 services. The DVM Development Plan ([LINK](#)) provides, among the third mission development objectives, that a new project for a more sustainable VTH should be defined. The related activity (A.2) was postponed to 2025 after taking into account the results of EAEVE re-visitation. However, the plan is to consider a more integrated role of external professional resources in the management of VTH, aiming to enhance their contribution to clinical and training activities. The new VTH management project is expected to be effective from 2027, upon the completion of the Regional funding program.

1.1.2 Comments

The opening hours of the VTH, together with its caseload, are gradually increasing.

The general lack of veterinary practitioners in Sardinia has affected their participation in the DMV call for veterinary services. The recruiting process for 24/7 emergency service is slow, but it is expected that, in mid 2025, the practitioners' team will be completed, allowing the service to become gradually operative. The Regional project ensures sufficient financial resources to support the increase in the number of practitioners involved in 24/7 emergency activities until the end of 2026.

1. Correction of Major Deficiencies

1.2 The VEE is not compliant with Standard 5.1 due to an insufficient caseload of companion animal patients in the VTH and an inadequate number of necropsies for both companion and food-producing animals.

1.2.1 Factual information

The insufficient caseload of companion animal patients in the VTH was directly linked to the insufficient number of teaching and support staff in the VTH (see standard 9.2) and the absence of a 24/7 service (see standard 4.4). As a result, some corrective measures are common to all three major issues. To increase the caseload of companion animals in the VTH, the following actions were taken:

- Assurance and implementation of morning activities through contracts with one anesthesiologist and two internist veterinarians to support the activities of structured vet staff (see also 1.1)
- VTH opening from 8:30 to 20:30 through contracts with two emergency room veterinarians (See also correction 1.1)
- Contracts with specialist veterinary practitioners. Starting in September 2024, three contracts were made with veterinary practitioners solely for practical training in the VTH with companion animals: an oncologist, an ophthalmologist, and one ECVD dermatologist. Each specialist works in the hospital once a week, providing high-quality specialized teaching to students while bringing clinical cases to VTH.
- The agreement with the Municipality of Sassari for the health management of the municipal kennel has been effective in recent years and was renewed until December 2025. The department is in charge of the sanitary and assistance management of the municipal kennel, which hosts an average of 200 dogs, maintained through new entries and exits (adoptions and deaths) that increase and diversify intramural activities involving canine species.
- An annual agreement with the Health Ministry Local Unit (ASL of Sassari) for sterilization services for stray dogs (300) and cats (100) in the municipality of Sassari and neighboring municipalities. It began in August 2023 and will be renewed in 2025.

In addition, the information provided to students about activities in the VTH has been improved.

For this purpose, an electronic calendar has been created, where all clinical visits are scheduled. Students can select the activities they prefer to attend and book themselves ([LINK 1](#) - [LINK 2](#)).

A form ([LINK](#)) has been created for students to record companion animal clinical cases observed during CCT and EPT during the *Tirocinio Pratico Valutativo* (TPV) extramurally. Although these cases are not included in the EAEVE indicators, they still represent clinical cases seen by students and contribute to their training.

ESEVT indicators are published in the VEE website with real time updates to stress with transparency about the commitment of the VEE to reach numbers required by EAEVE ([LINK](#)); See ESEVT Indicators section for more). The number of companion animal clinical cases has increased, peaking in the last quarter of 2024 as detailed by the figures below:

1. Correction of Major Deficiencies

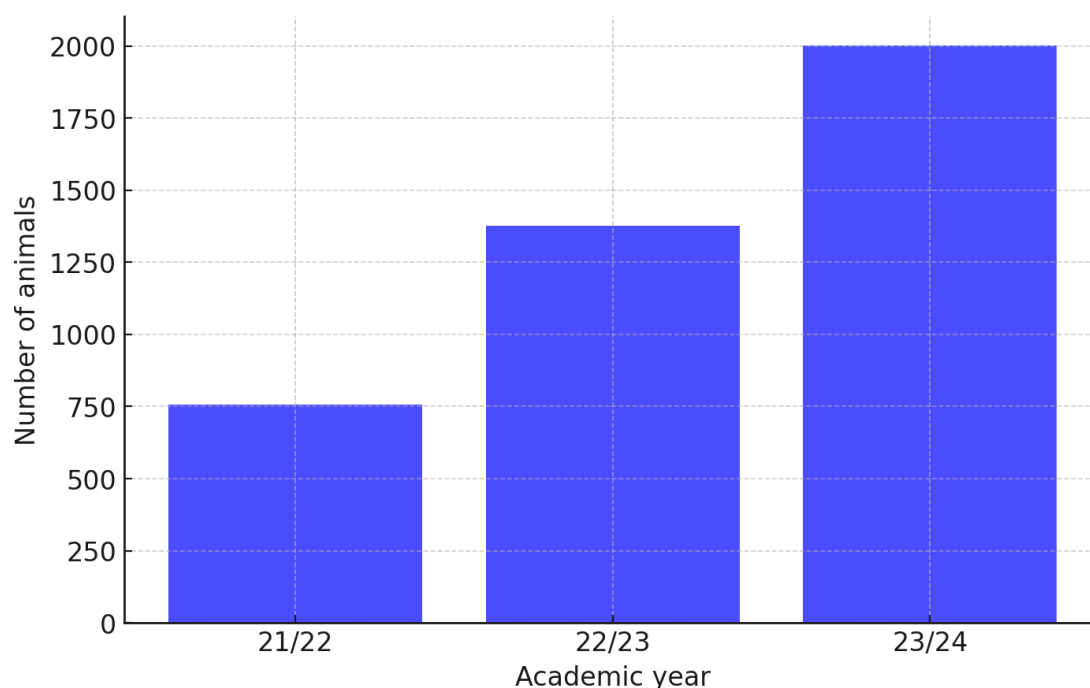


Figure 1.2.1: Graphical representation of the companion animals caseload from 2021/2022 (EAEVE visitation) to Re-visitation in 2025.

To increase the caseload of necropsies, the following actions were taken:

- A revised teaching responsibility and organizational framework was established to manage the necropsy caseload.
- A 1 ECTS module (18 hrs) on necropsy was introduced as part of the new Core Clinical Training (CCT) from 2024.
- A necropsy module was included in the organization of clinical rounds from 2023/2024 at IV (3,5 hrs) and V (3,5 hrs) year, with a total of 7 hours per student of full practice in the necropsy room ([LINK 1](#); [LINK 2](#)).
- A contract was made with an external practitioner/tutor (100 hours) to support the teaching staff in necropsy. The contract is in place from January 2025 ([LINK](#)).
- Meetings were organized with *Istituto Zooprofilattico Sperimentale della Sardegna* to enhance collaboration for necropsy as provided by the inter-institutional agreement.
- Meetings were also held with the Health Ministry's local unit (ASL) to define a collaboration for necropsy, which will become operational in the first semester of 2025.
- Additionally, efforts were made to enhance collaboration with veterinary practitioners for extramural necropsy. A support staff position has been established for a technician dedicated to organizing the necropsy room and managing the recovery of pathological materials and cadavers for necropsies and dissections, funded by the Regional government ([LINK](#)). The call is currently in progress, and the new support staff is expected to be on duty in the month of February 2025. This position will improve the workflow and bring coordination in the recovery of cadavers and their transport to the VEE, which remains to be the most important criticism for this indicator to date.
- A call for a necropsy tutor was recently closed, and the contract is expected to be signed in February 2025 (the provided assignment is 300 hours).

1. Correction of Major Deficiencies

All efforts were successful, and the VEE met the ESEVT indicators for necropsies in 2025, despite some challenges (Blue tongue outbreaks and resultant relative restrictions of animal movements). See improvement of necropsies caseload in the figures below:

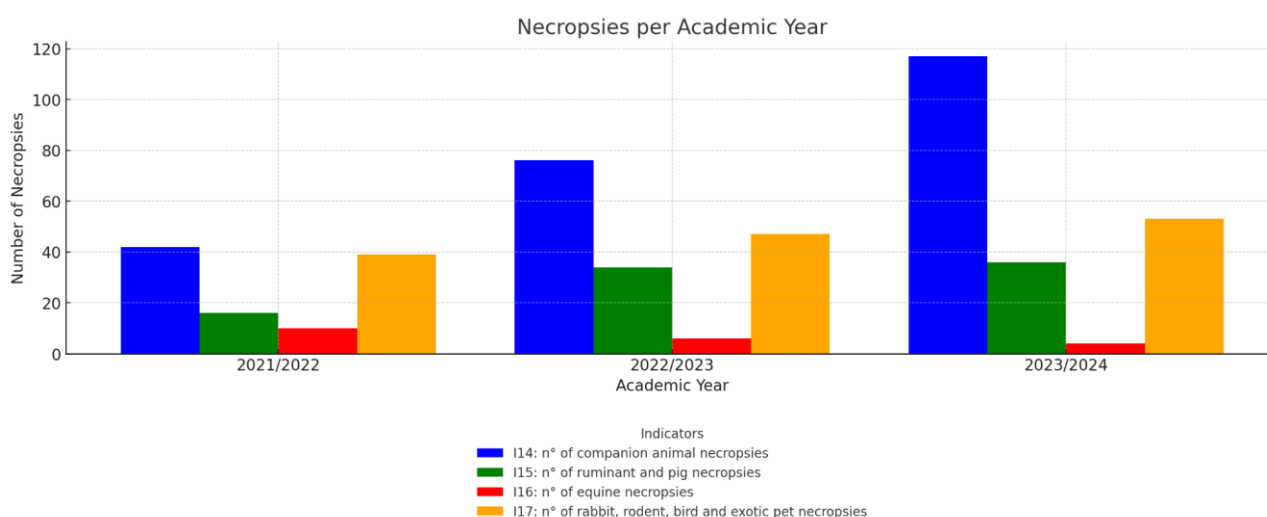


Figure 1.2.3: Graphical representation of the necropsies caseload from 2021/2022 (EAEVE visitation) to Re-visitation in 2025.

1.2.2 Comments

An increase in the clinical cases of companion animals is expected to continue with the completion of the following additional actions:

- Hospital operating 24/7
- Improvement of VTH services to make it more engaging with:
 - a) the opening of new services. The new obstetrics and gynecology researcher (see Correction 9.2) has already begun procedures to establish a dog and cat artificial insemination center and sperm bank.
 - b) the purchase of new diagnostic tools. Some have already been acquired (IDEXX blood cell counter, ISOMEDIC for hormone tests and inflammatory proteins), and others are in progress (two ultrasound machines).
- Increase in the number of contracts with specialist veterinary practitioners (3 contracts are also planned for 2025).
- Contracts for two administrative staff members, funded by the Regional Government of Sardinia, have been established to support the VTH front office, organizational processes, and administrative procedures. This will reduce the clinical staff's involvement in administrative paperwork.

The increase in the number of teaching hours/student devoted to necropsy will allow to increase practical clinical training on this subject. The enrollment of the tutors and support staff will support the academic staff in the organization of the activities. This achievement, together with the agreement put in place with the public veterinary services and the IZS, will ensure to reach an adequate caseload.

1. Correction of Major Deficiencies

1.3 The VEE is not compliant with standard 9.2 due to the insufficient number of teaching and support staff in the VTH.

1.3.1 Factual information

Immediately following the ESEVT full visitation in March 2023, and based on the ESEVT visitation team's final report (draft C), the VEE head, the VTH Director, and EAEVE committee met to discuss the proposals for correction of the Major Deficiency: *"There is an inadequate number of staff assigned to the VTH, and the level of specialisation among technicians is low due to restrictions in the selection process and insufficient salaries."*

The number of teachers and support staff assigned to teaching at the VTH is insufficient for the current number of students, and this situation could worsen if student enrollment continues to increase. It is suggested that, while recognizing the constraints on recruitment for certain specific disciplines, the number of teaching and support staff at the VTH must be increased to ensure 24/7 operations with an adequate caseload. This would be necessary to provide students with proper clinical training and fulfil their attainment of relevant DICs."

The VEE non-compliance with standard 9.2 also contributes to non-compliance with Standard 4.4 (absence of 24/7 emergency services.) and Standard 5.1 (insufficient caseload of companion animal patients in the VTH).

Support staff

Following the ESEVT Full visitation in March 2023, and based on the ESEVT Visitation Team's Final Report, the VEE submitted a request for additional support staff to the UNISS Rector.

The DMV has received a formal resolution from the University of Sassari for the enrollment of two permanent support staff units with a veterinary degree and experience in clinical activities, to be assigned to the VTH (anesthetist and internal medicine). The call for these positions is expected to open in 2025.

Additionally, to manage administrative procedures related to DMV and VTH, two permanent units from the University of Sassari were assigned in November 2024.

In 2024, a temporary contract was signed for a tutor to support the organization of VTH teaching activities (clinical rounds) ([LINK](#)).

In the second semester of 2024, a comprehensive program to increase support staff at the DMV and VTH, funded by the RAS project, was established. The following measures were adopted:

1. Recruitment of a Project Manager for planning, executing, and finalizing the project related to the agreement with the Sardinia Region ([LINK](#))
2. Recruitment of a support unit for the implementation of the Quality Assurance (QA) ([LINK](#))
3. Recruitment of a support unit for the organisation and management of teaching activities ([LINK](#))
4. Recruitment of a support unit (educational tutor) to assist with practical teaching support for the realisation, harmonisation, and management of the clinical rounds calendar ([LINK](#))

1. Correction of Major Deficiencies

5. Recruitment of a support unit (communication professional) for implementing communication strategies ([LINK 1](#) [LINK 2](#))
6. Recruitment of two administrative employees for VTH management (front-office, invoicing, and inventory and drug management) ([LINK 1](#) [LINK 2](#))
7. An open call for services with applications by professionals, which will remain open until December 31, 2026 ([LINK1-LINK2](#)).
8. Open call for technicians to apply for animal management services in the Emergency Department at the VTH (emergency, triage, intensive care and in-patient) and for the management of necropsies and anatomical dissection room ([LINK](#)). The contracts will be signed in January (for necropsy) and February 2025, as the previous DMV call ([LINK](#)) did not receive sufficient support from participants.
9. To further strengthen the VTH staff, the VEE signed five contracts in August 2024 for veterinary practitioners: one anesthesiologist, two internists, and two emergency room veterinarians.
10. A temporary contract for a tutor to support the organization of VTH teaching activities (clinical round) has been signed for 2025 ([LINK](#)).
11. A call for a tutor to assist with practical teaching activities has recently closed, and the contract for 300 hours in 2025 is expected to be signed in January.
11. DMV, as part of a national framework financed by the University and Research Ministry, has provided a call for 2025 ([LINK](#)) to increase student collaboration through peer-to-peer tutoring. In January, contracts will be signed for four tutors, each of 400 hours.

Academic staff

In the past 18 months, the VTH has enrolled 3 new academic staff units:

- 1 associate professor in internal medicine, SSD VET/08 (September 2023)
- 1 Type B researcher in obstetrics and gynaecology (March 2024)
- 1 associate professor in infectious disease, SSD VET/05 (October 2024)

From 2022/2023, several contracts for teaching activities in clinical subjects were defined to increase the participation of veterinary practitioners in the student clinical training ([LINK](#)).

To increase the participation of veterinary practitioners in student's practical clinical training, a call for 8 and 10 contracts respectively for academic years 2023/2024 and 2024/25 were published. In 2025, these contracts will contribute to additional 1000 hours of clinical training. See table 1.3.1 for more details.

1. Correction of Major Deficiencies

Table 1.3.1: Recruitment of NEW support and teaching staff since 2023 EAEVE visit:

SUPPORT STAFF	2023-24 units (FTE or hrs)	tasks	2024-25 units (FTE or hrs)	tasks
Students tutors	1 (100)	Clinical rounds	2 (500)	Clinical rounds (1); Necropsies (1)
VEE administration support units for RAS project (improvement of VTH and accreditation)	-	-	4 (FTE)	Project manager (1), Teaching organization (1), QA manager (1), Communication (1)
VTH support units	-	-	2 (FTE)	Front Office & administration
Technicians	-	-	3 (FTE)	VTH Anesthesiology (1); VTH Internal Medicine (1); VTH nurse (1)
Technicians			1 (FTE)	Necropsies
Administrative employees	-	-	2 (FTE)	VEE Administration
Veterinary practitioners for VTH and emergency care*	5 (FTE)	VTH & emergency medicine	5 (FTE)	Emergency care practitioners (2); Internal medicine (2); VTH anesthesiology (1).
ACADEMIC TEACHING STAFF				
Type B researcher	1 (FTE)	Reproduction	-	-
Associate professor	1 (FTE)	Internal Medicine	1 (FTE)	Infectious disease

1. Correction of Major Deficiencies

Veterinary practitioners for Clinical rounds and CCT	8 (630)	Exotic animals practitioner (1); ophthalmology practitioner (1); Dermatology practitioner (1); Oncology practitioner (1); Small ruminant practitioner (1); Large animals practitioner (1); Horses practitioner (1); Necropsy practitioner (1);	10 (1000)	Exotic animals practitioner (1); ophthalmology practitioner (1); Dermatology practitioner (1); Oncology practitioner (1); Pets Clinical Pathology practitioner (1); Small ruminant practitioner (1); Large animals practitioner (1); Horses practitioner (1); Emergency care practitioners (2);
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*In addition to the positions already hired, 16 other contracts for Vets will be signed by summer 2025 within RAS VTH framework project, as detailed below:

- Weekly nights 24 hours rotations: 5 contracts for Vet practitioners
- Non-working days 24 hours rotations: 5 contracts for Vet practitioners
- 24 hours emergency surgery team: 3 contracts for Anesthesiologist (1); Surgeon (1); Ultrasonography expert (1)
- Specialists: 3 contracts

1.3.2 Comments

The number of teaching and support staff has significantly increased compared to 2023 (EAEVE visitation) as detailed in table 1.3.1. The VEE strategy for the future to ensure the long-term sustainability of these measures is to reinforce collaboration with practitioners and local Clinics in order to overcome budget restrictions imposed by the Uniss central administration and national regulations.

2.0 Correction of Minor Deficiencies

2.1 Partial compliance with standard 2.1 due to suboptimal distribution of funding resulting in inadequate staffing

2.1.1 Factual information

As reported in the ESEVT Full Visitation final report, the main resource for VEE's financial maintenance mainly relies on the FFO (Fondo Funzionamento Ordinario). This is provided by the Italian Ministry of University and Research (previously known as the Ministry of Education) to the Uniss central administration. The VEE has no autonomy in the allocation of internal financial resources for recruitment, resulting in inadequate staffing in a complex structure such as the DVM. Based on these considerations, and to resolve this criticality and implement the DVM and VTH staff, the VEE signed an agreement with the Sardinian Region (RAS) to realise a three-year development project. Thanks to this agreement, the VEE received a €1,740,000 fund which is managed autonomously by the DVM to implement the Integrated development project for the accreditation of veterinary doctor training in Sardinia, in accordance with European Union standards (Progetto di sviluppo integrato per l'accreditamento della formazione dei Medici Veterinari della Sardegna in funzione di standard dell'Unione Europea, Convenzione RAS Rep. 45 del 23/11/2023 tra la Regione Autonoma della Sardegna - Assessorato dell'Igiene e Sanità e dell'Assistenza Sociale e l'Università degli Studi di Sassari – Dipartimento di Medicina Veterinaria, CUP J83C23000810002; art. 5 comma 21 della legge regionale 21 febbraio 2023, n. 1 - legge di stabilità 2023; [LINK](#)). A substantial portion of this fund was allocated for recruiting additional DVM and VTH staff, ensuring the successful achievement of its objectives for education and services. The measures that were adopted are described under major 1.3.

2.1.2 Comments

The DVM, like other UNISS departments, has no autonomy in the allocation of internal financial resources for the staff recruitment. In order to tackle this situation, the DVM acquired external financial resources by signing an agreement with the RAS to implement a three-year development project for the department. As a result of this agreement, the DVM has €1,740,000 in funding at its disposal, which it manages autonomously. The VEE invested these resources in the DVM and for the implementation of VTH staff, ensuring to achieve the education, research, and services goals.

The VEE recognizes that the recruitment of additional staff dedicated to the DVM and the VTH needs to be stabilized and that the acquisition of external financial resources is pivotal to overcoming this situation. Moreover, the implementation of the development project will allow the improvement of the services offered by the VTH, resulting in the acquisition of new financial resources that can be re-invested in the VTH, starting a new phase of virtuous self-financing. After visitation in 2023, the VEE facilities were upgraded, thanks to a complete renewal of fire prevention isolation and with a top-end solar system generator on its roof. In addition, in 2024, the general administration of Uniss granted the VEE with almost 6 million euros for the renewal of fixtures and air conditioning system to improve the sustainability of the VEE for energy, reducing its environmental impact. Work will be carried out during 2025.

2.1.3. Suggestions for improvement

A further external funding system is needed to implement the DVM and VTH staff. The VEE should create the conditions for a stable funding by RAS, in order to support the cultural and professional development, in accordance with the local needs, also considering an international perspective. Moreover, to improve the provision of services to the public and acquire additional fundings, the VTH should remain open to new collaboration with veterinary practitioners.

2. Correction of Minor Deficiencies

2.2 Partial compliance with Standard 3.1.1. because of suboptimal distinction between core, elective and optional activities in the curriculum.

2.2.1 Factual Information

According to the ESEVT Full Visitation final report, the SER lacked clarity in distinguishing core curriculum activities, which are mandatory for all students and supervised by academic and non-academic staff, from elective curriculum activities, which are optional and attended by a few students only. The Visitation Team suggested “*in the new curriculum, to be implemented in 2023/24, optional disciplines to be offered to the students should be accurately designated and not include subjects that should be core and, therefore, compulsory for all students*”. To enhance the distinction between mandatory and elective activities in the veterinary curriculum, we have initiated a review aimed at incorporating essential subjects into the core curriculum, to ensure that the students achieve the fundamental competencies required by ESEVT standards.

Elective and Core subjects

- Starting in 2023/24, some subjects previously considered elective, such as Animal Welfare, Biosecurity, and others, are mandatory.
- The Elective Credit regulations have been recently amended to clearly define elective courses as opportunities for students to explore innovative, specialized, or advanced topics. Electives are designed to focus on practical, applied learning, minimizing additional theoretical workload.
- Electives, such as *Veterinary Mycology* and *Viral Zoonoses*, that had been labelled incorrectly, are now accurately classified as advanced studies.

The full details of the amendment are accessible at this [link](#).

Modification to Core Clinical Training (CCT) and Elective Practical Training (EPT)

Modification to the old Professional Practical Training has been made mandatory by Italian law through Inter Ministerial Decree No. 652 of July 5, 2022, under which the LM-42 Master's Degree Program in Veterinary Medicine updated its regulations to include a professional training of evaluative/practical nature for undergraduate student. This new approach to practical training ensures greater alignment with current regulations stemming from Law No. 163 of November 8, 2021, which was introduced to simplify the process of entering regulated professions and facilitate a faster integration of graduates into the job market. This new training inherently encompasses the requirements set by the EAEVE for Core Practical Training (CCT) and Elective Practical Training (EPT) (ESEVT SOP 2023 - June 8, 2023). The Degree Council in Veterinary Medicine, in its session on July 9, 2024, and the Department Council of Veterinary Medicine at the University of Sassari, in its session on July 15, 2024, approved the following Regulations for the CCT and EPT.

CCT (28 ECTS) is divided in three defined area, each with specific mandatory training objectives:

- Area 01 - Clinical Care of companion animals (8 ECTS, 40 days): Companion animals, equines, and exotic animals, covering Internal Medicine, Surgery, and Obstetrics.
- Area 02 - Veterinary Public Health and Food Safety (7 ECTS, 35 days): Food inspection, veterinary public health, necropsies and cadaver diagnostics.
- Area 03- Animal Production and Livestock medicine (13 ECTS, 65 days): Internal Medicine, Surgery, Obstetrics, and Animal Production.

2. Correction of Minor Deficiencies

Elective Practical Training (EPT) consists of 2 ECTS, equivalent to 36 hours spread over 10 working days, with training objectives that students can decide to include in their individual training plan. These activities may be carried out in areas different from the previous ones and represent the elective portion of the training. The 30 ECTS of the CCT+EPT are awarded to the student after completing all the mandatory training objectives (defined by the day one competences) for both the CCT and EPT, and upon passing a Practical Assessment Test (PAT) of professional competences. This assessment can only be taken after the first semester of the fifth year of study and before the thesis discussion. Each ECTS corresponds to a total of 25 hours, with 18 hours per ECTS reserved for the practical working activities (for a total of 540 hours) and the remaining 7h/ECTS are dedicated to self-directed learning (for a total of 210 hours). The combined total of practical working activities and the self-directed learning activities amounts to 750 hours, as in the "old" Professional Practical Training (Tirocinio). All the necessary information for students to organize the CCT+EPT is contained in the "Regulations for the Evaluative Practical Training for the Degree in Veterinary Medicine at the University of Sassari" ([LINK](#)).

Overall, the CCT+EPT has a duration of 150 working days and is designed to help students achieve a series of Day One Competences outlined in the individual training projects for each discipline connected to the Areas. The CCT and EPT can be carried out starting from the 8th semester of the curriculum. Below is the time breakdown (ECTS, Days and Hours) of each discipline for each CCT Area.

Area 01	Disciplines		Total ECTS	Total Days
	Internal Medicine	Surgery and Obstetrics		
Clinical care of companion animals, equines, and exotic animals	4 ECTS 72 hours 20 days	4 ECTS 72 hours 20 days	8	40

Area 02	Disciplines		Total ECTS	Total Days
	VPH and FSQ	Necropsies and Cadaveric Diagnostics		
Veterinary public health, and Food safe and quality	6 ECTS 108 hours 20 days	1 ECTS 18 hours 5 days	7	35

Area 03	Disciplines			Total ECTS	Total Days
	Animal Production	Internal Medicine	Surgery and Obstetrics		
Animal production and livestock medicine	7 ECTS 126 hours 35 days	3 ECTS 54 hours 15 days	3 ECTS 54 hours 15 days	13	65

2. Correction of Minor Deficiencies

The CCT+EPT may be conducted intramurally within the department of Veterinary Medicine (DVM) at the University of Sassari or extramurally in accredited external facilities. External facilities must hold agreements with the DVM. For the training of external tutors who oversee the CCT/EPT, there is a self-learning PDF provided on the department's website ([LINK](#)), along with an evaluation questionnaire to assess their knowledge. Each external tutor may supervise up to three students simultaneously.

At the end of the CCT+EPT, students must pass a Practical Assessment Test (PAT), which can be taken after completing the 9th semester and must precede the thesis discussion. The PAT includes practical tests on animals, dummies, cadavers, organs, or food of animal origin, as well as oral and various written assessments. The PAT is structured into three sections, with each section corresponding to one of the designated areas. The examination committee consists of at least six members, including three university professors appointed by the department, and three practitioners with proven expertise in the field of training. The PAT evaluates the practicum student's achievement of mandatory educational objectives, professional competencies, problem-solving abilities, logical reasoning, and communication skills, as well as their capacity for independent decision-making. Successful completion of the PAT awards the PS, a competency certification and 30 ECTS credits, enabling them to proceed to the thesis discussion. The Department's website provides all necessary documentation for planning and certifying the competencies acquired during the CCT+EPT.

2.2.2 Comments

In response to the EAEVE's recommendations, we have made significant adjustments to improve the clarity between core, elective, and optional activities within the curriculum. The distinction was previously unclear, particularly concerning subjects that were considered optional but were fundamental to the veterinary profession. As suggested, we have incorporated essential subjects into the core curriculum, making them mandatory for all students starting from the 2023/24 academic year. This change ensures that students are provided with the necessary fundamental knowledge and skills required to meet both national and international veterinary standards. Additionally, we have reviewed and updated the regulations for elective credits. The revised elective framework clearly defines elective courses as opportunities for students to explore specialized or advanced topics, while keeping the theoretical workload balanced and minimizing unnecessary burden. The modification of the old Professional Practical Training (Tirocinio) structure, as mandated by Italian law, now ensures full compliance with the EAEVE standards for Core Practical Training (CCT) and Elective Practical Training (EPT). These changes reflect our commitment to continuously improving the curriculum, ensuring that it meets both the educational requirements and the practical demands of the veterinary profession.

2.2.3 Suggestion for improvement

Continuous monitoring of the implementation of the new curriculum and CCT+EPT through annual feedback from students and tutors to address potential gaps or inefficiencies.

Regularly updating the elective course contents, bringing it in accordance with emerging veterinary practices and research trends, ensuring relevancy and innovativeness.

Enhancing the accessibility of curriculum details, including syllabuses, learning outcomes, and evaluation criteria, by updating the VEE website to provide comprehensive and consistent information across all modules.

2. Correction of Minor Deficiencies

2.3 Partial compliance with Standard 3.1.2. due to suboptimal teaching of some essential basic subjects

2.3.1 Factual Information

The ESEVT Visitation Team's Final Report (draft C) stated: *"In general, Basic Sciences teaching is well covered in the VEE, with good opportunities for good quality training, considering the low number of students and consequent advantageous staff/student ratio. However, there is a large variation in the number of contact hours, and distribution between theoretical and practical teaching. It is suggested that the VEE should pay attention to the objectives and syllabus of the various Basic Sciences, particularly in the new curriculum, to assure that essential basic knowledge is acquired by all students in an equilibrated manner in subjects so important as those dealing with infectious agents"*.

The Table 2.3.1.1 included in the 2022 Sassari VEE SER showed the previous distribution of the teaching hours among different subjects:

Subjects	A	B	C ⁽¹⁾	D	E	F	G	H
Basic subjects								
Medical physics	15			3				18
Chemistry (inorganic and organic sections)	30			5				35
Animal biology, zoology and cell biology	26			3				29
Plant biology	10			2				12
Biomedical statistics	15			3				18
Basic science								
Informatics technology	35			15				50
Anatomy including histology and embryology	137			31	12	5		185
Physiology	122			14	4	4		144
Biochemistry	30			5				35
General and molecular genetics	32			6				38
Pharmacology, Pharmacy and Chemotherapy	64			15				84
Pathology	160			23	3	33	8	227
Toxicology	27			7		2		36
Parasitology (and parasitic diseases)	78			30		9		107

2. Correction of Minor Deficiencies

Subjects	A	B	C ⁽¹⁾	D	E	F	G	H
Microbiology	23			10				33
Immunology	23			10				33
Epidemiology	13			5				18
Information literacy and data management								
Professional ethics and communication	24			11				35
Animal health economics and practice management	25			5				30
Animal ethology	19	4			4			27
Animal welfare*								
Animal nutrition	19			4	4	2		29
Clinical science								
Obstetrics, reproduction and reproductive disorders	124					66		190
Diagnostic pathology	107			22	38	13		180
Medicine	66					27		93
Surgery	92					40		132
Anaesthesiology	25					11		36
Clinical practical training in common animal species						125		125
Preventive medicine	40			2	10	7		59
Diagnostic imaging	33					15		48
Therapy in common animal species	25					11		36
Propaedeutics of common animal species	67					30		97
Animal production								
Animal production including breeding, husbandry and economics	100			6	16	2	16	140
Herd health management	60			7	44			111
Food safety and Quality, Veterinary Public Health and One Health								

2. Correction of Minor Deficiencies

Subjects	A	B	C ⁽¹⁾	D	E	F	G	H
Veterinary legislation including official controls and regulatory veterinary services, forensic veterinary medicine and certification	11			15	10			36
Control of food, feed and animal by-products	39				38			77
Zoonoses	4			7				11
Food hygiene and food microbiology	13	4		5				22
Food technology	28			5				33
Total	1761	8	0	271	188	407	24	2659⁽²⁾

A: lectures; B: seminars; C: supervised self-learning; D: laboratory and desk-based work; E: non-clinical animal work; F: clinical animal work; G: others (tutorial, multimedia, visits); H = total.

(1) This is not part of the mandatory activities, but a self-learning area, offering deepening and strengthening opportunities in some subjects, is currently available on the DVMSS website.

(2) Additional 33 total hours of English language are taken by each student. Moreover, 16 compulsory hours on safety and biosecurity in working spaces (without ECTS acquisition) are taken in 1st semester. The minimum total of 250 hours spent in internship and for preparing the graduation thesis are not covered in the Table.

*Animal welfare is currently being treated both in a dedicated elective course and as a transversal topic in various disciplines with hours specifically dedicated to different aspects but are difficult to quantify (physiological bases of stress, well-being in the farm, well-being in transport and in the pre-slaughtering stages, laboratory animals, etc.). The current curriculum revision provides for the activation of a course specifically dedicated to this topic, in addition to the specific references within the courses of different disciplines.

Based on these suggestions, a general revision of the VEE curriculum has been carried out accordingly (Table 2.3). The teaching hours for the subjects covered by the basic sciences now have a more balanced distribution, also considering the ratio of lectures to practical activities. The previous unbalanced distribution of hours allocated to various basic science subjects was partly due to the erroneous allocation of hours for Parasitic Diseases in Parasitology, which are now included in the Zoonoses and Parasitic Diseases course. This error has now been corrected - please see the new Table below (2.3.1.2).

Table 2.3.1.2. New curriculum (2023/2024) hours taken by each student (excluding CCT+EPT)

Subjects	A	B	C ⁽¹⁾	D	E	F	G	H
Basic subjects								
Medical physics	15			3				18

2. Correction of Minor Deficiencies

Subjects	A	B	C ⁽¹⁾	D	E	F	G	H
Chemistry (inorganic and organic sections)	30			5				35
Animal biology, zoology and cell biology	15			3				18
Biomedical statistics	15			3				18
Basic science								
Informatics technology	35			15				50
Anatomy including histology and embryology	152		1	48		6		207
Physiology	128			21		4		153
Biochemistry	30			5				35
General and molecular genetics	34			8		2	3	47
Pharmacology, pharmacy and chemotherapy	64			15		5		84
Pathology	117			50		11		178
Toxicology	27			7		2		36
Parasitology	38		2	11		4		55
Microbiology	23			10				33
Immunology	23			10				33
Epidemiology	15			7				22

2. Correction of Minor Deficiencies

Subjects	A	B	C ⁽¹⁾	D	E	F	G	H
Information literacy and data management *	15			3				18
Professional ethics and communication	33			15				48
Animal health economics and practice management	10			2				12
Animal ethology	26	4			4	2		36
Animal welfare	25					7	3	35
Animal nutrition	80		11	9		8	2	110
Clinical sciences								
Obstetrics, reproduction and reproductive disorders	85					35		120
Diagnostic pathology	87			18		40		145
Medicine	17					7		24
Surgery	33					15		48
Anaesthesiology	25					11		36
Clinical practical training in common animal species + Therapy in common animal species	172					68		240
Preventive medicine	46				10	7		63

2. Correction of Minor Deficiencies

Subjects	A	B	C ⁽¹⁾	D	E	F	G	H
Diagnostic imaging	33					15		48
Propaedeutics of common animal species	109					47		156
Animal production								
Animal production including breeding, husbandry and economics	122			22	7	2	20	173
Herd health management	15					7		22
Food Safety and Quality, Veterinary Public Health and One Health Concept								
Veterinary legislation including official controls and regulatory veterinary services, forensic veterinary medicine and certification	31			15	10	24		80
Control of food, feed and animal by-products	41				35			76
Zoonoses and Parasitic Diseases	50			25				75
Food hygiene and food microbiology	13	4		5				22
Food technology	33				8			41
Total	1.862	8	14	343	73	325	25	2.650⁽²⁾

A: lectures; B: seminars; C: supervised self-learning; D: laboratory and desk-based work; E: non-clinical animal work; F: clinical animal work; G: others (tutorial, multimedia, visits); H = total.

(1) This is not part of the mandatory activities, but a self-learning area, offering deepening and strengthening opportunities in some subjects, is currently available on the DVMSS website.

2. Correction of Minor Deficiencies

(2) Additional 33 total hours of English language are taken by each student. Moreover, 16 compulsory hours on safety and biosecurity in working spaces (without ECTS acquisition) are taken in 1st semester. The minimum total of 250 hours spent in internship and for preparing the graduation thesis are not covered in the Table.

* Information literacy and data management: During the IT course, 2 hours are spent on VTH database student registration, digital university library system, and access to electronic periodicals

Please note that, in addition to the specific new teaching modules of 1 ECTS inserted in Special Zootechnics (Animal welfare) and 2 ECTS in Internal Medicine (Clinical evaluation of Animal Welfare), animal welfare is currently being treated in different disciplines, as a transversal topic. While hours are specifically dedicated to various aspects, they are difficult to quantify (physiological bases of stress, welfare during transport, pre-slaughtering stages, and in experimental animals, etc.).

2.3.2 Comments

Main differences between old and new curriculum:

In order to make the curriculum more rational and fluent, the following adjustments were taken:

1st year: The integrated course of “Rural Economy and Quality System Management” was poorly understood by first year students and it has been transferred to the third year (6th semester), when the knowledge and skills acquired allow a more effective understanding of the subject. In its place (2nd semester) the integrated course of “General zootechnics and genetic improvement” has been added, bringing it forward by 1 semester compared to the old curriculum.

2nd year: The “Botany” teaching module, which was part of the Zoology and Botany integrated course, has been discontinued to allocate 2 ECTS to be spent on subjects not included in the old curriculum. Specifically, 1 ECTS was assigned to the “Animal welfare” teaching module, which has been added to Special Zootechnics (4th semester), and the other to the “Management of Veterinary Clinics and Communication” module now part of the Internal Medicine integrated course (9th semester). Additionally, the Zoology teaching module has been added as an integrated course together with “Topographic Anatomy” (2nd semester). Meanwhile, the other teaching modules of Anatomy A and B have been reorganized in a more rational way, in order to effectively obtain ECTS acquisition. Moreover, “Microbiology and Immunology” integrated course has been shifted from the 4th to 3rd semester replacing “General Zootechnics and Genetic Improvement”. The “Animal Nutrition” teaching module has been merged with “Animal Feeding” and “Livestock Feed”, allowing the direct ECTS acquisition at the end of the 4th semester in the integrated course of “Animal Nutrition and Feeding”.

3rd year: To enhance the curriculum’s effectiveness, the teaching modules “Chemotherapy,” “Toxicology,” and “Pharmacology” have been merged into a single course in the 5th semester. This avoids unnecessary delays in the ECTS acquisition, as these modules, despite belonging to the same integrated course, were previously spread across different semesters. The same thing was done with “Parasitology” and “Parasitic Disease,” which in the old curriculum were placed in the 5th and 6th semester, respectively, have now been merged together in the 6th semester (allowing students to take the corresponding exam at the end of the 6th semester). Moreover, as specified above, the “Rural Economy and Quality System Management” module has been moved from the 2nd to the 6th semester. The “Necropsy” teaching module has been moved from the 6th to the 9th semester (see below).

5th year: The “Internal Medicine” integrated course (9th semester) has been reorganized to include two new teaching modules: “Management of Veterinary Clinics and Communication” (1 ECTS) and “Clinical Evaluation of Animal Welfare” (2 ECTS). These new modules have been merged with “Internal Medicine and Therapy in Pets” (4 ECTS) and “Internal Medicine and Therapy in Livestock” (3 ECTS). Furthermore, a new integrated course has been inserted in the 9th semester, containing “Necropsy” teaching module (4 ECTS) and “Veterinary Legislation and Professional Ethics” (2 ECTS).

2. Correction of Minor Deficiencies

The modifications introduced in the new curriculum allowed a more balanced distribution of the teaching hours between the basic science subjects. Moreover, the balance between lectures and practical activities has been improved.

2.3.3 Suggestions for improvement

None

2.4 Partial compliance with standard 3.1.3 due to suboptimal clinical training in companion animals.

2.4.1 Factual information

The efforts made by the VEE for resolving the major deficiencies 4.4 (24/7 service) and 5.1 (Companion animals caseload) has produced a significant improvement in the clinical training of the students in companion animals. In particular, students have access to:

- Significant improvements of clinical case opportunities, now within the ESVET ranges. The numbers of clinical cases involving pets seen by students intramurally has increased substantially, rising from 689 in 2021/2022 (Sassari VEE SER) to 1,330 in 2022/2023 ([LINK](#)) and 2,002 in 2023/2024 ([LINK](#)), while the number of graduates has remained nearly stable. In particular, in 2023/2024, students handled 504 cases above the medium forecast calculated on ESEVT indicators for the VEE. In addition to this, activity on non-conventional animals at the VTH has expanded, with a very important increase in the number of clinical cases (86 and 120 in the last two years respectively). For more details, see also figures 1.2.1; 1.2.2; 1.2.3; 1.2.4.
- Several practitioners have been recruited as teaching staff including 4 new contracts for teaching students about companion animals until December 2024, rising to 6 in 2025 (See also table 1.3.1 for details). Each practitioner brings his/her experience and many clinical cases for students, thereby increasing the level of training and practical exposure of students to clinical cases.
- The clinical training of students for companion animals has been enhanced in emergency and 24 hours service. The VEE is restarting its own service by hiring new practitioners (in progress). Previously, students have obtained their experience by training in contracted external clinics (Clinica Città di Sassari).
- In addition, two more contracts have been established for external practitioners to support teaching students within 24 hours emergency and critical care. The contracts have been approved by the VEE board in December 2024 and are currently undergoing the administrative procedure for the activation in January 2025 ([LINK](#)).
- A shared digital calendar with the lists of the VTH daily activities has been created to ensure that students are always informed, even from home, of training possibilities and can increase their attendance at the hospital even beyond their mandatory clinical activities ([LINK1](#) - [LINK2](#)).

The students clinical training is now organized as shown by table 2.4.1 and 2.4.2

2. Correction of Minor Deficiencies

Table 2.4.1 Clinical training in Sassari VEE updated to 2025:

		YEAR				
		I	II	III	IV	V
<i>Clinical training</i>	PT*	0	3	113	120	72
	CCT/EPT	0	0	0	0	393
	CR**	2	18	5	25	50
<i>Total hours per student</i>		2	21	118	145	515

*PT: Practical training at single courses; **CR: Clinical rounds

Table 2.4.2: How clinical training is provided to all students at the moment of the visit:

Site	Schedule	Activities	Supervision provided	Hours per student
VEE	Mon-Fri from 08:30 a.m. to 8:30 p.m	All clinical activities including specialist visits, day hospital, ordinary hospitalizations and critical care – companion animals	Academic staff	During PT, CCT/EPT, CR and on demand
VEE	Mon-Fri from 08:30 a.m. to 2 pm	Emergency room - companion animals	Academic staff	During PT, CCT/EPT and on demand
VEE	Once a week for each specialist at VTH	Oncology, ophthalmology and dermatology - companion animals	Practitioners enrolled at the VEE as teaching staff	On demand
VEE	Clinical rounds	Animal management	Academic and support staff	20
Kennel	Clinical rounds	Clinical activities in dogs	Academic staff	5
Extramural	Clinical rounds	Equine internal medicine, pets internal medicine, ruminants and pigs surgery and internal medicine, non-traditional and exotic animals, wildlife management, Necropsies	Academic staff Practitioners enrolled at the VEE as practical training teaching staff	50

2. Correction of Minor Deficiencies

External clinics	Clinical rounds	H24 - Emergency service for companion animals. Each student <i>must do</i> the following rounds: Friday nighttime Saturday daytime Saturday nighttime Sunday daytime	Trained practitioners in an external site	25
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2.4.2 Comments

The VEE is actively hiring new practitioners and veterinary experts (i.e. Diplomates), to enhance training opportunities for students in companion animals. See also table 1.3.1 for details.

2.4.3. Suggestions for improvement

A long term strategy will be developed by the VEE, in particular, to increase the collaboration with private clinics and experts (inside and outside the VTH) to stay open 24/7, thus offering students with a broader exposure to clinical cases in companion animals.

2. Correction of Minor Deficiencies

2.5 Partial compliance with standard 4.2. due to the insufficient number of lockers for students and suboptimal onsite food services.

2.5.1 Factual information

Immediately following the ESEVT full visitation in March 2023, and based on the ESEVT visitation team's final report (draft C), the VEE head and EAEVE committee met to discuss the proposals for the correction of this minor deficiency. The issue of insufficient number of lockers was managed by the VEE head while the food service point was addressed to the Uniss general administration, and in particular, to the Rector, since the VEE has no authority to formulate such a structure on its own.

Lockers

Following an on-site inspection (Protocol No.3621, 4th of November 2024), the Head of the Office of Construction and Logistics pointed out suitable locations for the installation of lockers (up to 20 modules, about 350 lockers) distributed across four floors. Based on these findings, an initial implementation plan has been defined, which includes the installation of a first group of about 90 new individual lockers with a cost of about €11.000. The lockers are now available at the DMV ([LINK](#)). In 2025 the DMV will reassess the lockers needed by the students.

Food Service point

The Council of DVM formally requested the central bodies of the University (Student Council, Academic Senate, and Administrative Council) for the activation of adequate food service facilities for students and staff on several occasions over the past two years. These requests are aimed to explore possible solutions that meet the academic community's needs in terms of both quality and accessibility of food services. These initiatives aim to create a welcoming and practical environment aligned with the required standards and the expectations of its users.

2.5.2 Comments

In relation to what has been previously reported about the Food Service Points, the student representation has officially reiterated the request to the responsible university offices for the activation of adequate food service facilities for students and staff.

2.5.3. Suggestions for improvement

It is planned that within a two-to-three-year timeframe, the need for the locker for all students will be fully addressed, funded by the University. The objective is to provide personal storage space for educational materials and personal items, while improving the logistical organization of common areas. This intervention addresses the needs expressed by students and contributes to creating a more functional learning environment that aligns with required quality standards.

2.6 Partial compliance with Standard 4.3 due to suboptimal organisation of the hospitalisation spaces for companion animals.

2.6.1. Factual Information

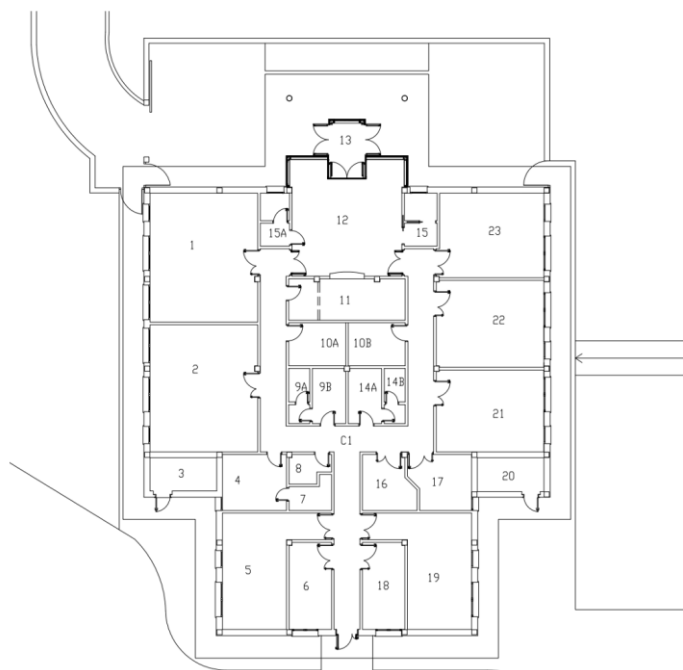
According to the ESEVT Full Visitation final report “*in the VTH there is no ability to hospitalize dogs or cats nor separate these species as expected in a ‘cat-friendly’ practice. There is also no provision for the hospitalization of exotic pets or wildlife nor for the separation of prey and predator species*”.

There was likely a misunderstanding, as dogs and cats are hospitalized in two clearly separated zones. What was noted during EAEVE visit in 2023 was the lack of a clear separation between infectious dog and cat patients.

2. Correction of Minor Deficiencies

Since its construction, the VTH has undergone numerous changes in the subdivision of the spaces to meet the numerous needs presented over the years. From the first planning, reported in the 2023 SER (see [Appendix 3](#)), several upgrades have been implemented. The current layout also incorporates modifications suggested by the EAEVE visit and ECOVE in 2023, including two separate isolation rooms, one for dogs and one for cats, in addition to quarantine areas and wards for non-infectious dogs and cats, as detailed in the figure 2.6.1 below:

- 1 TRIAGE
- 2 **DOG WARD**
3. TECHNICAL ROOM
4. MEDICAL ROOM
5. INTENSIVE CARE UNIT
6. **QUARENTINE**
7. MEDICAL ROOM TOILET
8. LAUNDRY
- 9B. MEN'S DRESSING ROOM
- 9A. RESTROOM
- 10A. LABORATORY
- 10B. DINING ROOM
11. ADMINISTRATION
12. WAITING ROOM
13. ENTRANCE
- 14A. WOMEN'S DRESSING ROOM
- 14B. RESTROOM
15. RESTROOM
- 15A. RESTROOM
16. NUTRITION DESK
17. **CAT WARD**
18. **ISOLATION FOR CATS**
19. **ISOLATION FOR DOGS**
20. TECHNICAL ROOM
21. ULTRASOUND ROOM
22. OUTPATIENT CLINIC 2
23. OUTPATIENT CLINIC 1



Regarding the hospitalization of exotic pets, a new area was found to be suitable. Required arrangements are planned to be completed before summer 2025.

Regarding the hospitalization of wildlife, the VEE has an agreement with [Agenzia Forestas](#) (that is officially responsible for wildlife rescue for the Italian and Sardinian Government). When there are animals that need hospitalization, they will be transferred to the Bonassai Rescue Center that was also visited during the EAEVE visit in 2022. The Bonassai wildlife rescue center has all necessary facilities for the hospitalization of wildlife and students are permitted to visit the center during Clinical Rounds and EPT.

2.6.2 Comments

None

2.6.3 Suggestions for improvement

None

2. Correction of Minor Deficiencies

2.7 Partial compliance with standard 4.8 due to suboptimal transportation of students to extra-mural facilities.

2.7.1 Factual information

The visitation team pointed out the suboptimal transportation of students to extramural facilities. The lack of adequate transport means for students and teaching staff was identified as a minor deficiency. In view of the present restriction to purchase new means of transport by University/DVM, the deficiency in transportation was addressed with renting two new buses (long term contract from December 2024 to December 2026) with adequate capacity, accomplishing the organization of repeated practical training for 4 small groups of students to reach extramural facilities.

2.7.2 Comments

Practical extra-mural activities are supported by a three-year project funded by the Autonomous Region of Sardinia with a total budget of €1,740,000. Such dedicated fundings accounts for long-term rental of two minibuses with 9 seats each (8 passengers + 1 driver) that can be driven with the driving licence type B, solely by the personnel of the Department, for reasons such as insurance and responsibility (see below). Extramural Facilities, such as farms and plants, are easily accessible. For each extra-mural practical activity and visit, a total of 16 students can be transported, accommodating the average number of students from four groups of repeated teaching hours for practical activities, in line with the needs for hands-on training.

Management and Procedures

The department developed an internal operation manual for the correct booking and operation of the minibuses, and to schedule the practical activities by the teaching staff.

Procedures rule on:

- **Booking and Usage:** The use of minibuses is restricted to institutional purposes (teaching). Journey information [driver (name and surname), destination (place and reason), distance (km), date (calendar), time (hour of departure and arrival) must be booked in advance and documented in the "Logbook".
- **Safety and Responsibilities:** The vehicles are equipped with mandatory safety devices, and drivers are required to adhere to traffic rules and report any issues or damages, if any, immediately after the visit to resolve critical issues promptly.
- **Maintenance and Refuelling:** The administrative office oversees routine and extraordinary maintenance, manages refuelling with fuel cards, and conducts periodic checks to ensure the vehicles' optimal functionality.

This system ensures efficient, safe, and coordinated transportation, enhancing the quality of education while fostering collaboration with local resources and facilities.

2.7.3. Suggestions for improvement

If the financial Italian laws still prohibit purchase of new cars by University/DVM, and only long-term rental is possible, it will be accomplished with the provision of external funds.

2. Correction of Minor Deficiencies

2.8 Partial compliance with standard 6.3. due to suboptimal access of students to equipment for the development of procedural skills.

2.8.1 Factual information

The visitation team commended the VEE for the development of ‘The nutrition corner’ which efficiently complements the training in this discipline and is freely available for students, with an online booking system. Additionally, the VEE positively evaluated the library and the use of JoVE, a multidisciplinary video resource, as well as the internal study resources that allow students to access a wide collection of skeletons, bones, and teeth. All above mentioned resources are still available for students. Nonetheless, the visitation team noticed that, albeit the models to train students on invasive procedures were available, they were located in various areas of the VEE, where free access is not continually available, should students wish to practise techniques at times of their choosing. Thus, the team suggested providing a well-equipped Clinical Skills Lab (CSL) in one specific location, which would be freely open for students. The DVM Council deliberated on the 28th of September 2023 a new arrangement of the building facilities taking into account the suggestion from EAEVE commission. The council identified the area that will be dedicated to the CSL and related services (approximately 210 square meters). A €200,000 budget has been allocated for the CSL equipment; these funds are part of the Uniss grant dedicated to enhance the DVM teaching infrastructures.

2.8.2 Comments

The area for the CSL has been identified on the first floor (Scala A) and can be accessed by stairs or elevator. The CSL will have two toilets and a dressing room. The CSL is approximately 18,5 meters long and 11 meters wide (circa 210 square meters) and was previously equipped as a laboratory. To renovate the area, DVM and Uniss Office of Construction and Logistics have made a big effort to remove and relocate considerable amounts of lab furniture, instruments and reagents. Now the Office of Construction and Logistics is defining the executive project for the CSL.

The DVM has designated a CSL committee, consisting of six teachers and one students’ representatives. All staff members and students’ representatives were invited to contribute to the CSL creation by sending their proposals via a google form ([LINK](#)). Proposals were received from the students and teachers of the following disciplines: anatomy, physiology, pharmacology, parasitology and parasitic diseases, medical, surgical and gynecological clinic (Anatomia degli animali domestici, Fisiologia veterinaria, Farmacologia, Parassitologia e malattie parassitarie degli animali e alle Cliniche medica, chirurgica, ostetrica e ginecologia).

Additionally, the committee gained knowledge on how to set up a CSL by: 1) reviewing the existing literature; 2) asking representatives of other Italian CSL to share their experiences by email (Bari, Padua) or via online meeting (Bologna); 3) having members of the committee visiting CSLs in other establishments and reporting to the committee (Dublin, Turin, Milan). In light of all the above, the committee has selected an initial list of 8 simulators, 2 softwares, and one surgical setting model to be purchased (estimated total cost €75,000) to develop competences on animal handling (horse, cattle, dog, mouse, rat), venipuncture (horse, sheep, dog, cat), IM injection (horse), artificial insemination (horse, cattle), calving assistance, pregnancy diagnosis (cattle), resuscitation (dog), leg bandages (dog), surgical preparation and suturing, dissection ([LINK](#)). The remaining budget (approximately €125,00) will be employed to purchase further equipment, based on the experience gained from using the first set of products and from the feedback received by students.

2.8.3. Suggestions for improvement

Renovation works in the CSL room are ongoing. The simulators/software quotes have mostly been received. On November 28, 2024, the DVM approved the purchase of several products. We aim for opening the CSL by the first semester of the academic year 2025.

2.9 Partial compliance with standard 8.1. due to suboptimal strategy to ensure coherence of the overall assessment regime.

2.9.1 Factual information

In the final report following the EAEVE visit of 2023, regarding “Area 8. Student assessment”, the commission analysed different aspects related to the structure of the assessment such as the completeness of the syllabus, where the responsible professor outlines the assessment procedures and relevant prerequisites, the exam schedule, and (according to Italian law) the possibility for each teacher to adopt the most appropriate examination methods for his subject, consistent with the University teaching regulations, provided that they allow students to achieve standard outcomes defined by the Dublin descriptors. The committee noted that theoretical knowledge is mostly evaluated orally, and in some cases, a written multiple-choice test or a combination of the two has been adopted. The committee underlined that the popularity of oral exams among teachers and students is cultural and that students are convinced that in an oral exam, they may better demonstrate their knowledge. For the EAEVE committee, *although it is difficult to identify a strategy on what types of assessment should be given on what subjects, the system in place, favouring oral exams, seems to please the whole community, assuring a degree of fairness that is clearly accepted by all. Discussion within the VEE for the various types of assessment possible could be promoted, eventually with the help of acknowledged specialists in the subject. The main goal should be ensuring fairness in all circumstances.*

Following the analysis and suggestions of the EAEVE visit in 2023 about a clearer evaluation approach by the VEE, a new policy concerning the procedures for assessments was done. On November 25, 2024 the document was approved by the Veterinary Medicine Degree Course Council, and then ratified by the Department Council on November 28, 2024. The policy ([LINK](#)) describes in detail, point by point, its strategic, EAEVE-oriented aspects, listing the types of examinations carried out for the various disciplines that make up the teaching offer of the degree course in Veterinary Medicine. The responsibilities of the student, and the prerequisites required to take the exams are spelled out in greater detail, as well as the duties of the lecturers. Both the practical and theoretical aspects of the exams are specified, with the aim of verifying the acquisition of skills on the first day (DOC). Moreover, the duration of validity of partial tests and *in itinere* tests has been better specified, setting a uniform period for all subjects rather than leaving it to the discretion of individual teachers. The document also includes a section regarding the possibility for students to lodge a complaint if the assessment procedures are not conducted in accordance with the policy, and a section regarding the quality assurance of this process, which is carried out through the monitoring of the students' self-assessment questionnaires, focusing on adherence to procedures and the regularity of the assessment.

2.9.2. Comments

The analysis of the assessment process by the EAEVE committee, highlights the predominance of the oral modality in the student evaluation exams compared to other modalities. It also notes the absence of a precise and analytical strategy for assessments, inviting further reflections. Nevertheless, although the oral exams remain to be one of the most widespread among various subjects, over the last years, the assessment methods for students have changed significantly. Exams conducted in the past were predominantly oral, but written methods, such as *in itinere* tests may allow students to have a lower study program load than having to take the entire exam orally. However, the elimination of the oral exam totally replaced by written formats is feasible only in some basic subjects (mathematics,

2. Correction of Minor Deficiencies

physics, statistics). For professional disciplines (for example Anatomy, Histology, Pathological Anatomy, Food Inspection etc), oral exams remain essential. In these cases, in order to evaluate the acquisition of practical skills by the student, the oral exam is preceded by a practical examination. Furthermore, the oral examination is always public, and this ensures transparency of judgment and fairness of treatment towards everyone. However, while it is true that, among the various subjects taught in the degree course, there are different approaches for the evaluation of students (oral, written, mixed), the assessment policy clearly codifies the methods to be used. Both students and teaching staff are required to adhere to these established guidelines.

2.9.3. Suggestions for improvement

The drafting of the assessment policy was carried out by collecting the comments of the EAEVE committee during the 2023 visit to improve the existing one, and to better outline the strategic directions in the field of student assessment. Furthermore, thanks to the department's communication staff, a video tutorial will be set up. This will be used to show teachers and students so that everyone can be informed in detail about how the assessment policy works.

3.0 Partial compliance with standard 9.1. due to non-compulsory training in teaching and assessment for all teaching staff.

3.0.1 Factual information

The final report issued by ECOVE on 7 June 2023, reported that *“The VEE is partially compliant with Standard 9.1. due to non-compulsory training in teaching and assessment for all teaching staff”* suggesting that *“Formal training with assessment should be in place for all staff involved with teaching”*. In February 2024, the DVMSS established a working group for staff training. In December 2024 the DVMSS approved a new policy for staff training ([LINK](#)). Via the Staff training policy, the DVMSS commits to ensure the mandatory training of the teaching staff, academic or contract staff (Academic Staff), technical-administrative staff (Support Staff), as well as doctoral, post-doctoral and postgraduate students (Junior Staff), freelancers on contract at the VTH and extramural tutors responsible for compulsory practical training (*Elective practical training, EPT, providers*). Course attendance will be checked with an attendance register and will be followed by a compulsory learning assessment.

The DVM proposes both face-to-face and online courses and creates an online repository for such content to enable asynchronous ex-post training for newly recruited staff ([LINK](#)). The training courses are chosen considering various operational areas, and including courses of collective interests, and sector-specific training courses. Annually, the working group for staff training plans the calendar of training activities and submit it to the Department Council for its approval. In 2024 the following courses were organized by the DVMSS and UNISS:

- Scientific communication and public speaking course IV ed; for academics, students, junior and support staff. 20/04/2024 – 23/03/2024 (Prof. A. Varcasia, DVMSS; [LINK](#)). Online
- Training course aimed at acquiring skills to support students with Specific Learning Disorders (SLD) for academics and Support Staff (Italian dyslexia society – UNISS). Online
- Prevention and protection of risks in veterinary activities; for support staff 05/03/2024 – 22/03/2024 (Dr. F. Ariu, Dr. A. Marongiu, DMVSS and SPISS). Onsite
- From teaching objectives to course evaluations: dissecting a course outline from the University of Guelph - Seminar (Prof. P.M. Bartlewski, Department of Biomedical Sciences, Ontario Veterinary College, University of Guelph, Canada. Visiting professor DVMSS). Onsite

At the end of the year, the achievement of training objectives is monitored, and new didactic proposals are modulated in accordance with the DVMSS and UNISS.

2. Correction of Minor Deficiencies

These actions are in accordance with the Ministerial Decree n°773 of June 10, 2024 indicating the “General guidelines for University planning 2024-2026 and Indicators for the evaluation of results”. For this purpose, one of the strategic objectives chosen by UNISS, focuses on qualifying and improving the skills of the University staff through continuous training for members involved in teaching activities, and for technical and administrative staff to strengthen academic networking. UNISS is committed to implementing measures to incentivize the participation of teaching staff in training activities, including regulatory changes regarding bonuses and salary increases. This includes introducing a clause of the possession of at least two qualification certificates issued at the end of the proposed training experiences foreseen in the two-year reference period of the suitability assessment.

3.0.2 Comments

According to the ESEVT Full Visitation final report which suggested that “*Formal training with assessment should be in place for all staff involved with teaching*”, the DVMSS is committed to ensuring continuous formal training for its Staff with a particular focus on those involved in teaching activities.

3.0.3. Suggestions for improvement

Making pedagogical training compulsory through regulatory changes in bonuses and salary increases is an essential step to incentivize the participation of teaching staff in training activities. The DVMSS is confident that this decision will benefit both students and all DVMSS Staff. Moreover, an increase in the variety of training courses could stimulate the interest and the motivation of staff to participate in new updated courses. This would be particularly feasible and appropriate for the university staff, as universities are centers of excellence in higher education, dedicated to training high-level professionals.

ESEVT Indicators

3.1. Factual information (*Updated data based on the last three academic years*)

Regarding ESEVT indicators, the VEE, soon after the visitation in 2023, began providing monthly monitoring during each VEE council meeting. At the start of the new academic year, the VEE EAEVE delegate, in collaboration with the president of the veterinary medicine course, established threshold values for each indicator and calculate the monthly averages required, based on forecasts of graduating students (estimated to be 31 and 34 respectively for 22/23 and 23/24).

The VEE established a member of teaching staff, responsible for each indicator that reports to the VEE council regarding the ongoing situation. Based on the results of the monitoring, the VEE adopts new strategies to improve the indicators and revise previous strategies, adopted according to the PDCI approach. In addition, indicator sheets for clinical cases were published in the VEE website and were updated monthly for transparency with students and stakeholders ([Link to the page; 2022/2023 ESEVT Indicators](#); [ESEVT 2023/2024 Indicators](#)). The indicators reported in the ESEVT Full Visitation report included the A.Y. 2019/2020, 2020/2021 and 2021/2022 (last 3 full academic years before visitation). The updated indicators are for 2021/2022, 2022/2023 and 2023/2024. **Sassari VEE Indicators are publically available at this [LINK](#).**

3.2. Comments

The VEE policy for monitoring and improving ESEVT indicators was successful, reaching the indicators in 2022/2023 with the only exception of pets for only 21 clinical cases and in 2023/2024. The reality exceeds forecasts in several indicators, thus valoring the strategy adopted. The full operative 24/7 service will further improve VEE ESEVT indicators in the upcoming years. For more details see also figures 1.2.1; 1.2.2; 1.2.3; 1.2.4.

3.3. Suggestions for improvement

1. **Increase clinical case variety:** Although the monitoring system has proven effective, there remains room to further diversify the clinical cases, particularly for companion animals, to meet the specific targets set for clinical case numbers and improve the learning experience for students. This could involve expanding partnerships with more external clinical facilities or increasing the variety of cases presented at the VEE.
2. **Enhance interdisciplinary integration:** To strengthen the coherence between theoretical and practical teaching, it may be beneficial to further integrate interdisciplinary teaching approaches in the clinical training. This could involve closer collaboration between the Basic Sciences and Clinical departments to ensure students gain a more holistic understanding of veterinary medicine.
3. **Increase student feedback:** Building on the current system, the VEE could further increase the frequency and depth of student feedback on clinical training experiences, ensuring that adjustments to clinical rotations and case assignments are more responsive to student needs and perceptions.
4. **International collaboration:** Expanding international cooperation and clinical exchange programs can expose students to a broader range of cases and methodologies, while also offering opportunities to benchmark the VEE's performance against global standards.

Glossary

B

BAWC: Biosecurity and Animal Welfare Committee

C

CC: Curriculum Committee

CCT: Core Clinical Training/*Tirocinio*

D

DCVM: Degree Course in Veterinary Medicine

D1Cs: Day One Competences

DVS: Department of Veterinary Sciences

E

EAEVE: European Association of Establishments for Veterinary Education

EPT: Elective Practical Training

ESEVT: European System of Evaluation of Veterinary Training

F

FSQ: Food Safety and Quality

FPA: Food Producing Animals

J

JSTC: Joint Student-Teacher Committee

O

ORIENTAMENTO: intramural or extramural activities in various disciplines to deepen knowledge and skills

Q

QA: Quality Assurance

S

SC: Steering Committee

U

Uniss: University of Sassari

V

VTH: Veterinary Teaching Hospital/ *Ospedale Veterinario Universitario Didattico*

R-SER Redactors: Consuelo Mura, Maria Luisa Pinna Parpaglia, Enrico De Santis, Sergio Gadau, Francesca Mossa, Francesca Piras, Carla Cacciotto, Maria Grazia Cappai, Sebastiano Luridiana, Nicola Columbano, Marco Casu, Elena Baralla, Federica Ariu, Andrea Corda, Luca Stucchi, Stefano Rocca, Renata Fadda, Cristina Story Villalobos, Margherita Trande, Antonello Floris, Flavia Marceddu, Furqan Arshad.

Internal reviewers: Fiammetta Berlinguer, Enrico De Santis - **Coordination:** Antonio Varcasia

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