

DEPARTMENT OF VETERINARY MEDICINE FOUNDATIONAL STRATEGIC PLAN 2025-2028

South East Technological University



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1 CONTEXT AND STRATEGIC TIMEFRAME

The Department of Veterinary Medicine was formally established at South East Technological University (SETU) in September 2025. The Department supports the management and oversight of SETU's Bachelor of Veterinary Medicine (MVB) programme and associated teaching, research, professional engagement, and clinical education activities. As a new academic department, this strategic plan articulates the Department's foundational ambitions and priorities from establishment until 2028, coinciding with the final years of SETU's institutional strategy, Connecting for Impact 2023–2028.

This plan defines the Department's role during its formative phase, with a particular focus on satisfying the standards of the Veterinary Council of Ireland (VCI) and Royal College of Veterinary Surgeons (RCVS) and aligning with the European Association of Establishments for Veterinary Education (EAEVE) framework. A subsequent strategic plan will be developed for the post-2028 period, reflecting departmental maturation, programme expansion, and accreditation progression.

1 CONTEXT AND STRATEGIC TIMEFRAME

DEPARTMENT OF VETERINARY MEDICINE

VISION

The Department of Veterinary Medicine at SETU will be an internationally respected centre for veterinary education and clinical and pedagogical research. The Department aims to enhance the veterinary profession in Ireland and Europe through excellence in education, evidence-informed practice, clinical and pedagogical research, and sustained engagement with the One Health agenda.

DEPARTMENT OF VETERINARY MEDICINE

MISSION

Consistent with SETU's mission and with expectations of the veterinary profession as expressed in regulation, the Department of Veterinary Medicine is committed to:

- Delivering a **competency-based veterinary curriculum** that enables all graduates to demonstrably meet the VCI and EAEVE Day One Competences and Underpinning Knowledge and Understanding, ensuring readiness for safe, effective, and ethical professional practice.
- Ensuring **high-quality, authentic clinical education**, through a robust, quality-assured distributed clinical training model that reflects contemporary first-opinion and referral veterinary practice in Ireland and the EU.
- **Embedding animal welfare, professional ethics, sustainability and One Health principles** across teaching, learning, assessment, and clinical experience.
- Maintaining **rigorous quality assurance, governance, and continuous improvement processes**, consistent with VCI, EAEVE, RCVS and SETU requirements.
- Supporting the development of **professional identity, resilience, and lifelong learning**, enabling graduates to adapt to the evolving demands of the veterinary profession.
- Contributing to **regional and national capacity building, addressing workforce needs, rural veterinary sustainability and applied veterinary research** relevant to the southeast of Ireland.

This mission reflects the Department's dual responsibility: to its learners and to the animals, clients, communities, and systems served by its graduates and staff.

1 CONTEXT AND STRATEGIC TIMEFRAME

DEPARTMENT OF VETERINARY MEDICINE

VALUES

The Department of Veterinary Medicine upholds SETU's institutional values within a professional and regulatory veterinary context. These values inform all departmental activity:

- **Student-centred professionalism:** Supporting learner development while maintaining appropriate professional standards, accountability, and fitness to practise.
- **Educational and clinical excellence:** Commitment to evidence-based education, constructive alignment, valid assessment, and scholarly teaching.
- **Integrity and ethical practice:** Upholding veterinary professional ethics, animal welfare principles, and regulatory obligations.
- **Collaboration and collegiality:** Engaging constructively with clinical partners, regulators, professional bodies, and interdisciplinary colleagues.
- **Equity, diversity, and inclusion:** Promoting inclusive access, fair assessment and respectful learning and working environments.
- **Sustainability and One Health responsibility:** Recognising the interconnectedness of animal, human and environmental health in education and practice..

DEPARTMENT OF VETERINARY MEDICINE

OBJECTIVES

Research

Build the Department's research activities in a broad range of scientific areas relevant to veterinary medicine and One Health including basic and clinical sciences.

Grow the Department's veterinary and clinical pedagogical research to support evidence-based improvements in teaching and learning across the Department.

Enhance the Department's ability to translate our research into meaningful impact for the region and beyond.

Learners

Develop and implement veterinary professional degree programmes aligned with regional and national veterinary workforce needs.

Provide a range of postgraduate/advanced degree programmes in veterinary medicine related areas.

Produce internationalised curricula to support production of globally relevant, work ready graduates.

Engagement

Strengthen strategic partnerships with the veterinary, agricultural and scientific communities locally, nationally, and internationally to enhance clinical training, research collaboration, and veterinary workforce development.

Expand the Department's engagement with the public and local community to promote animal welfare and broaden participation in the Department's programmes.

Support and enable staff research activity to strengthen research capacity, outputs and impact within the Department.

Staff

Ensure all academic and technical staff are equipped with the skills and training necessary to deliver the Department's programmes in alignment with accreditation standards.

Support and enable staff research activity to strengthen research capacity, outputs and impact within the Department.



2 INNOVATION AND RESEARCH

2.1 Build the department’s research activities in a broad range of scientific areas relevant to veterinary medicine and OneHealth including basic and clinical sciences.

Actions	KPI
<p>2.1.1 Increase departmental scientific/clinical research funding activity through competitive grant applications</p>	<p>Enhance the Department’s ability to translate our research into meaningful impact for the region and beyond.</p> <hr/> <p>Establishment of a Department Research Strategy to include a clinical/scientific grant development plan by 2026.</p>
<p>2.1.2 Establish strategic research collaborations to support interdisciplinary and interprofessional veterinary and One Health research</p>	<p>Create at least four formal scientific/clinical research partnerships with clinical practices, universities, research institutes, government agencies, or industry by 2028.</p> <hr/> <p>Establish interdisciplinary research collaborations with at least two other One Health–aligned SETU Departments.</p> <hr/> <p>Deliver a minimum of three joint research outputs (publications, conference presentations, policy submissions, or grant proposals) with partners by 2028.</p>
<p>2.1.3 Develop departmental scientific/clinical research capacity through postgraduate recruitment and formation of thematic research groups</p>	<p>Create at least four formal scientific/clinical research partnerships with clinical practices, universities, research institutes, government agencies, or industry by 2028.</p> <hr/> <p>Establish interdisciplinary research collaborations with at least two other One Health–aligned SETU Departments.</p> <hr/> <p>Deliver a minimum of three joint research outputs (publications, conference presentations, policy submissions, or grant proposals) with partners by 2028.</p>

2 INNOVATION AND RESEARCH

2.2 Grow the Department’s veterinary and clinical pedagogical research to support evidence-based improvements in teaching and learning across the Department.

Actions	KPI
2.2.1 Increase departmental pedagogical research funding activity through competitive grant applications	Submission of a SATLE application annually led or co-led by members of the Department by 2028.
	Establishment of a Department Research Strategy to include a pedagogical grant development plan by 2026.
2.2.2 Establish strategic research collaborations to support interdisciplinary and interprofessional veterinary and clinical pedagogical research	Create at least two formal pedagogical research partnerships with clinical practices, universities, research institutes, government agencies, or industry by 2028.
	Establish interdisciplinary research collaborations with at least two other One Health pedagogy-aligned SETU Departments.
	Deliver a minimum of two joint research outputs (publications, conference presentations, policy submissions, or grant proposals) with partners by 2028.
2.2.3 Develop departmental research capacity through postgraduate recruitment and formation of thematic research groups	Enrol 1–2 postgraduate research students (Masters by Research or PhD) in One Health pedagogy-aligned areas by 2028.
	Initiate the establishment of an active One Health pedagogical research group with an identified lead.
	Produce at least six peer-reviewed veterinary and clinical pedagogical research outputs as a Department (publications, posters, presentations, policy briefs) by 2028.

2.3 Enhance the Department’s ability to translate our research into meaningful impact for the region and beyond.

Actions	KPI
<p>2.3.1 Strengthen the Department’s research dissemination and scholarly visibility at national and international level</p>	<p>Deliver a minimum of six conference presentations (oral or poster) at national and/or international veterinary, pedagogy, or One Health conferences by 2028.</p> <hr/> <p>Ensure representation at least one major international conference per year by departmental staff or postgraduate researchers.</p>
<p>2.3.2 Host and co-host research-led events that support regional, national and international knowledge exchange</p>	<p>Host one national or international research-informed conference or symposium aligned to veterinary medicine or One Health by 2028.</p> <hr/> <p>Design and deliver at least 3 CPD events informed by departmental research by 2028.</p> <hr/> <p>Produce a minimum of 2 research-informed outputs for non-academic audiences (e.g. policy briefs, clinical guidelines, public/practitioner-facing resources).</p>



3 LEARNERS

3.1 Develop and implement veterinary professional degree programmes aligned with regional and national veterinary workforce needs.

Actions	KPI
<p>3.1.1 Deliver and quality-assure veterinary medicine professional degree programme aligned with regulatory standards and workforce demand</p>	<p>Achieve initial validation or ‘reasonable reassurance’ from Veterinary Council of Ireland prior to initiation of programme in September 2026.</p> <hr/> <p>Obtain a satisfactory outcome to the year 1 Veterinary Council of Ireland visitation and self-evaluation report submission during academic year 2026/27.</p> <hr/> <p>Have a VCI Year 3 Visitation Work Plan internally approved and operational no later than 12 months prior to the 2028/29 accreditation visit.</p>
<p>3.1.2 Develop Ireland’s first Registered Veterinary Nurse (RVN) apprenticeship programme</p>	<p>Enrol 1–2 postgraduate research students (Masters by Research or PhD) in One Health pedagogy-aligned areas by 2028.</p> <hr/> <p>Initiate the establishment of an active One Health pedagogical research group with an identified lead.</p> <hr/> <p>Produce at least six peer-reviewed veterinary and clinical pedagogical research outputs as a Department (publications, posters, presentations, policy briefs) by 2028.</p>

3 LEARNERS

3.2 Provide a range of postgraduate/advanced degree programmes in veterinary medicine related areas.

Actions	KPI
<p>3.2.1 Progress towards the establishment of a European Board of Veterinary Specialisation (EBVS)-aligned residency programme in conjunction with our clinical partner practices</p>	<p>Establish a formal working group to scope an EBVS-aligned residency pathway, including specialty focus, supervision requirements and institutional capacity, by 2027.</p> <hr/> <p>Develop a documented EBVS residency feasibility and readiness plan, including partnerships, caseload access and governance structures, by 2028.</p> <hr/> <p>Secure formal engagement or advisory input from relevant EBVS Colleges or Diplomates to inform programme development.</p>
<p>3.2.2 Secure approval and implement a Veterinary Preceptorship postgraduate module</p>	<p>Achieve internal approval for the Veterinary Preceptorship module through SETU's programme/module validation process within the strategic period.</p> <hr/> <p>Successfully deliver the module to at least two clinical preceptors in each partner practice by 2028.</p>
<p>3.2.3 Develop postgraduate modules for certificates or bespoke diplomas or Masters pathways for veterinary surgeons and veterinary nurses</p>	<p>Establish a formal framework for stackability and award accumulation, enabling progression to postgraduate certificates, diplomas or Masters degrees within the Department.</p> <hr/> <p>Design and validate 2-3 postgraduate Masters-level modules in veterinary related areas (clinical, business and education) by 2028.</p>

3.3 Produce internationalised curricula to support production of globally relevant, work ready graduates.

Actions	KPI
3.3.1 Progress international accreditation and benchmarking through structured engagement with RCVS and EAEVE	Initiate both the RCVS and EAEVE accreditation process by the end of 2025.
	Have a RCVS Year 3 Visitation Work Plan internally approved and operational no later than 12 months prior to the 2028/29 accreditation visit.
	Initiate production of an EAEVE Self Evaluation Report in advance of the initial visitation in Year 5 by end of 2028.
3.3.2 Embed curriculum-based internationalisation to enhance global competence and graduate employability	Embed 1–2 Collaborative Online International Learning (COIL) activities within core modules of the Veterinary Medicine programme, with documented learning outcomes and student evaluation.
	Secure at least two active international EMS placement pathways, enabling student participation in quality-assured international clinical placements.
	Leverage EU CONEXUS mobility funding to support staff and student engagement in international educational and research collaboration aligned with curriculum enhancement.

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4 ENGAGEMENT

4.1 Strengthen strategic partnerships with the veterinary, agricultural and scientific communities locally, nationally, and internationally to enhance clinical training, research collaboration, and veterinary workforce development.

Actions

KPI

4.1.1 Develop a coordinated Continuing Professional Development (CPD) network to strengthen engagement with the veterinary profession

Establish a formal veterinary CPD network and deliver the first CPD event by the end of 2025.

Develop and approve a plan for this CPD network for 2026–2028, aligned with professional, workforce and research impact priorities.

Deliver a minimum of 3-4 CPD activities from 2026–2028, with participant feedback informing continuous improvement.

4.1.2 Expand and strengthen the Distributed Clinical Network (DCN) to support clinical training and workforce sustainability

Recruit at least ten additional veterinary practices into the Distributed Clinical Network by the end of 2026.

Establish a Distributed Clinical Network Board, with agreed governance terms of reference, by the end of 2027.

Appoint a Veterinary Placement Lead to provide strategic oversight of Intra-Mural Rotations by the end of 2027.

4.1.3 Establish formal industry and stakeholder advisory structures to inform education, training and workforce development

Establish a Veterinary Industry Board with representation from veterinary practice, agriculture, industry and public bodies by end of academic year 2025/26.

Convene at least one formal meeting per annum of the Industry Board, with documented recommendations feeding into programme review and workforce planning.

4 ENGAGEMENT

4.2 Expand the Department’s engagement with the public and local community to promote animal welfare and broaden participation in the Department’s programmes.

Actions	KPI
<p>4.2.1 Develop targeted outreach activities to promote animal welfare and awareness of veterinary careers</p>	<p>Collaborate with SETU’s Learning for Life team to design and deliver the first veterinary workshop for primary school children by the end of 2025, focused on animal welfare and veterinary careers.</p> <hr/> <p>Expand the L4L workshop programme to at least two outreach events per year from 2026 onwards.</p> <hr/> <p>Host an animal welfare awareness event for members of the public by end of 2028.</p>
<p>4.2.2 Create structured widening participation initiatives to encourage access to veterinary education pathways</p>	<p>Deliver a “Try Veterinary Medicine” outreach event by 2026, targeted at school learners and under-represented groups.</p> <hr/> <p>Gradually expand widening participation activities with a medium-term objective to deliver a Veterinary Summer School by summer 2028 or 2029, subject to resources and demand.</p>

4.3 Embed sustainability across departmental operations to encourage environmentally responsible veterinary practice and contribute to institutional sustainability goals.

Actions	KPI
<p>4.3.1 Embed sustainability and the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) across veterinary medicine, veterinary nursing and postgraduate curricula</p>	<p>Map SDGs and sustainability learning outcomes across all programmes within the Department with evidence in programme and module documentation.</p> <hr/> <p>Embed at least sustainability-related learning activity per semester in each programme, ensuring alignment with professional and regulatory competencies.</p> <hr/> <p>Host a CPD focused on sustainability in veterinary practice by end of 2027.</p>
<p>4.3.2 Develop and support research activity focused on sustainability and One Health challenges relevant to veterinary practice</p>	<p>Submit at least one sustainability-related research funding applications during the strategic period.</p> <hr/> <p>Produce a minimum of two research outputs with demonstrable sustainability impact, including peer-reviewed publications, policy briefs, or practitioner-facing guidance.</p>



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Veterinary



5 STAFF

Medicine



5.1 Ensure all academic and technical staff are equipped with the skills and training necessary to deliver the Department’s programmes in alignment with accreditation standards.

Actions	KPI
<p>5.1.1 Strengthen educational and pedagogical expertise among academic staff</p>	<p>Provide protected working time and financial support for each member of academic staff to undertake educational training and/or CPD relevant to veterinary education (e.g. assessment, feedback, simulation, curriculum design).</p> <hr/> <p>Ensure all new academic staff complete a recognised teaching and learning programme within their first two years of appointment (if not completed prior to commencing employment) in line with accreditation standards.</p>
<p>5.1.2 Establish formal industry and stakeholder advisory structures to inform education, training and workforce development</p>	<p>Provide financial support and protected working time for clinical and technical staff to engage in externally recognised clinical training, CPD or professional accreditation aligned with programme and regulatory needs and satisfy the requirements of the VCI.</p> <hr/> <p>Provide support (financial or otherwise) for at least 3-4 staff members to achieve a post graduate qualification (MSc, Doctorate or PhD) which is aligned to the strategic aims of the Department.</p>

5 STAFF

5.2 Support and enable staff research activity to strengthen research capacity, outputs and impact within the Department.

Actions	KPI
5.2.1 Implement structured mechanisms to provide protected time for staff research activity	Recognise and allocate protected research time within departmental workload allocation/timetabling and formal research buy-out schemes, enabling at least 50% of research-active staff to access protected research time during the strategic period.
5.2.2 Strengthen grant development, research training and application support for staff	Provide grant development support (e.g. proposal review, budgeting assistance, institutional approvals) for all departmental research funding applications in conjunction with the University Research Office.
	Identify and facilitate targeted research training activities (e.g. grant writing, research methods, governance, ethics) in response to identified staff needs.
	Achieve year-on-year growth in staff participation in grant applications, evidenced through internal research reporting.





6 ENABLERS

6.1 12. Establish the physical, organisational and governance infrastructure required to support sustainable delivery of veterinary education, research and professional training.

Actions	KPI
<p>6.1.1 Deliver fit-for-purpose physical infrastructure and equipment to support veterinary education and research</p>	<p>Work with the Capital Projects team to agree, action and deliver a phased infrastructure development plan for the development of the transitional infrastructure space by September 2026.</p> <hr/> <p>Work with the Capital Projects team to agree, action and deliver a phased infrastructure development plan for the development of the permanent infrastructure spaces by January 2029.</p> <hr/> <p>Work with the Finance team to agree, action and deliver a phased veterinary equipment procurement plan by December 2025.</p>
<p>6.1.2 Build on established processes to ensure robust departmental governance, quality assurance and accreditation structures</p>	<p>Ensure veterinary related policies are approved as part of SETU's Policy Approval Framework prior to first student intake in September 2026.</p> <hr/> <p>Ensure the Department works with key university offices (Academic Affairs, Quality Assurance, Governance, Registry) to support internal governance including programme approval, review and accreditation readiness.</p>



7 IMPLEMENTATION, REPORTING AND MONITORING

The implementation, monitoring and management of this Strategic Plan will be overseen through robust governance, quality assurance and reporting structures aligned with SETU's institutional framework and the requirements of veterinary accreditation bodies.

Responsibility for delivery of the Plan rests with the Head of the Department of Veterinary Medicine, supported by the Faculty Management, Programme Leader, Programme Boards and relevant advisory and governance committees.

Strategic objectives, actions and associated KPIs will be embedded within annual operational planning processes, with progress reviewed at least annually through structured reporting mechanisms. This will include regular review via Departmental meetings, Programme Boards, and University-level academic governance structures, ensuring alignment with SETU's Connecting for Impact 2023–2028 implementation model.

In line with VCI and EAEVE accreditation requirements, the Strategic Plan will function as a living document, informing resource allocation, staffing, infrastructure planning and quality enhancement activities, and will be systematically reviewed and updated using evidence from programme monitoring, accreditation feedback, stakeholder input and performance data.

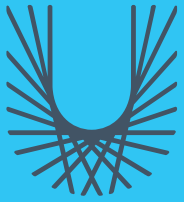
Progress against strategic priorities will be documented and used to support continuous improvement, accreditation readiness (VCI/EAEVE/RCVS), and transparent reporting to internal and external stakeholders.

A formal review of the Strategic Plan will be undertaken prior to 2028 to inform the next phase of departmental strategic development.

A APPENDIX: SWOT ANALYSIS

STRENGTHS	New, purpose-designed curriculum, fully approved by SETU's Academic Council and aligned from inception with VCI/EAEVE/RCVS accreditation standards and contemporary veterinary education best practice.
	Distributed Clinical Education Model, enabling authentic exposure to first-opinion, referral, and community-based veterinary practice.
	Newly established interprofessional education network with a One Health focus.
	Strong alignment with SETU's regional mission, particularly agriculture, rural communities, sustainability, and applied biosciences.
	Enhanced professional identity formation, resilience/ wellbeing, sustainability, and business training embedded explicitly within the curriculum design.
Robust departmental and university governance and quality assurance structures.	
WEAKNESSES	New department with limited operational history, requiring rapid development of systems, culture, and identity.
	Dependence on external clinical partners, necessitating intensive coordination and quality assurance oversight.
	Limited early research capacity, as staff recruitment and research infrastructure are still developing.
High initial workload for staff, balancing programme delivery, accreditation preparation, and departmental establishment.	
OPPORTUNITIES	National workforce demand for veterinary graduates, particularly in rural and food-producing animal sectors.
	Potential for early innovation in veterinary education, unencumbered by legacy structures or curricula.
	Strategic positioning within SETU's Faculty of Science and Computing which offers many opportunities to expand the Department's research through interdisciplinary collaboration in numerous aligned area including sustainability, One Health, agri-tech and life sciences.
	Future accreditation pathways, including potential AVMA approval and international recognition.
Expansion of postgraduate, CPD and applied research activity once the undergraduate programme is established.	
THREATS	Regulatory and accreditation risk, inherent to all new veterinary programmes.
	Competition for clinical placements and veterinary academic staff in a constrained national and international market.
	Staff and infrastructural pressures, particularly during early programme rollout.
	External sector pressures, including workforce burnout, changing public expectations, and evolving professional regulation.





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