Developing teachers of the future: a novel Undergraduate Certificate in Veterinary Medical Education as a platform for public engagement and developing veterinary graduate skills

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A key responsibility of healthcare professionals is the education of clients/patients, colleagues, students and the general public such as school pupils. In order to formally recognise the important role that students play in our teaching and learning processes and foster students as partners in education, Edinburgh’s Veterinary School developed and introduced a novel Undergraduate Certificate in Veterinary Medical Education (UCVME), believed to be the first of its kind in the veterinary sector.

The UCVME is a modular programme and students can enrol in the third year of the veterinary degree. There are core and elective components, with completion over the final three years of the veterinary degree.

The UCVME has been embraced by students, with 116 students currently enrolled since its inception in 2014. Activities receiving credit have included: peer assisted learning (PAL) sessions, widening participation educational workshops with schools (encouraging and raising aspirations in school pupils) and veterinary client education. In addition, a subset of students is being mentored towards application for Associate Fellowship of the Higher Education Academy.

The programme has provided opportunity for students to become involved in designing and delivering outreach workshops to schools. In the first year of the programme, 26 students were involved in 10 outreach educational activities to over 900 school pupils in the UK and USA. An illustration of this is the ongoing delivery of science workshops (cardiology, radiology, gastroenterology, neurology, anatomy) for high school science pupils. Successful working partnerships have been forged with local schools, charities, other educational institutions and professional associations.

This presentation will detail experiences with the programme, including feedback and reflections from student participants and stakeholders including partnership school teachers.

We believe that this programme facilitates transitions in to and through university,
the educational training of students and ultimately develops key graduate skills for the veterinarians of the future.