The Master of Science (MSc) Programme at the Department of International Animal Health of the Freie Universität Berlin:

Course set-up and curriculum structure of the Joint MSc Programme in Veterinary Public Health (VPH) with the Chiang Mai University in Thailand

Baumann, M.P.O., Rajanasthien, S., Srikitjakarn, L., Zessin, K.H., Kyule, M.N.

The Department of International Animal Health of the Freie Universität Berlin establishes a new Master Course concept: Three courses address modern areas of veterinary medicine (epidemiology, veterinary public health, food chain management), aim at specific target regions and are jointly executed with partner universities and veterinary institutions in the regions.

The modular curriculum of the MSc programme allows also for state-of-the-art teaching of a particular topic as a combination of classroom knowledge transfer (lectures, group work, seminars, PC labs) linked to practical laboratory experiences (bench work) within a defined and uninterrupted time period at a particular partner institution.

The two-years „sandwich“-programme in English language leading to a dual degree ( „Joint MSc VPH of FUB and CMU“) follows a modular structure applying the European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System – ECTS –; its design as „classroom and research master“ is fully in line with the recommendations given by HRK (Association of Universities in Germany) and the Accreditation Council.

Here we present the MSc-VPH Course for the Southeast Asian Region which is I with the beginning of the Academic Year 2003/2004 (October 2003) aunchedtogether by the partner universities Chiang Mai University (CMU) in Thailand and the Freie Universität Berlin (FUB).

The University of Veterinary Medicine, Vienna / Austria (UVMV) with its Institute of Meat Hygiene, Meat Technology and Food Science is the third and junior partner within the EU ASIA LINK Programme (providing substantial financial co-funding).

Scholarships have been made available by the German Academic Exchange Service (DAAD) under its ‘Aufbaustudienleng-programm’ as well as by the Ministry of University Affairs / Thailand.

Young and mid-career veterinarians and other professionals (natural, agricultural, medical sciences) from the Southeast Asian region with a background in and training needs for zoonoses control and food safety are the target group addressed by the MSc programme.

The course concept of a "twinning" or "sandwich"-programme is based on bundling of training institutions in Thailand and the countries in the region (South-South collaboration) under the leadership of CMU and in strong collaboration with the Northern partners FUB (South-North collaboration).

The three Master Courses form the foundation for the establishment of the "International Graduate School in Veterinary Public Health (IGS VPH)" at the Faculty of Veterinary Medicine of FUB; expansion from the MSc level to a led PhD programme is to be achieved latest by 2007 with first graduation in 2010.

Part A of the course starts at CMU with Introductory modules for three months followed by Advanced Modules at FUB with Laboratory Practicals being carried out at UVMV. Further modules addressing regional specifics follow; the first study year will be completed with a draft of the study proposal.

Part B emphasises on the MSc thesis and comprises of the preparatory project work, the field investigations in the home country of the participant with accompanying workshops at CMU and in the region. With the completion of the written thesis and the oral defence the MSc course is accomplished.

The three Master Courses are aimed at veterinarians in government and non-government organisations. In addition, the programme is open to health professionals from other related fields who are interested in the health sector and the health-related aspects of animal diseases and food safety.

The Master of Science in Veterinary Public Health is a full-time programme consisting of three years (total: 90 credit points), including a six-months summer school at CMU in Vienna. The course comprises of an introductory phase, a regional-specific phase and a thesis phase. Each phase is evaluated by examinations.

The examinations are based on the assessment of students' work, which is supervised by a tutor. The final grade is based on the examination results and the overall performance of the student during the course. The final grade is categorized as follows:

- 100% - 95% = A
- 85% - 75% = B
- 75% - 50% = C
- < 50% = D

Grades are based on a scale of 0 to 100, with 100 being the highest possible score. The final grade is calculated as a weighted average of the examination results and the overall performance of the student during the course. The weightings for the examinations and the overall performance are as follows:

- Examinations: 60%
- Overall performance: 40%

The typical course load is 1800-1900 hours per year, with around 900 hours spent on classroom work and the remainder on laboratory work, case studies, and self-study.

The programme is designed to be flexible, allowing students to tailor their studies to their interests and career goals. Students can choose from a wide range of modules and topics, and can also participate in a number of extra-curricular activities, such as study trips and networking events.

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