

ADVICE NOTE 27

OVERSEAS VETERINARY SURGEONS VISITING THE UK

LAWFUL REGISTRATION AND PRACTICE OF VETERINARY SURGERY

1. This Advice Note is for those veterinary surgeons visiting from overseas who are not registered with the RCVS already.
2. All visiting overseas veterinary surgeons should ensure they are registered with the RCVS before they practise as a veterinary surgeon in the UK.
3. Generally, it is illegal for a person to practise veterinary surgery in the UK if he or she is not registered with the RCVS.
4. 'Veterinary surgery' is defined within the Veterinary Surgeons Act 1966 as encompassing:

'The art and science of veterinary surgery and medicine and without prejudice to the generality of the foregoing shall be taken to include (a) the diagnosis of diseases in, and injuries to, animals, including tests performed on animals for diagnostic purposes; (b) the giving of advice based upon such diagnosis; (c) the medical or surgical treatment of animals; and (d) the performance of surgical operations on such animals.'

5. If you are registered with the RCVS as an overseas member, you must register as a home-practising member before you practise in the UK.

REGISTRATION WITH THE RCVS

6. There are various routes to registration with the RCVS which are dependent on the initial veterinary qualification except in the case of those exercising rights under various European Directives. The main routes to registration are determined as follows:
 - a) **European Nationality other than British Nationality** (those who are nationals of other EU and EEA Member States and in some cases nationals of Switzerland).

Generally such nationals and some others – those who are '**community rights entitled persons**' (see the end of this advice note for meaning of this term) - may register virtually 'automatically' where the qualification is a

recognised European qualification. Such veterinary surgeons may register in order:

- i) to provide veterinary services in the UK on a temporary or occasional basis; or,
- ii) to establish him or herself as a practising veterinary surgeon in the UK.

If a ‘**community rights entitled person**’ has obtained a veterinary qualification that is not a recognised European qualification, the route to registration with the RCVS may not be straightforward; this may depend on the length of time he or she has practised as a veterinary surgeon in Europe, and potentially he or she may be required to sit and pass part or all of the RCVS’ own examination for registration, called the ‘Statutory Examination’.

b) **Qualifications**

RCVS Recognised Qualifications

There are a number of qualifications obtained from outside the EU which may be recognised for registration in the UK. These include some qualifications from universities in Australia, New Zealand, South Africa, the USA and Canada. Holders of such recognised qualifications may obtain full registration and work in the UK.

Other Qualifications

Those holding veterinary qualifications which are not recognized for registration purposes must pass the RCVS Statutory Examination in order to work in the UK unless the Temporary Registration provisions outlined below apply to their circumstances.

TEMPORARY REGISTRATION

7. In limited circumstances, veterinary surgeons with qualifications that are not recognised by the RCVS (those who must otherwise sit and pass the Statutory Examination) may be eligible for temporary registration so that they can carry out specific veterinary-related activities in a restricted capacity at a specific location.
8. There are a number of approved categories of temporary registration, each with a number of associated conditions, for example: temporary registration to accompany animals coming to the UK, which is currently granted for a maximum of 31 days. Temporary registration may also be available to fill a vacancy that cannot be filled by an MRCVS (a member and registrant of the RCVS); one of the conditions with this type of temporary registration is that a home practising MRCVS must supervise the temporary registered overseas veterinary surgeon.
9. A veterinary surgeon with temporary registration must not use the letters MRCVS or sign prescriptions or certificates which require the signature of an MRCVS.

10. Detailed guidance on registration may be found on the RCVS website at <http://www.rcvs.org.uk/Templates/Internal.asp?NodeID=89638>

VETERINARY MEDICINES

11. Generally, medicines from overseas may not be brought into the UK for use on animals in the UK without appropriate authorisation from the Veterinary Medicines Directorate.
12. Furthermore, it is an offence to be in possession of a veterinary medicinal product (a product may be a veterinary medicine by its properties or use) without proper authority (e.g. an import certificate).
13. Also, in the UK, veterinary surgeons must supply all veterinary medicinal products (except AVM-GSL) from veterinary practice premises registered with the RCVS.

* *“Community rights entitled person” means—*

(a) a national of a relevant European State other than the United Kingdom;

(b) a person who falls to be treated as a national of the United Kingdom for the purposes of the Community Treaties and who is seeking access to, or is pursuing, the profession of veterinary surgeon by virtue of an enforceable Community right; or

(c) a person who is not a national of a relevant European State but who is, by virtue of any enforceable Community right, entitled to be treated, for the purposes of access to and pursuit of the profession of veterinary surgeon, no less favourably than a national of a relevant European State,

but does not include a person who, by virtue of Article 2 of Protocol No. 3 (Channel Islands and Isle of Man) to the Treaty of Accession, is not to benefit from Community provisions relating to the free movement of persons and services;”;

(Veterinary Surgeons’ Qualifications (European Recognition) Regulations 2008 (SI 2008 No. 1824))