

To: Heads of UK Veterinary Schools

**Ref:** mod certs/unis/fma

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Dear Colleague

**INVITATION TO SEEK ACCREDITATION FOR THE RCVS POSTGRADUATE CERTIFICATE IN  
ADVANCED VETERINARY PRACTICE**

I am writing to provide you with more information about the new modular Certificate in Advanced Veterinary Practice and to invite your university to take part in this important initiative by submitting proposals for accreditation to award modules under the scheme. This could be in collaboration with other providers of your choice.

The concept of a modular structure for RCVS Certificates was accepted in 2002 as part of RCVS's long term education and training strategy. The aim is to provide a modular route to a recognised level of attainment for practising veterinary surgeons, allowing individuals to gain credit for their achievements either in single modules, or in combinations that better reflect their development needs. Over time, it is hoped that a significant proportion of CPD provision can be geared towards accredited modules.

The new Certificate is based on a credit accumulation and transfer model, consistent with the QAA frameworks for higher education qualifications in England, Wales, Northern Ireland and in Scotland. The full postgraduate certificate is pitched at postgraduate 'M' level, representing a total of 60 credit points, or 600 notional learning hours.

A key feature of the new system is that RCVS will be delegating the assessment of individual modules to universities which it will accredit for the purpose. It has been agreed that accreditation should only be open to universities. This recognises their experience in running assessment and quality assurance systems, as well as the fact that they are publicly accountable institutions. Universities will also be free to enter into partnership with other, non-HE organisations and associations to deliver courses and to assist with assessment, and we will welcome proposals along these lines. We would encourage your institution to consider such collaborative ventures as this will help to increase access to modules, provide you with an additional source of expertise, and help to stimulate a variety of CPD provision.

We are also keen to see opportunities opened up for candidates to gain credits not only towards the RCVS Certificate but also towards Masters degrees and, possibly in the future, professional Doctorate programmes. The new modular system provides an exciting opportunity for universities to integrate RCVS modules with their own postgraduate awards or alternatively to submit their own postgraduate modules, in areas not covered by the RCVS framework, to become part of a national credit accumulation system. This will help universities to widen the market for their own awards, as well as providing candidates with a variety of progression routes to choose from.

I am **enclosing** a paper describing in more detail the **administrative rules** that will apply to universities and candidates, together with a copy of the **bye-laws** for the new system. Universities that are accredited will be required to sign a simple **accreditation agreement** with RCVS, and a copy of this is also enclosed for your information.

A **list of modules is enclosed**, showing the initial range of subjects that have been defined by RCVS's various subject boards. You will see from the list that some modules are still under development and details of these will be released as soon as possible. In the meantime, we will welcome expressions of interest from any university that wishes to take part in the system. Please write to the Education Department, indicating which modules you may be interested in awarding and we will send you further details of the modules concerned. Please contact Freda Andrews – [f.andrews@rcvs.org.uk](mailto:f.andrews@rcvs.org.uk), telephone 0207 202 0702.

### **Timescale**

We will be pleased to receive proposals for accreditation from September onwards, and aim to hold the first accreditation meeting in October 2006, to be followed by further meetings on an as-needs basis. There will be no closing date for applications, as we are conscious that universities may need some time to develop their proposals. However, in order that we can advise interested candidates of likely timescales and availability, as well as plan for the eventual phasing out of the existing RCVS Certificates, **we would welcome an indication from you by 1 October as to whether your university intends to submit proposals for accreditation**, and if so, which modules you are considering.

Finally, the fees that RCVS will need to charge universities to cover the cost of accreditation have not yet been agreed, but we hope to keep these as low as possible. Universities will, of course, be able to charge candidates for the cost of assessment. In the case of English universities, the fact that these will be assessed HE qualifications may open up the way to HEFCE funding in the form of part-time student numbers.

I would urge you to circulate this information widely amongst your colleagues, not only to the veterinary faculty, but also to any other relevant departments that may be interested in providing programmes and assessment in areas such as professional and business practice.

I look forward to hearing from you, and hope that your university will feel able to play a full part in this important initiative aimed at improving the lifelong learning opportunities for practising veterinary surgeons.

Yours sincerely



Lynne Hill, MVB, MBA, MRCVS  
President