

Proposal for new Royal Charter: note on changes from the draft of December 2013

Introduction

1. In December 2013 we consulted on proposals for a new Royal Charter to replace the present Supplemental Charter of 1967. The text of the consultation document is at www.rcvs.org.uk/newcharter.
2. The RCVS Council has now agreed to invite its members to agree at the annual general meeting of the College on 11 July that a slightly amended draft of the new Charter should go to the Privy Council for approval. This note explains the amendments.

Activities of the College

3. There have been minor changes in the wording of article 5, which mentions various activities that the College can undertake in order to achieve its objects.
4. Item (a) and (d) on the list, in the consultation version, were

"Accrediting veterinary courses and qualifications, other than as provided for in the Act in relation to veterinary surgeons" and

"Developing, accrediting, and promulgating guidance on post-registration veterinary education and training for those admitted as members and associates of the College".
5. Now we propose:

"Accrediting veterinary education, training and qualifications, other than as provided for in the Act in relation to veterinary surgeons" and

"Promulgating guidance on post-registration veterinary education and training for those admitted as members and associates of the College".
6. The point of the revised wording is to make clear that it is open to the College to accredit CPD which is aimed at people other than members and associates of the RCVS.
7. Item (e) now reads "Supporting [rather than *encouraging*, as in the consultation draft] the continued development and examination of new knowledge and skills". The new wording is more positive: the College ought not just to urge members and associates to develop new knowledge and skills but help them to do so.

8. Item (j) is now "Facilitating [rather than *promoting*] the resolution of disputes between registered persons and their clients. The intention is the same, but it was pointed out to us that "promoting" could be taken to mean just encouraging people to go off and sort out their disputes. The College will not have power to make veterinary surgeons and their clients use any kind of dispute resolution arrangements, but it can try to make it easier for them to do so.
9. Items (j) and (k) in the consultation draft were
 - "Providing information services to the veterinary professions" and
 - "Providing historical information about the development of the veterinary professions".
10. These are both functions of the Library & Information Service of RCVS Knowledge. In the new draft they have been put together as:
 - "Providing information services and information about the historical development of the veterinary professions".
11. Item (m) in the consultation draft was:
 - "Monitoring developments in the demographic of veterinary professionals".
12. This was drafted mainly with reference to the periodic RCVS Surveys of the Veterinary Professions, formerly known as "Manpower Surveys". We now propose the following rather wider wording:
 - "Monitoring developments in the veterinary professions and in the provision of veterinary services".
13. That would cover, for example, changes in the delivery of veterinary services for farm animals or in the role of technicians.

Associates of the College

14. Articles 12 to 16 of the draft Charter deal with the registration of veterinary nurses, and the new bye-laws attached to the Charter say that registered veterinary nurses are entitled to use the postnominal letters RVN.
15. Article 17 of the draft Charter gives power to recognise classes of associate other than veterinary nurses. If new classes of associate were to be recognised - there are no plans for this at the moment - the bye-laws of the College would have to be changed, and any such change would need to be supported by a resolution of the members at a general meeting and approved by the Privy Council.

16. There is one change in the revised draft. The consultation version said in article 17 that any newly recognised class of associate could use descriptions in accordance with rules of the College. Such rules would be made by the RCVS Council (see article 9). In the new draft, permitted descriptions of new classes of associate, including postnominals, would be a matter for the College bye-laws. That means that the permitted descriptions would need to go to a general meeting of the members and the Privy Council for approval.

Financial powers

17. Articles 20 and 24 of the consultation draft gave Council powers to charge fees in respect of goods and services provided by the College. The two articles have now been rolled up into one (article 20 of the new version) without any change of substance.