

## **RCVS Advanced Practitioners**

### **Guidance on providing evidence of CPD in Professional Skills**

## Summary

**This guidance applies to those applicants whose qualification was awarded prior to 2017.**

This guidance is for you if you need to provide evidence of having developed your professional skills in each of six areas, which are:

- 1. Principles of Professional Reasoning and Decision Making**
- 2. Animal and Public Health Protection**
- 3. Emergency Care**
- 4. Animal Welfare, Professional Conduct and Veterinary Ethics**
- 5. Quality and Safety**
- 6. Key Skills (Communication/Personal and Professional/Research Skills)**

You can do this in a number of different ways, for example, by:

- providing evidence from day-to-day work or from prior learning/qualifications;  
and/or
- undertaking CPD on topics that are new to you, or that you want to refresh;  
or
- completing a relevant professional development module or modules;  
or
- using available 'assessment only' routes.

**We stress that you do not have to undertake a module or attend taught courses unless you choose to do so.** You will need to provide some evidence for each of the six areas and we have given examples of what might be included under each heading. These are intended as helpful guidance and are not prescriptive.

Precisely how you approach this is up to you, but you might want to start by thinking about your own learning and development needs for each of the six areas. This will help you to decide which topics you can evidence from prior experience or learning, which require a more general understanding and any that you wish to cover in more depth. This also means that the actual amount of CPD that you undertake will depend on your learning needs and the amount of prior learning and experience that you feel you can use as evidence.

Using the online 1CPD system would be a good way of recording your professional skills CPD, as this makes it easy to record brief notes on learning goals, what was learned and how it has impacted on your practice. **If you are using the 1CPD system to provide this evidence please write 'AP Professional Skills' in the subject area so we can easily identify your Professional Skills CPD.**

The assessment panel find it very useful to see the relevant CPD activities for each of the six areas accompanied by a brief summary of how these then impacted on your practice in each area.

## Introduction

The RCVS considers it important that those who are accredited as Advanced Practitioners have presented evidence of having developed their skills in key areas of professional development. If you have been accepted onto the list, but your postgraduate qualification did not explicitly include such elements, you will have the five-year period up to the time you apply for reaccreditation to put together evidence of how you meet the requirements for professional skills. You can do this in a number of ways, for example, by:

- providing evidence from your day-to-day work, or from prior learning/qualifications that you have undertaken
- and/or
- undertaking CPD on topics which are new to you, or that you want to refresh
- or
- completing a relevant professional development module or modules
- or
- looking at an assessment-only route to show you already have the necessary knowledge and understanding

This note contains some general guidelines on the topics that you might cover as part of this CPD and the evidence that you might wish to present at re-accreditation.

It is up to you to decide how to approach this, but we would suggest that you start by thinking about and identifying your own learning and development needs in each area. This will help you to decide which topics you need to cover in some depth, which require a more general understanding and awareness of key points and those which you feel you can evidence from prior learning and experience. We would also expect that this weighting will depend on your area of designation and the species that you see as part of your day-to-day work.

New applicants applying for the first time will need to provide this evidence with their application if they are applying on the basis of a qualification that does not explicitly include professional skills. Anyone whose qualification was awarded in 2017 or later will need to do this through an assessed professional skills module.

## Topics to be covered

This section contains details of the areas that we wish you to consider and for which you need to provide some evidence. There are six main areas (in bold) which we would like to be evidenced in some way. We have provided examples of what might be included under each heading, but this is intended as helpful guidance and is not prescriptive. We understand that the depth of additional knowledge that is required will depend on your own learning needs and the area in which you are working. The topics that we would want to see covered are as follows.

## 1. Principles of Professional Reasoning and Decision Making

This topic is about tackling complex clinical and wider professional problems in a systematic manner, drawing rational conclusions and making reasoned decisions autonomously.

Broadly, we would expect this to encompass: models of scientific reasoning, principles of clinical reasoning and evidence-based practice, dealing with risk and uncertainty, approaches to problem-solving and decision-making and application of logical, analytical, critical problem-solving and synthetic skills, in varying degrees of depth.

## 2. Emergency Care

The purpose of this topic is to ensure that principles relating to the emergency care of animals remain as a foundation of advanced practice.

You might want to provide evidence covering the following points: first aid, emergency care and pain relief, euthanasia and humane slaughter and the ability to access relevant information rapidly and apply it appropriately. For first aid and emergency care (in areas that are not part of your designation), this could mean having an awareness of what to do in an emergency situation when, even if you do not deal routinely with the particular species in question, you could find yourself to be the most qualified person at the scene. This might include risk assessing the situation, who to call for further assistance and how to manage the public, if appropriate. For pain relief, euthanasia and humane slaughter, and accessing and applying relevant information, you could draw evidence from your designated area of work as well as the range of species that you encounter in the course of your normal day-to-day practice.

## 3. Animal and Public Health Protection

The purpose of this topic is to ensure that veterinary responsibility for protection of human and animal health remains as a foundation of advanced practice.

The points below give a number of examples that could be covered using your designated area of work as well as the range of species that you encounter in the course of your normal day-to-day practice to provide the relative emphasis that you place on these topics. This is one area where the depth of coverage is likely to depend heavily on your designated area. For example, you might need to know more about some of these areas if you work with production animals rather than companion animals. If your designation is in Veterinary Public Health, we would expect that all of these areas would have been covered within the qualification with which you are applying and, in this case, we would not expect any further evidence to be provided.

- principles of animal disease detection, reporting (notification) and surveillance
- principles of epidemiology and risk assessment
- awareness of issues surrounding antimicrobial drug resistance
- principles of biosecurity, hygiene and animal disease control measures
- principles of certification for export and animal health, ( e.g. the pet travel scheme for small animal practitioners)
- management of animal and veterinary public health risks
- ability to carry out health certification including official breed health schemes
- recognition of health protection as a collective responsibility

- ability to access, interpret and apply relevant health-related information

#### 4. Animal Welfare, Professional Conduct and Veterinary Ethics

The purpose of this topic is to ensure that welfare and ethical concerns are integrated into all aspects of advanced practice.

The points below are given as examples of areas you should take into account when considering your current knowledge base and learning needs. :

- the *RCVS Code of Professional Conduct* and its supporting guidance
- scientific and philosophical foundations of animal welfare assessment and ethical approaches to decision-making in veterinary practice
- models of professional organisation, conduct and ethics
- ability to reflect on the role of veterinary science in the broader context of society
- critical awareness of welfare and ethical issues as they relate to advanced practice
- ethical issues relating to clinical research in practice
- ability to integrate ethical considerations into clinical and professional decision-making

#### 5. Quality and Safety

The purpose of this topic is to promote continuous improvement in the quality and safety of your chosen area of veterinary practice.

Suitable evidence could cover: approaches to quality assurance and management such as managing adverse and significant events, clinical governance, audit, clinical and professional leadership, management of health and safety in the area of practice.

#### 6. Key Skills (Communication/Personal and Professional/Research Skills)

The following list gives some suggestions of the sorts of key skill that you should consider, however, many of these areas may well have been covered in some depth by your qualification and, if so, we would not expect further evidence to be supplied:

- **communication:** for example, referencing systems; report writing; consultation models, for example, the Calgary-Cambridge model
- **personal and professional development:** for example, feedback and appraisal systems; identification of individual learning needs; learning styles; time management; reflection and reflective writing; professionalism; planning, learning and evaluation
- **research skills:** for example, scientific and statistical methodology; bibliographical resources, archives and other sources of information; literature search strategies; critical appraisal of scientific literature; ethical aspects of research; analysing and evaluating relevant information
- **leadership and team working:** for example, leadership and management approaches and styles, different team role preferences, and effective delegation.

## What kind of evidence will be accepted?

Broadly speaking, any activities you undertake in order to develop your professional (non-clinical) skills as part of a development programme can be counted towards your CPD. This is no different, in principle, from any other CPD evidence and you may find the more general guidance that we give on CPD helpful. This can be found on the RCVS website at [www.rcvs.org.uk/cpd](http://www.rcvs.org.uk/cpd).

You do not have to participate in face-to-face learning delivered by an external CPD provider although you may choose to do so. Universities accredited to assess the RCVS 'A' module of the Certificate in Advanced Veterinary Practice also offer 'assessment-only' routes, which is another option that you may wish to consider if you are already fully confident in your competence in these areas and would like to have your skills validated.

As mentioned above, if you feel that you have covered some of the professional skills as part of your studies towards the postgraduate qualification with which you applied for Advanced Practitioner status, or from any other prior learning that you have undertaken, you can use this evidence towards your professional skills CPD, by giving details of where and how your studies covered those topics. You might also want to use evidence from your day-to-day work that demonstrates your approach to and use of the professional skills. You can do this by providing relevant evidence (examples of cases, for instance) and accompanying explanatory notes.

Although the following is not an exhaustive list, it provides an indication of the types of CPD activities that would be appropriate to include.

- Clinical audit activity
- Workplace-based learning (eg ward rounds, case conferences)
- Self-directed study (eg critical reading - see Appendix 1 for some suggested reading materials - research, preparing a new lecture/presentation)
- Distance learning (formal or informal online learning, webinars) or formal taught courses (such as those leading to CertAVP or the Nottingham Trent/BSAVA Certificate)
- Short courses (in-house or external, numerous providers and subjects)
- Conference sessions

Workplace activities such as case conferences or rounds can count as CPD activity if you record and systematically reflect on what you have learnt. Similarly, research and clinical audit activities (including setting up an audit system within your practice) can be recognised as adding to your professional development if you can account for how they have contributed to your own personal learning.

Private study and self-directed learning, such as keeping up to date with relevant professional themes in veterinary journals, can be incorporated into your CPD plans, provided you document what you have learnt. You should keep your own personal record of such activities, perhaps in the form of a reading or learning diary if this is to count as 'documented' private study for which there is no time limit in terms of what can count towards your CPD. You can use the online 1CPD system to keep such notes.

There are increasing opportunities to take part in online assessment, and other 'mediated' distance learning involving online tutors and learning groups. There is no restriction on the number of hours of online assessment or mediated distance learning that can count towards your CPD. You should keep notes of all such activities so you can account for what you have learnt.

### **How much CPD should I do?**

The starting point for considering this question is the criteria for eligibility for Advanced Practitioner status, which include the requirement to undertake 100 hours of CPD in professional skills areas (or a professional development module equivalent to 10 credits).

However, the actual amount of CPD that you need to do will depend on your learning needs and the prior learning and experience that you may want to use as evidence of meeting the professional skills requirement.

To give an example, you may feel that your postgraduate qualification (s) contained elements of the listed professional skills that would amount to roughly 50 hours. You may also have other evidence from your day-to-day work that would account for roughly another 20 hours. Finally, you may have identified a number of specific learning needs which you can then meet by undertaking relevant CPD activities of your choice.

We will look holistically at the evidence provided and we do not expect you to account for precisely 100 hours: this is a 'ballpark' figure, not an absolute requirement. The emphasis will be on reviewing evidence that you have covered the six areas in the way that best meets your own personal learning needs.

### **Recording professional skills CPD**

It would be helpful to see brief notes on learning goals, what was learned and how it has impacted on your practice. The best way to do this is by recording these on the 1CPD system. If you are only using the printed version of the CPD Record Card, you would need to keep a separate personal file with any certificates of attendance, learning diaries, CPD plans, assessment results, or other documents that serve as evidence of your involvement in CPD. You may find it useful as part of planning your professional development to have a detailed account of your learning experiences for your own reference. If you are using the online 1CPD system, you can use the notes section to show which of the six areas the activity relates to and what you gained from it. If you wish, you can upload electronic records of attendance, certificates, photos, and other notes. If you are using the 1CPD system to document your professional skills CPD evidence please write 'AP Professional Skills' in the subject area so we can easily identify this evidence.

### **Any questions?**

If you have any questions about this guidance, please do get in touch with the Education team, either by email at [ap@rcvs.org.uk](mailto:ap@rcvs.org.uk) or telephone on 020 7202 0736.

## Appendix 1: Suggested reading and resource list

The following references and resources are intended to be helpful starting points for reading and thinking about professional skills. The list is certainly not exhaustive and you may wish to find and use other alternative sources. Most of these references are available via the RCVS Knowledge library.

Appleby, Michael C et al (2011) *Animal welfare*. 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. Wallingford: CABI

Armitage-Chan, Elizabeth A. (2014) Human factors, non-technical skills, professionalism and flight safety: their roles in improving patient outcome. *Veterinary Anaesthesia and Analgesia*, 2014

Belbin, R Meridith (1981) *Management teams – why they succeed or fail*. Oxford: Butterworth Heinemann

Belbin, R Meridith (1993) *Team roles at work*. Oxford: Butterworth Heinemann.

Buchanan, R.A. and Wooldridge, A.A. (2011) Staying current by searching the veterinary literature. *Journal of Veterinary Medical Education*, 38 (1), pp. 10-15

Cockcroft, Peter D and Holmes, Mark A (2003) *Handbook of Evidence-Based Veterinary Medicine*. Oxford: Blackwell

Cornell, Karen.K., Brandt, Jennifer.C., and Bonvicini, Kathleen.A. (2007) Special issue: effective communication in veterinary practice. *Veterinary Clinics of North America: Small Animal Practice*, 37(1) 1-199

Dean, Rachel. (2013) How to read a paper and appraise the evidence. *In Practice*, 35(5), pp. 282-285

De Brun, Caroline and Pearch-Smith, Nicola (2009) *Searching skills toolkit: finding the evidence*. Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell

Del Mar, Chris; Doust, Jenny; and Glasziou, Paul P. (2006) *Clinical thinking: evidence, communication and decision making*. Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell

Ericsson, K Anders (2009) *Development of professional expertise*. Cambridge: CUP.

Gambrill, Eileen (2012) *Critical thinking in clinical practice*. 3<sup>rd</sup> ed. New Jersey: John Wiley & Sons

Gray, Carol and Moffett, Jenny (2010) *Handbook of veterinary communication skills*. Oxford: Blackwell.

Greenhalgh, Trisha (2010) *How to read a paper: the basics of evidence-based medicine*. 4<sup>th</sup> ed. Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell

Hackett, Tim B (2012) *Veterinary emergency and critical care procedures*. 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. Oxford: Wiley Blackwell

*Harvard Business Review 10 must reads on change* (2007) Harvard Business School Publishing.

*Harvard Business Review on 10 must reads on leadership* (2011) Harvard Business School Publishing.

*Harvard Business Review 10 must reads on teams* (2013) Harvard Business School Publishing.



- Higgs, Joy, et al (2008) (Eds) *Clinical reasoning in the health professions*. 3<sup>rd</sup> ed. Oxford: Butterworth Heinemann
- Holmes, Mark A. and Cockcroft, Peter D. (2004) Evidence-based veterinary medicine 1. Why is it important and what skills are needed? *In Practice*, 26 (1), pp. 28-33
- Lyons, Nona (2010) *Handbook of reflection and reflective Inquiry*. New York. Springer
- Maddison, Jill, Volk, Holger and Church, David (2014) *Clinical reasoning in small animal practice*. Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell (In press)
- Mellanby, R.J., Rhind, S.M., Bell, C., Shaw, D.J., Gifford, J., Fennell, D., Manser, C., Spratt, D.P., Wright, M.J.H., Zago, S. and Hudson, N.P.H. (2011) Perceptions of clients and veterinarians on what attributes constitute 'a good vet'. *Veterinary Record*, June 11, 2011
- May, Stephen .A. (2013) Clinical reasoning and case-based decision making: the fundamental challenge to veterinary educators. *Journal of Veterinary Medical Education*, 40(3), pp. 200-209
- May, Stephen A (2013) Veterinary ethics, professionalism and society. Chapter 4 in: *Veterinary and Animal Ethics*. Eds. Wathes, Christopher M. et al (UFAW Animal Welfare Series) Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell
- Mossop, Liz H (2012) Is it time to define Veterinary Professionalism? *Journal of Veterinary Medical Education*, 39(1), pp. 93-100
- Mullan, Siobhan.and Main, David (2001) Principles of ethical decision-making in veterinary practice. *In Practice*, 23(7), pp. 394-401
- Powell, Lisa L (2011) *Small animal emergency and critical care: case studies in client communication, morbidity and mortality*. Oxford: Blackwell
- Radford, Alan et al. (2006) Development, teaching and evaluation of a consultation structure model for use in veterinary education. *Journal of Veterinary Medical Education* 33(1) 38-44.
- Roder, C., Whittlestone, K., and May, S.A. (2012) View of professionalism: a veterinary institutional perspective. *Veterinary Record*, December 8, 2012
- Rollin, Bernard E (2006) *An introduction to veterinary medical ethics* 2<sup>nd</sup> ed Oxford: Blackwell
- Schmidt, Peggy.L. (2007) Special issue: Evidence-based veterinary medicine. *Veterinary Clinics of North America, Small Animal Practice*, 37(3), pp. 409-616.
- Silverman, Jonathan, Kurtz, Suzanne and Draper, Juliet (2005) *Skills for communicating with patients*. 2<sup>nd</sup> ed Oxford: Radcliffe Publishing
- Thistlethwaite, Jill and Spencer, John (2008) *Professionalism in medicine*. Oxford: Radcliffe Publishing
- Viner, B. (2010). *Success in veterinary practice: maximising clinical outcomes and personal well-being* Chichester: Wiley-Blackwell

## Other resources

The ABIM “Project Professionalism” website <http://www.abimfoundation.org/Professionalism/Medical-Professionalism.aspx> contains a lot of resources.

<http://www.royalcollege.ca/portal/page/portal/rc/canmeds/framework> A further resource for the purposes of looking at what professionalism can include.