

## DRAFT AGENDA

Agenda for the meeting to be held on 12 September 10am

Royal College of Nursing,

London, W1G 0RN

1.	<b>Welcome and Apologies for absence</b>	
2.	<b>Declarations of interest</b>	
3.	<b>Education Committee Minutes</b> a) Minutes of meeting held on 9 May 2023	Paper Attached
4.	<b>Matters arising</b>	
5.	<b>Education Department update</b>	Oral Report
6.	<b>Clinical Career PIDS</b>	Paper Attached
7.	<b>CPD</b> Minutes from the meeting held on 14 July 2023	Paper Attached
8.	<b>Advanced Practitioner Status</b> a) AP Equine ECC designation approval	Paper Attached
9.	<b>VetGDP</b> a) Minutes from the meeting held on 5 July 2023 b) 18-month time limit	Paper Attached Paper Attached
10.	<b>CertAVP</b> a) Minutes from the meeting held on 19 June 2023 b) Synoptic policy	Paper Attached Paper Attached
11.	<b>Specialist Subcommittee</b> a) Nomination of new member	Paper Attached
12.	<b>EMS</b> a) 2024 EMS policy	Paper Attached
13.	<b>SME</b> a) SME update b) Exam Software comparison c) 2024 SME Guidance	Oral update Paper attached Paper Attached

14.	<b>Primary Qualifications Sub-Committee (PQSC)</b> a) Minutes from the meeting held on 14 August and 29 August 2023 b) Edinburgh visit report c) Liverpool accreditation event report d) CityU Accreditation event report e) Overseas accreditation fees	Paper Attached Paper Attached Paper Attached Paper Attached Paper Attached
15.	<b>IAWG</b> Sustainable accreditation	Paper attached
16.	<b>Apprenticeships discussion paper</b>	Paper Attached
17.	<b>ENQA</b>	Oral report
18.	<b>Risk register</b> Items to add to the Risk Register	Paper Attached
19.	<b>AOB</b>	
20.	<b>Date of next meeting</b>	14 November 2023

Britta Crawford  
Committee Secretary  
August 2023  
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**Education Committee membership**

Dr Abbie Calow

Ms Linda Ford

Mrs Susan Howarth

Mr Tim Hutchison

Professor Matt Jones

Professor Tim Parkin – also Chair of Specialist Recognition Subcommittee

Dr Kate Richards (Chair)

Professor Stuart Reid

Professor Susan Rhind

**Student Members:**

Ms Anna Bradbury

Mr Luke McLinden

**Operations Board member as observer:** Dr Melissa Donald

**Chairs of Education Subcommittees:**

Dr Martin Whiting, PQSC

Professor Stephen May, Panel of Assessors for Advanced Practitioner Status

Dr Sue Paterson, VetGDP

Claire Mclaughlin, SME Board

## Education Committee Terms of Reference

### From the Scheme of delegation from the RCVS Council to committees 8 June 2023

The Education Committee shall set the policy for undergraduate and postgraduate education and training of veterinary surgeons and determine the requirements for those seeking registration, for the award of qualifications under the Charter, for continuing professional development, and for recognition as RCVS Advanced Practitioner and RCVS Specialist.

Under normal circumstances Council members will form the majority on non-statutory committees, but on Education Committee (and the Primary Qualifications Subcommittee (PQSC)) a minimum of one third and a maximum of one half of members will be co-opted external members with education expertise, for example, Heads of the Veterinary Schools or other veterinary school staff members. Two students will also sit on the Education Committee (and two on PQSC). In addition, the Chairs of the Education Subcommittees and a member of the Officer Team will sit as non-voting observers.

The Committee shall develop and keep under review education and training requirements for registration, and in particular shall:

- a) define Day-One Competences and advise on the content of the veterinary undergraduate curriculum;
- b) oversee the approval process and ongoing monitoring of veterinary degrees and international recognition agreements, considering subcommittee reports on appointment of accreditation panel members, accreditation event reports, follow-up reports and annual monitoring reports from veterinary schools, subcommittee reports on overseas degrees from other accrediting bodies, and subcommittee reports on operation of the statutory membership examination; and,
- c) make recommendations to Council on any change in approved status concerning registrable degrees, on the regulations governing the statutory membership examination and on the regulations governing practice by students.

The Committee shall develop and keep under review policy for continuing professional development, revalidation of Advanced Practitioner and Specialist status, and postgraduate training and qualifications, and in particular shall:

- a) define Entrustable Professional Activities (EPAs) for, and monitor, the VetGDP;
- b) set the requirements for and monitor continuing professional development within the profession;
- c) develop and maintain a framework of College postgraduate awards, receiving reports from subcommittees on the standards for College-awarded certificates and fellowships by thesis, examinations and accreditation of other recognised postgraduate qualifications as part of the framework;

- d) define the requirements for RCVS Advanced Practitioner and RCVS Specialist status, receiving reports from subcommittees on the maintenance of lists for Advanced Practitioners and Specialists; and,
- e) recommend to Council amendments to the certificate rules.

The Committee shall recommend fees to the Finance and Resources Committee for all related activities, for example, application and annual fees for Advanced Practitioners and Specialists, together with reviewer remuneration; fees for Statutory Membership exam candidates and remuneration for examiners; remuneration for accreditation panel members and reviewers of Advanced Practitioners and Specialist applications.

<b>Summary</b>	
Meeting	Education Committee
Date	12 September 2023
Title	Education Committee Minutes 9 May 2023
Summary	Education Committee Minutes 9 May 2023
Decisions required	To note
Attachments	None
Author	Britta Crawford <a href="mailto:b.crawford@rcvs.org.uk">b.crawford@rcvs.org.uk/</a> 020 7202 0777

<b>Classifications</b>		
<b>Document</b>	<b>Classification<sup>1</sup></b>	<b>Rationales<sup>2</sup></b>
Paper	Unclassified	
Classified appendix	<b>Confidential</b>	1

## Education Committee

### Minutes of the meeting held on 9 May 2023

<b>Members:</b>	Dr Abbie Calow	
	Dr Niall Connell	
	Ms Linda Ford	- Lay member
	Professor Tim Parkin	
	Mrs Susan Howarth	
	Professor Chris Proudman	
	Professor Stuart Reid	
	Professor Susan Rhind	
	Dr Kate Richards	- Chair
	Ms Anna Bradbury	- Student representative
	Ms Kate Dakin	- Student representative
<b>By invitation:</b>	Dr Melissa Donald	- CertAVP Subcommittee Chair
	Professor Stephen May	- Advanced Practitioner Panel Chair
	Dr Joanne Dyer	- PQSC Chair
	Dr Susan (Sue) Paterson	- VetGDP subcommittee Chair and Observer
	Professor Nigel Gibbens	- Chair of Accreditation Review Working Party
<b>In attendance:</b>	Mr Duncan Ash	- Senior Education Officer
	Dr Linda Prescott-Clements	- Director of Education
	Mrs Britta Crawford	- Senior Education Officer
	Ms Laura Hogg	- Senior Education Officer
	Ms Claire Holliday	- Senior Education Officer
	Mr Jordan Nicholls	- Lead for Undergraduate Education
	Ms Beckie Smith	- Senior Education Officer
	Ms Jenny Soreskog-Turp	- Lead for Postgraduate Education
	Mrs Kirsty Williams	- Quality Assurance Manager
	Ms Lizzie Lockett	- CEO
	Mr Darren Tysoe	- Chief Digital Officer (Item 12 only)

### Apologies for absence and welcome

1. Apologies were received from Kate Dakin and Anna Bradbury. Darren Tysoe (RCVS CDO) joined the committee for the item relating to EMS, and Claire McLaughlan joined for the item on the Statutory Membership Examination (SME).

### **Declarations of interest**

2. Mrs Howarth declared that she works for Harper Adams and would leave the meeting for item number 12 and Dr Connell is on the Glasgow vet school staff so would leave the meeting for items 13a and 14d.
3. The Committee was informed that a paper is being prepared for the Council Culture Working Group that would consider all aspects of declarations of conflict of interest so that there is consistency across all committees in how these are managed.

### **Minutes**

4. The minutes of the meeting held on 7 February 2023 were noted. Professor Parkin asked that paragraph 9 be amended to clarify that only Veterinary qualified teaching staff must be MRCVS not all teaching staff. This was agreed.

**ACTION: BC to amend minutes**

### **Matters arising**

5. The Committee heard that the actions had been completed or were included in the forthcoming agenda items. Dr Richards had written to Nigel Gibbens, the Chair of the Accreditation Working Group and the members of that party to thank them for all their work.
1. The Committee heard that the Registrar is looking into the issue regarding clinical teachers being on the RCVS register, as this will have a wider impact on the profession in general and which individuals need to be on the practicing register. A paper will be taken to Education Committee and Registration Committee at the next round of meetings.
6. The Committee was updated regarding the proposal submitted to DEFRA which was discussed at the previous meeting. The RCVS had only recently heard back with further questions. Any further updates would come to this Committee.

### **Education Department update**

7. The Director of Education, Dr Prescott-Clements, gave an oral update on the work of the Education Department. Mr Nicholls and his team were congratulated as the accreditation review evidence that informed the change in methodology and the new standards had been published in the Journal of Veterinary Medical Education. The International Accreditors Working Group is taking place this summer in Australia and one of the items on the agenda is the consideration of training "super visitors" - experienced visitors trained in the standards and methodology of more than one accreditor who may be used to reduce travel time and expense. The postgraduate team have been visiting vet schools to talk to final year students about VetGDP so that they know what to expect, what to look for and also busting a few myths which have arisen.



## Clinical Careers Pathways Proposals

8. The committee received and noted the paper about the clinical career pathways proposal. Dr Prescott-Clements reminded the committee about the work that had been done over the last few years on reviewing the Advanced Practitioner (AP) status and the clinical career pathway stakeholder event in London last year. Education Committee discussed the report from the event at their last meeting and requested more details and clarifications of roles and statuses within clinical practice but also a new career pathway framework for veterinary surgeons working within General Practice that is flexible and inclusive.
9. Dr Prescott-Clements gave an overview of the suggested framework that had four pathways:
  - a) Vet general practitioners (GPs) working with primary care.
  - b) A new specialist training route for GPs that would be a workplace-based programme of at least five years leading to a similar status as RCVS specialist but within primary care.
  - c) 'Special interest' pathways, to include a designated certificate and portfolio demonstrating experience, with additional CPD in the designated area (similar to the current AP status).
  - d) Clinical RCVS specialists, including a flexible modular route to specialisation.
11. The committee was pleased to see the progress and members were supportive of the proposed pathways. They agreed that it would be important for any new specialist training for GPs to be set at an equivalent level to the existing training routes towards becoming an RCVS specialist so that candidates have comparable skills and knowledge and that it is viewed as an equivalent achievement.
12. The committee agreed that detailed guidance and careful communication is needed - not just around the new statuses and roles but how each stage in the career pathway is described, so that it is easy to identify each step of the framework and where individuals fit into it. It needs to be clear not only to the profession but the public and there were some suggestions that comparing a veterinary surgeon working in primary care to a human health GP is not helpful as the role includes more breadth of expertise such as surgery and laboratory work.
13. There were some suggestions for how to improve the flowchart to ensure that it is easily understood by anyone outside of academia and that the new pathway is truly flexible and accessible for the whole profession.
14. The committee supported the framework and requested that further detailed plans including details of stakeholder input be developed for them to review, prior to presentation to RCVS Council.

**Action: Detailed project plans to be presented to EC in September**

## CPD: Minutes from the meeting held on 13 March 2023

15. The committee noted the minutes from the meeting of the CPD Policy and Compliance subcommittee and Ms Ford highlighted some of the discussions at the meeting such as

continuing with the comms plan to educate the profession about the CPD requirement and reflection. There were also discussions of how to deal with the large number of veterinary surgeons and nurses that are non-compliant. It was agreed that the usual referral process would be followed, and the committee would review the numbers at their next meeting in the summer and report back to Education Committee.

#### **Advanced Partitioner Status: Panel Terms of Reference**

16. The terms of reference for Advanced Practitioner (AP) status panel members were reviewed and approved by Education Committee.
17. The committee was presented with three qualifications that had been approved by the Advanced Practitioner panel and Chair as eligible for Advanced Practitioner status. The Chair gave details about the qualifications and how they meet the eligibility requirements for the status. The committee approved the qualifications as a route to applying for Advanced Practitioner status.

**Action: Add approved qualifications to AP Qualification list**

#### **VetGDP: Minutes from the meeting held on 29 March 2023**

18. Dr Paterson, chair of the VetGDP subcommittee presented the minutes to the Committee. Dr Paterson reported that the subcommittee were enthusiastic and engaged with the subject. Much of the discussion involved the EPAs and the subcommittee had received a first draft of a policy-based EPA for addition to the bank.

#### **CertAVP: Minutes from the meeting held on 16 February 2013**

19. Dr Donald presented the minutes to the Committee and thanked Mrs Crawford for her time as secretary to the subcommittee and welcomed Ms Hogg into the role.

#### **Specialist Subcommittee: Recommendation for changes to reapplication criteria and process for European Specialists applications**

20. The committee noted the paper about recommendations for changes to the reapplication criteria and process for European Specialist applications. The specialist subcommittee met in March to discuss potential amendments to the criteria for reapplications for RCVS Specialist accreditation as well as potential future processes for new and reapplications for RCVS Specialist status from European Diploma holders. They recommended changes to the re-application criteria for RCVS accreditation and changed the process for European Specialists to an office-based process that would be more efficient. Education Committee agreed with the suggested proposals.

#### **Statutory Membership Exam (SME)**

##### **Acceptance of On-line IELTS**

21. SME candidates have enquired if they can complete the online IELTS English language assessment, this is currently not accepted, and only in-person assessments are allowed. The

SME Board considered information regarding the exam and live proctoring for the online IELTS and recommended that the online version of the exam is accepted for entry into the SME. The committee agreed this would be a welcome change and agreed there were no concerns regarding exam security. The examinations manager will update the SME guidance to reflect the changes.

**Action: SME guidance to be updated**

### **Primary Qualifications Sub-Committee (PQSC)**

#### **Minutes from meeting held on 29 March 2023**

22. The minutes of the PQSC meeting held in March were received. Members heard that three of the items discussed at PQSC would be agenda items at this meeting; Panel member numbers for overseas visits; University of Dublin verification visit; and Glasgow verification visit.
23. Members heard that the Edinburgh Royal (Dick) School of Veterinary Studies report was considered at the last meeting and had been sent back to the School for formal consultation with one amendment.
24. The committee was informed that the school's responses to questions arising following the review of annual monitoring reports had been discussed at PQSC and as a result a letter had been sent to Cambridge requesting additional information regarding progress made with previous recommendations.
25. It was noted that the agenda for that meeting also included a discussion regarding the definition of 'core' teaching sites, however, it had been agreed that further work was needed on this, and more options would be brought back to PQSC at a later date.
26. Members heard that PQSC had considered a proposal to update the fees for overseas accreditation visits and it had been decided that further investigation into RCVS costs was needed before a decision could be made. It had been agreed that this would also be brought back to a future meeting.
27. It was noted that interim reports had been received from both Adelaide and Murdoch vet schools and these had been discussed during the meeting.
28. Finally, members heard that the UCLan progress visit had been discussed and feedback agreed for the School.

#### **Panel member numbers for overseas accreditation visits**

29. Education Committee was reminded that, at the February meeting, members had requested some wording to go into the RCVS methodology regarding the number of RCVS panel members attending joint overseas visits. The aim of this was to maintain consistency in the process between Schools.

30. Members heard that this isn't prescribed in the current documentation as numbers were decided on a case-by-case basis according to the type of visit, taking a holistic view of any previously identified issues, as well as any Mutual Recognition Agreement (MRA) in place. However, 1 or 2 RCVS representatives were usually sent as full voting members.
31. At their meeting in March, PQSC agreed the following wording to go in the RCVS methodology and apply to future visits:  
    'For joint overseas accreditation visits, RCVS will appoint either 1 or 2 panel members depending on the requirements of the visit and in accordance with any mutual recognition orders in place'.  
Education Committee was invited to consider the recommendation from PQSC and agree the wording.
32. Some members asked where the numbers had come from and what would happen if RCVS ever needed to send three people on a visit. It was explained that the numbers were already agreed with other accrediting bodies through the MRA's, however, there was nothing in the methodology to inform people who were not party to this information. It was explained that adding the numbers into the methodology would ensure transparency. It was further explained that there was some flexibility to allow 3 RCVS representatives on a visit if the situation arose, however, the RCVS usually only send 1 or 2 representatives.
33. Education Committee agreed that the wording was suitable and could be added to the RCVS methodology.

**Action: Add the agreed wording to the RCVS methodology**

### **ENQA Update**

34. Since the last Education Committee meeting, the ENQA panel has provided the schedule for the review visit which will take place from 5th – 7th June 2023.
35. Most meetings will take place on Monday 5th and Tuesday 6th June, with a meeting on 7th June with the CEO (and/or other members of the Presidential Team and/or Senior Staff) to clarify any pending issues. There will be a de-brief by the ENQA panel to share their initial findings at 13.00 on 7th June.
36. The meetings have been at the request of the ENQA panel to review and triangulate the evidence provided in the self-assessment report (SAR). Combined with this, the panel has also requested some additional evidence be provided to clarify some areas. This is normal for the process, and it was expected that they would request further information. The list has been shared with the team working on the review, and the information will be ready to send to the ENQA panel by the deadline of 15th May.
37. The ENQA panel has also requested to meet with key senior personnel on 15 May. This meeting is for the panel to ensure that they have a sound understanding of the specific national and legal context in which the RCVS operates; to understand the specific quality assurance system to which the RCVS belongs; and to establish a solid understanding of the key characteristics of the

RCVS' external QA activities. This meeting will take place online with Linda Prescott-Clements (Director of Education), Julie Dugmore (Director of VN) and Eleanor Ferguson (Registrar). This meeting will take less than an hour and is for background context only.

38. Invitations have been sent to all participants, with the preference being for in-person meetings. This will have an associated cost of travel and loss of earnings (LOE) for participants, to be borne by the RCVS. The meetings will take place at the Royal College of Nursing in Cavendish Square, and 2 meeting rooms have been booked – for the ENQA panel and for the RCVS team to brief and de-brief participants.
39. Participants have been asked to confirm their attendance by 5th May and after this date, they will be sent a copy of the SAR and briefing notes specific to their meeting. The logistics of having meetings during the week beginning 29th May to have briefings with participants is being explored – these will be online.

### **Risk Register**

40. The risk register was received and noted. The committee asked the Education Department to review the wording and controls in regard to Advanced Practitioner (AP) status and the statutory membership exam.

**Action: Education Department to review wording and controls for risks relating to AP/SME**

### **Date of Next Meeting**

41. The date of the next meeting is 12 September 2023 and will be in person. Venue TBC.

Britta Crawford  
May 2023

<b>Summary</b>	
Meeting	Education Committee
Date	12 September 2023
Title	Minutes from the meeting of the CPD Policy and Compliance subcommittee held on 14 July 2023
Summary	Minutes from the meeting of the CPD Policy and Compliance subcommittee held on 14 July 2023
Decisions required	None
Attachments	None
Author	Jenny Soreskog-Turp Lead for Postgraduate Education <a href="mailto:j.soreskog-turp@rcvs.org.uk">j.soreskog-turp@rcvs.org.uk</a> / 020 7202 0701

<b>Classifications</b>		
<b>Document</b>	<b>Classification<sup>1</sup></b>	<b>Rationales<sup>2</sup></b>
Paper	Unclassified	

**<sup>1</sup>Classifications explained**

Unclassified	Papers will be published on the internet and recipients may share them and discuss them freely with anyone. This may include papers marked 'Draft'.
Confidential	Temporarily available only to Council Members, non-Council members of the relevant committee, sub-committee, working party or Board and not for dissemination outside that group unless and until the relevant committee or Council has given approval for public discussion, consultation or publication.
Private	The paper includes personal data which should not be disclosed at any time or for any reason, unless the data subject has agreed otherwise. The Chair may, however, indicate after discussion that there are general issues which can be disclosed, for example in reports to committees and Council.

**<sup>2</sup>Classification rationales**

Confidential	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. To allow the Committee or Council to come to a view itself, before presenting to and/or consulting with others</li> <li>2. To maintain the confidence of another organisation</li> <li>3. To protect commercially sensitive information</li> <li>4. To maintain public confidence in and/or uphold the reputation of the veterinary professions and/or the RCVS</li> </ol>
Private	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>5. To protect information which may contain personal data, special category data, and/or criminal offence data, as listed under the General Data Protection Regulation</li> </ol>

## CPD Policy and Compliance sub-committee Notes of the meeting held on 14 July 2023

**Present:** Linda Ford Chair  
 Jessica Beckett  
 Abbie Calow  
 Donna Lewis  
 Stephen May  
 Stephanie Richardson  
 Alison Reid  
 James Wood

**In attendance:** Julie Dugmore Director of Veterinary Nursing  
 Jenny Soreskog-Turp Lead for Postgraduate Education  
 Rebecca Smith Education Officer

### Welcome and Apologies

1. The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting and noted that Ms Roberts and Ms Bloor had sent their apologies. It was noted that it was Ms Roberts and Dr Calow's last meeting and they were thanked for their valuable contribution to the work of the committee.

### Minutes of the meeting on the 13 March 2023

2. The minutes of the meeting held on 13 March 2023 were received and approved as a true and accurate record.

### Matters arising

3. All actions from previous meeting were covered by the agenda.

### 1CPD Data

4. The committee received and noted the 1CPD data report.
5. The committee were pleased to see increased number of 1CPD users and that CPD compliance for 2022 was around 90% for both veterinary surgeons and nurses that were using 1CPD. The committee felt that the positive news of increased compliance should be



highlighted in communication to members in order to show anyone not using 1CPD or not recording enough CPD that a large majority are meeting the requirement.

**Action: Update CPD Comms plan to highlight increased number of CPD compliant vets/RVNs.**

6. There were some concerns with how data was being presented in regard to reasons that members were non-compliant, leading to a misunderstanding amongst the committee as to the level and nature of non-compliance amongst those who are entitled to a reduced requirement due to reasons of parental leave etc. The committee asked that the data could be presented more clearly with correct data labels in order to get an accurate picture of reasons for not meeting the CPD requirement. A request was also made to remove from the data those who were exempt due to their non-practising status.

**Action: Education Department to update 1CPD data report format**

7. The committee discussed CPD while on parental leave and felt that it was important that vets and nurses are aware of their options regarding their CPD obligation, as they can change to non-practising register or temporarily remove their name from the register, but also that they can pause their CPD and count 'keeping in touch' (KIT) days towards the requirement. The committee felt that we should work with the registration department to review any financial disadvantages to changing status. Committee member AC agreed to work with the staff team to capture her feedback in respect of her own experience of parental leave to inform improvements to the process.

**Action: Update CPD Comms plan re options for parental leave**

**Action: Staff team to engage with Abbie Callow to address opportunities to improve the process and information provided for those on parental leave.**

The committee also discussed the use of terminology such as maternity and paternity and requested that the education department work with colleagues in registration and comms to ensure consistent use of the term 'parental leave' to ensure inclusivity.

**Action: terminology to be reviewed and updated.**

### **1CPD Development work**

8. The Committee received the paper about 1CPD development work and noted the priorities for development over the next few months.
9. The committee were concerned that 1CPD app was still not available for newer android phones but reassured that new upgrade had been built and testing was taken place so the upgrade would take place in the next few weeks.
10. Once the app has been updated further updates such as not counting hours of CPD until they have been reflected upon would be implemented and the committee discussed how that should be communicated to the professions.

11. The committee felt that it was an important function that would help the committee enforce the CPD requirement and thought it was important that comms explained that the new function was there to support users so that they could clearly see what learning they had reflected upon and what activities were still outstanding. The committee asked to be emailed details of the comms plan for raising awareness of the changes in 1CPD.

**Action: Comms plan for introducing the new 1CPD functionality to be emailed to committee**

12. The committee noted that once the current development priorities have been completed the RCVS IT development team would continue to work with other projects in the college however given other college wide priorities it was unlikely that further work and updates to 1CPD would take place in next 24 months. The committee were keen to ensure that technical issues or delays to the release of new functionality did not become a cause of non-compliance. The committee requested that the list of 1CPD development priorities and their status on the overall IT priority list, including anticipated delivery schedule, be a standing item on the committee agenda. If the committee becomes concerned that delays are having an adverse impact on members' CPD compliance the matter would be referred to Education Committee and Council with a recommendation for further investment to enable additional resourcing to allow delivery of the CPD functionality without compromise to other important initiatives.

**Action: Development schedule & priority status to be standing item on agenda**

### 1CPD Exemptions

13. The committee received and noted the three applications for 1CPD exemptions.
14. The first application had previously been circulated via email but committee felt it would be beneficial to discuss it in the meeting. They felt that in cases such as this it would be useful to have a limited licence as the vet was only practising in a very limited capacity and thought it would be useful insight to inform the Advancement of the profession committee (APC) that legislative work also had an impact on CPD compliance. The committee was satisfied that the vet had a legitimate reason for being unable to use 1CPD due to a disability and granted her an exemption.
15. In the second case a lot of information had been submitted in order to evidence the veterinary surgeon's inability to use computers and although the committee is not reviewing the vet from a fitness to practice point of view, they felt that they were unable to make a decision on the application until the Registrar had reviewed the information provided and advised the committee that granting an exemption would not cause a risk with regard to fitness to practise. Furthermore, the committee felt it would be useful to obtain clarity from the Registrar as to how to handle situations where evidence provided to the committee in support of an exemption application contained information pertaining to the registrant's fitness to practise.
16. The committee supported the Chair's proposal to introduce a declaration to the exemption application form asking the applicant to declare that the matters relevant to their request for an exemption did not affect their fitness to practise.

17. It was agreed that this suggestion, together with the request for guidance, be referred to the Registrar and if helpful the Chair would meet with the Registrar to discuss the committees' concerns.

**Action: Education department to refer the committees' queries and suggestion re a declaration to the Registrar for further guidance and arrange a meeting with the Chair if needed.**

**Action: Education Department to share the Registrars response by email to allow the committee to consider this case in light of the guidance received regarding fitness to practise implications.**

18. The third case involved a vet who claimed that they were digitally excluded because they were not using computer or other technical devices at all. The committee felt that as this vet was working in a clinical practice and had a supportive team to support them, they could get help from a colleague to update their 1CPD record and did not feel that they meet the requirement of being digitally excluded. The committee requested that the applicant be encouraged to obtain support from colleagues to use the app.

**Action: Education Department to update members of the outcomes of the applications**

#### **VetGDP update**

19. The committee was informed that the VetGDP subcommittee wanted to make changes to the VetGDP policy and enforce an 18-month deadline to complete the programme and change the number of CPD hours that graduates could claim when they complete VetGDP. Education Committee had made the decision that VetGDP should count as 35 hours of CPD, so the decision to change the policy would lie with Education Committee. The CPD committee was asked to support this request. The committee felt that they could not make a decision until they had further information including a rationale for the change in policy.

**Action VetGDP committee to provide rationale for the request to revise the CPD recognition given to the completion of VetGDP.**

#### **Any other business**

20. There were no other items of business to discuss.

#### **Follow up of non-compliant members**

*Alison Reid left the meeting for this item*

21. The committee received a report detailing the follow up of non-compliant members. The committee agreed with all recommendations in the report and felt that the non-compliant cases should be referred to the professional conduct department.

22. There are over 3000 members that are not using 1CPD, or have recorded just a few hours in 2022. They have been contacted via email but not responded to any communication. Further talks with the Registrar about next steps are planned and the committee will be updated about any progress.

### **Next Meeting**

23. Dates for the next meeting dates will be circulated to the committee.

**Action Education Department to circulate Meeting dates.**

Jenny Soreskog-Turp

July 2023

[j.soreskog-turp@rcvs.org.uk](mailto:j.soreskog-turp@rcvs.org.uk)

<b>Summary</b>	
Meeting	Education Committee
Date	12 September 2023
Title	Advanced Practitioner status: additional designation
Summary	In June 2023 the CertAVP Sub-Committee approved the addition of Equine Emergency and Critical Care as a designation area for CertAVP. There is currently no designation in this area for Advanced Practitioner status and any new designation would need to be approved by Education Committee.
Decisions required	To approve the addition of an Advanced Practitioner designation in Emergency and Critical Care
Attachments	None
Author	Laura Hogg Senior Education Officer <a href="mailto:l.hogg@rcvs.org.uk">l.hogg@rcvs.org.uk</a> / 020 7202 0736

<b>Classifications</b>		
<b>Document</b>	<b>Classification<sup>1</sup></b>	<b>Rationales<sup>2</sup></b>
Paper	Unclassified	

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In June 2023 the CertAVP Sub-Committee approved the addition of Equine Emergency and Critical Care as a designation area for the CertAVP programme.

The new modules will be run from January 2024.

As there is no current designation in this area for Advanced Practitioner status, Education Committee is invited to consider approval of this as a new designation listing.

<b>Summary</b>	
Meeting	Education Committee
Date	12 September 2023
Title	Veterinary Graduate Development Programme (VetGDP) Subcommittee
Summary	Minutes of the meeting held on 5 July 2023
Decisions required	To note
Attachments	None
Author	Britta Crawford Senior Education officer <a href="mailto:b.crawford@rcvs.org.uk">b.crawford@rcvs.org.uk</a> / 020 7202 0777

<b>Classifications</b>		
<b>Document</b>	<b>Classification<sup>1</sup></b>	<b>Rationales<sup>2</sup></b>
Paper	Unclassified	



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**Veterinary Graduate Development Programme (VetGDP) Subcommittee****Minutes of the meeting held on 5 July 2023**

<b>Members:</b>	Sue Paterson	-	Chair
	Rob Williams		
	Teresa Cordovil		
	Mary de las Casas		
	Rachel Bowron		
	Claire White		
	Tim Walker		
	*Robert Wienesen		
	*Hannah Hodgkiss-Geere		
	Stephanie Rae Flicker		
	Abbie Calow		
	Linda Prescott-Clements	-	Director of Education
	Britta Crawford	-	Senior Education Officer
	Jenny Soreskog-Turp	-	Lead for Post-graduate Education

**Apologies for absence**

1. Apologies were received from Robert Wienesen and Hannah Hodgkiss-Geere.

**Declarations of interest**

2. There were no new declarations of interest.

**Minutes**

3. The minutes from the subcommittee meeting held on 29 March 2023 were accepted as an accurate record.

**Matters Arising**

4. The subcommittee heard that there were 4 peer review training sessions coming up and members would be specifically asked to indicate if they can review farm animal and mixed practice as a priority. The BVA will be contacted if there is still a shortage in these areas. Luke Bishop from the Communication Team had secured a piece on the value of the VetGDP in the Veterinary press to be published in the autumn. Other actions had been dealt with or were on the agenda for the meeting.

### General Update including statistics

5. Mrs Crawford presented the 'statistics and update' paper. The engagement statistics were positive, work had been done to contact those who had made a statement to say that they were starting work but had not yet recorded activities in the portfolio. The reasons for these varied from those who had secured a position but had not yet actually started work and overseas graduates who had signed up for the VetGDP but were exempt as had over a year's experience and decided not to participate. The subcommittee raised concern over how well overseas graduates were being supported when it was not mandatory for them to undertake the VetGDP.
6. The subcommittee discussed the figures for completion of the VetGDP with a general expectation that more graduates from the 2021 cohort would have completed at this point. The education department expected an improvement in these figures when the automatic reminders, to access and record in the eportfolio, for both graduates and adviser, are functional. The subcommittee asked that the completion figures be presented as a percentage of the active cohort to aid clarity.
7. The subcommittee discussed the potential "fatigue" with the system as graduates and advisers lose sight of the value in getting it finished. The graduates' focus can change to moving on to new practice and/or are often given new roles as they have progressed. The subcommittee discussed a similar fall-off in corporate training schemes and reported good engagement for the first 10 months but falls off after a year. There is also the issue of a new graduate joining the workplace the following year, leaving less time to support the original graduate. The subcommittee felt that there needed to be a proactive approach rather than chasing the graduates at the end, contacting them earlier, letting them know that their other CPD will need to be addressed to give them a push to finish.
8. Mary de Las Casas gave her experiences of working with the PDP, whilst a different system, it takes a lot of chasing from the RCVS to get people to the finish. The subcommittee discussed setting an expectation that they complete the VetGDP within the first 18 months so that they will be more focused, commenting that the current deadline "was a bit woolly" although noting that varying circumstances would be considered. The subcommittee discussed whether the deadline for completion should be 12 or 18 months but felt that at 12 months graduates were still "a bit green" but at 18 months they have generally found their confidence. Currently the VetGDP counts as a year's CPD, which is 35 hours. The subcommittee suggested that if we were going to be firm on an 18-month deadline then perhaps the allocated CPD hours should match this.

**ACTION:** Discuss the CPD group raising the VetGDP hours to 52.5 and investigate whether the recording system can facilitate this. EC to approve a stricter 18-month deadline.

### Choosing EPAs

9. At the previous meeting the subcommittee had tasked the Education Department with creating a resource to guide graduates and Advisers in choosing their EPAs. The EPAs chosen by the graduates with their advisers are extremely varied, as you would expect given that the roles and workplaces and previous experiences of the graduates are also extremely varied. It was therefore difficult to identify a pattern for any discipline. We have a wide number of examples of how the

EPAs have been applied to different scenarios but were reluctant to release them as experience shows us that many graduates will only copy the examples available and not record their own variety of reflections. It is not possible to list examples of every possible scenario thus running the risk of the graduates not including the broad range of examples required.

10. The case studies we have used to date have not given good examples of how EPAs were chosen so could not be published. Members of the subcommittee volunteered to share their experiences of choosing EPAs with their new graduates to be used as examples to aid others.

**ACTION: Interview Abbie Calow and Claire White as case studies for choosing EPAs. Any other volunteers to email BC.**

11. The subcommittee agreed that it was worth reminding new graduates that many other professions have a period of training and/or further qualification and assessment at the beginning of their career and this is not a bureaucratic nonsense that has to be tolerated but part of their professional standing.
12. The subcommittee asked if all VetGDP Advisers could be offered a webinar similar to that of the peer review training as many had found it useful.

**ACTION: Education Department to set up further Adviser training**

#### **QA Report: Graduate Support**

13. The QA report focused on identifying the graduates who are having issues with support from their adviser and practice. The education department looked at approximately 1700 responses and only 59 commented to say that they weren't getting enough support. All 59 were contacted with individual emails and asked to contact the education department directly to discuss their situation. We spoke to about half of these, many of whom had now moved on to more supportive positions. Five graduates requested the education team speak to their practice to remind them of their responsibilities, and this was carried out. All but one wished to remain anonymous.
14. The subcommittee were asked to discuss a table of proposed sanctions for those employers not supporting their graduates. In the RCVS Code of Conduct there is a clear code of obligation at paragraph 4.6:

“The appointed senior veterinary surgeon must ensure that the training provided to graduates meets the requirements of the VetGDP”.

There is also further guidance in chapter 17 that makes it clear what senior veterinary surgeons are required to do:

17.16 Where the senior veterinary surgeon works at an RCVS-Approved Graduate Development Practice/Workplace\*, the senior veterinary surgeon must:

Sign a declaration agreeing that the practice will provide any graduate employed at the practice with regular support as defined by the VetGDP guidance.

Engage positively with feedback on the delivery of the programme and any quality assurance activity. \*Please refer to the VetGDP guidance for timescales and deadlines for becoming an RCVS-Approved Graduate Development Practice/Workplace.

15. The Education department consulted with the Professional Conduct department who advised that:

“In the first instance it would probably be proportionate to remind senior vets/clinical directors of their obligations, rather than it becoming a concern at the outset, as it would have to be a persistent and repeated failure to fulfil the obligation to progress as a disciplinary matter. It would also need to be well documented. It would also place any young vets in an invidious position, as they would need to become witnesses and give evidence against their employers, which can be difficult. Anonymity makes it very difficult to enforce the code. As always, the concerns process should be the measure of last resort.”

They also advised that this was not a process that could be handled through PSS.

16. The subcommittee was reminded that the RCVS VetGDP practice declaration states that it should be signed by the Appointed Senior Veterinary Surgeon but that the RCVS did not record the name of this person for each practice. The subcommittee suggested that the person making the declaration should identify themselves as part of the process of completing the declaration.

**ACTION:** BC to investigate adding this function to the declaration.

17. The subcommittee agreed with proposed table but commented that any sanctions would need to come with guidance as to how to return to a position where they can employ new graduates. The next step would be to consult the professional conduct department to check that these steps were appropriate and achievable.

**ACTION:** BC to liaise with prof con and bring back a final draft with timelines to the subcommittee.

18. The subcommittee were informed that all current VetGDP Advisers had been contacted to ask if they would now like to add their names to a list of locums in order to increase the pool available.

### **Policy EPA**

19. Dr Claire White presented her updated version of the Policy EPA noting that she had tried to broaden it to include all those practising as a vet as all would be involved in either shaping or applying animal health and welfare policy because of the nature of the profession. LPC offered assistance with the formatting of the success criteria to make it in line with the existing EPAs. It was suggested that “charities” should be added to the list of stakeholders within the document.

### **Any Other Business**

20. The chair thanked Abbie Calow and Chloe Roberts for their contributions to the subcommittee and informed the subcommittee that they would be getting new members at the next meeting.

**Date of Next Meeting:** Dates to be circulated

<b>Summary</b>	
Meeting	Education Committee
Date	12 September 2023
Title	Update from the CertAVP subcommittee
Summary	Minutes from the meeting of the CertAVP subcommittee on the 19 June 2023
Decisions required	To note <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Equine ECC designation</li> <li>• SACP designation</li> <li>• Equivalence going to providers</li> </ul>
Attachments	None
Author	Laura Hogg Senior Education Officer <a href="mailto:l.hogg@rcvs.org.uk">l.hogg@rcvs.org.uk</a> / 020 7202 0736

<b>Classifications</b>		
<b>Document</b>	<b>Classification<sup>1</sup></b>	<b>Rationales<sup>2</sup></b>
Paper	Unclassified	

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## **Minutes of the CertAVP Sub-Committee meeting held on 19 June 2023**

**Present:** Stephanie Richardson  
James Horner  
Melissa Donald - Chair  
Chris Proudman  
\*Liz Chan  
Ros Carslake  
James Wood  
\*Claudia Hartley  
Rachael Gregson

**In Attendance** Laura Hogg  
Linda Prescott-Clements  
Jenny Soreskog-Turp

\*Absent

The meeting was held remotely by Microsoft Teams.

### **Apologies for Absence**

1. Apologies were received from Liz Chan.

### **Declarations of interest**

2. There were no new declarations of interest.

### **Minutes**

3. The minutes of the meeting held on 16 February 2023 were held as a true record.

### **Matters arising**

4. All matters had been actioned or were in papers for discussion.

### **Equine Emergency Care modules**

5. Mrs Carslake put forward the creation of two new C modules in Equine Emergency Care, reporting that Liverpool had received demand for modules in this area. The proposed module combination for a new designation in Equine Emergency Care would include these two new modules alongside the existing C-VA.3 module.



6. The subcommittee felt the modules looked very good but appeared to be lacking coverage of emergency care at equestrian events and suggested that this be added into the modules. Mrs Carslake said she would go back and see where this could be added and circulate the modules to the subcommittee once updated.
7. There was some discussion around the learning outcomes and whether these could be achieved through the proposed assessment methods of case reports. The subcommittee felt that a lot could be assessed through reflection on case reports and case logs and agreed the assessment methods proposed would be appropriate.
8. The subcommittee were happy to approve a new designation in Equine Emergency Care and the proposed module combination.
9. The subcommittee asked how the synoptic assessment for the new designation would be organised, Liverpool said they would assess the synoptic exam in the same way as the other synoptic exams they provide.

**ACTION – Liverpool to amend module documents and circulate once updated**

**ACTION - Education Committee to approve the new designation**

### **Third Sit requests**

10. The sub-committee agreed to the request for a third sit for the first candidate feeling that the candidate had put in a good plan for preparing for the exam to increase the chances of success.
11. The subcommittee also approved the request from a second candidate for a third sit but felt the information they provided on how they will prepare could have been improved and felt they should be reminded to be well prepared for their third attempt, as it is their last chance to sit the exam.

**ACTION – Secretary to feedback to candidates**

### **Equivalence Applications**

12. There were five applications for equivalence of modules. The subcommittee started discussion on the first application and stated that although the modules are different they felt the learning objectives appeared to have been met.
13. The subcommittee discussed the high number of equivalence applications that had been received and the significant time it takes to go through each application thoroughly, and considered whether there should be any guidance given to subcommittee members on how to assess the applications. The subcommittee felt that candidates did not always clearly map across the learning objectives and that this meant they felt uncomfortable making a decision on an application given the RCVS are not assessors and all assessment is done through the providers. It was suggested that equivalence applications would be best made directly to the providers, as they deliver the assessments, and the expertise lies with them.

14. The subcommittee agreed that they did not feel they had the adequate knowledge and skills to assess equivalence applications and would take this to Education Committee for agreement on applications being directed to the providers.

**ACTION – Education Committee to approve equivalence applications going to providers**

### **Synoptic policy review**

15. Dr Prescott-Clements presented the subcommittee with a revised draft of the RCVS synoptic policy. The subcommittee were informed that the review of the CertAVP had highlighted that there was significant inconsistency in how synoptic exams were being carried out across institutions, and the new policy is needed to address this.
16. The new policy aims to make the guidance clearer; the format of the exam will still be a structured oral exam with two independent examiners. To make the exam more flexible, the revised policy will allow candidates the option of submitting a portfolio of cases in advance, in place of one of the three unseen exam cases. The subcommittee was asked, where a candidate may submit a portfolio how we could ensure the candidate is using new cases. The Turnitin system was suggested, and would be explored further. The providers mentioned they could check back on cases submitted for module work, but that this could be time consuming and could only be done where the information was still available. A declaration approach was also suggested for candidates to sign in advance of the exam, stating it was all their own work.

**ACTION – RCVS to explore Turnitin system**

17. The subcommittee discussed how ChatGPT could be used by a candidate when submitting a portfolio of cases, and whether the portfolio option should be reconsidered with the current advances in ChatGPT. The subcommittee didn't feel that the portfolio option be excluded as although ChatGPT could be used to generate cases to be used in the exam the candidate would still need to be able to reflect upon and discuss the cases, and answer exam questions.
18. The subcommittee enquired as to what would happen if the independent examiners had very different marks. It was noted that if the rubric was clear then there shouldn't be any big variations in marks between examiners. A mean score across the two examiners would be taken. Where significant differences are noted, moderation is an option.
19. There was agreement that successful candidates should also receive feedback on their performance.
20. Dr Prescott-Clements informed the subcommittee that the RCVS had updated their appeals policy and mitigating circumstances form and that this would be shared with the subcommittee.
- ACTION - Appeals policy and mitigating circumstances form to be circulated**
21. The subcommittee were asked for the reasoning behind candidates having only two attempts to sit the synoptic exam. The subcommittee explained this was due to the up-to-date nature of the assessment and to ensure there was fair availability to candidates at each exam sitting. The numbers of candidates that pass after a third attempt is rather low. The subcommittee were in

agreement to keep the two-attempt limit. There was discussion on whether there should be a time limit on when candidates can sit the exam after they have passed their modules, as this could potentially be seen as discriminatory. It is candidates responsibility to be up to date on knowledge, and the subcommittee agreed a time limit should not be needed. If a candidate had any unexpected circumstances, an extenuating circumstances form could be submitted and if approved the sitting would not count as one of their exam attempts.

22. The subcommittee were informed that the synoptic review had found that all providers of the synoptic exam have slightly different marking schemes and approaches, which could make the exam hard to defend if challenged. All these approaches were looked at when putting the policy together.
23. Five assessment constructs had been suggested and the subcommittee were asked whether construct two 'Analysis and interpretation of case information', overlapped too much with third and fourth constructs, and how these could be made more distinct. The subcommittee agreed there could be overlap between these constructs, and suggested that construct two should cover just differential and problem lists to avoid any confusion for examiners. The subcommittee were asked to review the rubric and to send through any comments.

**ACTION - Rubric draft to come back to subcommittee**

#### **Small Animal Clinical Practice Nottingham**

24. Dr Richardson presented Nottingham's reviewed proposal for a synoptic assessment of a Small Animal Clinical Practice designation. They proposed that the exam would be made up of a portfolio of two cases, and a structured viva.
25. The subcommittee felt it was in keeping with the draft synoptic policy in the previous item and approved the synoptic proposal. The new designation Small Animal Clinical Practice and module combination for this was also approved.
26. The subcommittee felt the 'Lunch and Learn' sessions suggested in the previous synoptic assessment proposal were a very good idea and enquired as to whether this element could be added into the module assessments. Nottingham are looking at how to incorporate this into their module assessments.

**ACTION – Education Committee to approve the new designation**

#### **VDI synoptic exam reports**

27. The subcommittee noted the reports from the Veterinary Diagnostic Imaging synoptic exam, held remotely, by the RCVS. The subcommittee viewed the examiner's report and the observer report from each day.
28. The subcommittee enquired as to what happens next with the reports. Currently no further action is taken once the subcommittee has approved them, but following the synoptic policy review a QA process will be put in place for the exam reports. There was some discussion on whether they

could be used more strategically and viewed together as a cluster. For this to happen there would need to be a better structure on what we want those completing the reports to feedback on.

### **Statistics**

29. The statistics were noted.
30. The subcommittee commented that around 7% of the profession hold a CertAVP and that this was encouraging. They felt it would be useful to see a breakdown of designations awarded by year to see if there were any redundant designations.
31. There was some discussion around the positive number that had completed the A-FAVP.1 module and whether this could be presented to the profession in RCVS News.

### **Any other business**

32. The subcommittee were notified that a letter was being sent to the RCVS from Specialists around confusion of the use of terminology regarding referrals in the profession. Dr Prescott-Clements mentioned the work ongoing around clinical pathways and how this was all interlinked and would be addressed together.
33. The subcommittee was asked for volunteers to act as observers for two synoptic exams later in the year. The dates of the exams would be circulated to the subcommittee.
34. Mrs Carslake stated there was an error in the updates to the sheep assessment modules in the previous meeting, the correct assessment methods were relayed to the subcommittee who were happy to agree them.
35. Mrs Carslake enquired about the module updates that had been started and that some of the module documents that had been updated had not been changed on the RCVS website.

**ACTION – Secretary to check and update the RCVS website**

36. The Chair informed the subcommittee that this would be her last meeting as Chair. The subcommittee thanked her for all her work.

### **Date of the next meeting**

37. The date of the next meeting is 21<sup>st</sup> November 2023.

Laura Hogg  
June 2023  
l.hogg@rcvs.org.uk

## Summary

Meeting	Education Committee (EC)
Date	12 September 2023
Title	2024 Statutory Membership Exam (SME) Guidance
Summary	The SME Guidance is reviewed and updated each year to reflect any changes and updates. The exam guidance for 2024 now includes information regarding the new live Invigilation/proctoring process, new dates for the 2024 OSCEs and supportive training courses available on the RCVS Academy
Decisions required	The SME guidance has been updated for 2024. Major changes made are highlighted in red for ease of review.  Education Committee are asked to approve the 2024 SME guidance
Attachments	2024 SME Guidance
Author	Claire Hobson Examinations Manager <a href="mailto:c.hobson@rcvs.org.uk">c.hobson@rcvs.org.uk</a> / 020 7202 0745

## Classifications

Document	Classification <sup>1</sup>	Rationales <sup>2</sup>
Paper	Unclassified	

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<b>Summary</b>	
Meeting	Education Committee
Date	12 <sup>th</sup> September 2023
Title	The introduction of Medical Doctor (Degree) apprenticeships: Implications for veterinary education.
Summary	<p>Recently the NHS launched a new apprenticeship for medical doctor degree programmes. This allows the undergraduate phase of medical training to be undertaken as an apprenticeship degree, rather than the traditional university route. The apprenticeship enables learners to work in a practice and earn a salary whilst completing their studies, making the medical profession more accessible to those who would usually find costs a barrier.</p> <p>Learners will be placed in a location that meets their needs as well as that of the NHS. It is envisaged that this will help to staff the geographical areas that may have fewer doctors, as well as allow those who may not be able to undertake a traditional degree due to their personal commitments, to complete their undergraduate training.</p> <p>The NHS is clear that this route represents the ‘same education – different delivery’ and the outcomes of graduates in terms of knowledge and skills will be the same. All medical students will be required to take the General Medical Council (GMC) Medical Licencing Assessment (MLA).</p>
Decisions required	For discussion, and consideration of whether the RCVS should begin to explore the potential for a veterinary apprenticeship pathway.
Attachments	Annex 1: Summary of Medical Doctor (Degree) Apprenticeship
Author	L Prescott-Clements (Director of Education) K Williams (Education Quality Improvement Manager)

<b>Classifications</b>		
<b>Document</b>	<b>Classification<sup>1</sup></b>	<b>Rationales<sup>2</sup></b>
Paper	<b>Unclassified</b>	

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## Background

1. In July 2022, new NHS apprenticeships to train medical doctors were launched which aim to widen access to medical training and create a more diverse and representative workforce. The first such apprenticeships will begin in September 2023. The apprenticeships were also highlighted as part of the NHS workforce plan published in 2023.
2. The Medical Doctor Degree Apprenticeships will involve the 'same education' but with a 'different delivery' model which enables the apprentice to earn a salary whilst in education. In addition to achieving their medical degree, apprenticeship graduates will also need to meet all of the requirements of the General Medical Council (GMC), including the need to pass the UK Medical Licencing Assessment (MLA).
3. Increasing the diversity of the UK veterinary profession is a strategic priority for the RCVS. However, this is not without its challenges. In recent years, the costs associated with veterinary education have been identified as a potential barrier to some students.
4. As the veterinary profession lacks diversity and is struggling with a workforce crisis, Education Committee are invited to discuss whether veterinary degree apprenticeships could be one potential solution.

## Medical Degree Apprenticeships

5. A high-level summary of how medical degree apprenticeships will work is included in annex 1.
6. The first medical apprenticeships will begin in September 2023. These are mostly being taken forward by relatively 'new' medical schools in universities already familiar with the apprenticeship model, such as UCLan, Plymouth and Anglia Ruskin University. However, other universities have also signed up to run the apprenticeships from 2025 e.g. University College London. In addition, a blended learning degree has been commissioned by Health Education England at Queen Mary School of Medicine and Dentistry, London (more information [Here](#)).
7. A variety of different approaches to apprenticeships are being taken by each university, to fit with their particular degree programme and circumstances. For example, Plymouth medical school is offering a graduate entry route, and a remote learning approach with regular skills 'camps' on their university campus for apprentices. UCLan will offer apprentices blocks of 6 weeks in the university and 6 weeks on wards with their employer.
8. Although the traditional academic programme and apprenticeship degree both take five years to complete, the apprenticeships will have a 46 week / year model (resembling a typical employment contract). The apprenticeships will have a minimum of 6 hours / week education offsite (i.e. not at

their employer). There is a minimum apprenticeship salary (no maximum), and a 'lock-back' or 'golden handcuff' arrangement may also be offered by the employer.

9. Stakeholders who have expressed concern that the knowledge and skills of graduates resulting from apprenticeship pathways would be lower than those of graduates from the full-time academic route can take reassurance that all graduates will be required to take the MLA. The end-point assessment for the apprenticeship will rest with the exam board at the university.

### **Other Professional Apprenticeships**

10. Apprenticeships have been running successfully for Veterinary Nurses since 2018. More information is available at <https://www.instituteforapprenticeships.org/apprenticeship-standards/veterinary-nurse-v1-1> .
11. Apprenticeships in the legal profession have been running successfully for several years. More information can be found here: <https://www.lawsociety.org.uk/career-advice/becoming-a-solicitor/qualifying-without-a-degree/apprenticeships>
12. Apprenticeships in Dentistry are proposed for the near future.

### **Employer's perspective**

13. As the employers are generally the NHS, acting as placement providers for medical students is already familiar to most, and the required training and quality assurance procedures are already in place.
14. Integrated Care Boards (ICB's - which replaced Clinical Commissioning Groups in July 2022) were engaged with the process of developing medical degree apprenticeships from the start. Some ICB's are sponsoring 20 apprenticeship places (at the cost of +£1Million). Although this is a substantial investment in the short-term, this is more cost effective in the long term than employing locums for long periods in areas where there are staff shortages.

### **Implications for Veterinary Education and Employer**

15. There are a number of similarities between the medical degree and veterinary degree programmes, including the duration (5-year programme), the need for graduates to meet Day One Competences set by the professional regulator and being subject to quality assurance and accreditation standards.
16. However, there are also some key differences to consider, including the following:

- When developing and implementing the medical degree apprenticeships, some stakeholders were concerned whether an equivalent level of knowledge and skills could be achieved via an apprenticeship route. Having the MLA national licencing exam enables the GMC to provide stakeholders with reassurance in this respect. The current Veterinary Surgeons Act (1966) does not allow RCVS to implement a national licencing exam (although this has been proposed in the RCVS Recommendations for future veterinary legislation<sup>1</sup>).
- There would need to be a source of funding to top up the levy (presumably set at £27,000 as with Medical apprenticeships). Those implementing the Medical apprenticeships insisted on Government funding outside of the cap for existing places.
- The NHS, as the employer, already has trained staff able to provide quality education and training as training places in these environments are already provided. This is not the case across all veterinary employers. Although the VetGDP provides useful training in coaching, supervision, guided reflection and feedback, further training specific to the veterinary degree programme would be required.
- The NHS is also already subject to educational quality assurance measures in its capacity as offering training places, but this is not the case with veterinary employers unless they offer intra-mural rotations for existing vet programmes.

### **Next steps**

17. Education Committee are invited to discuss whether veterinary degree apprenticeships should be explored. Professor Liz Hughes from Health Education England (HEE) has indicated that she would be happy to attend a future Education Committee to discuss how the medical apprenticeships were established, and how some of their challenges were overcome.

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<sup>1</sup> [RCVS recommendations for future veterinary legislation - Professionals](#)

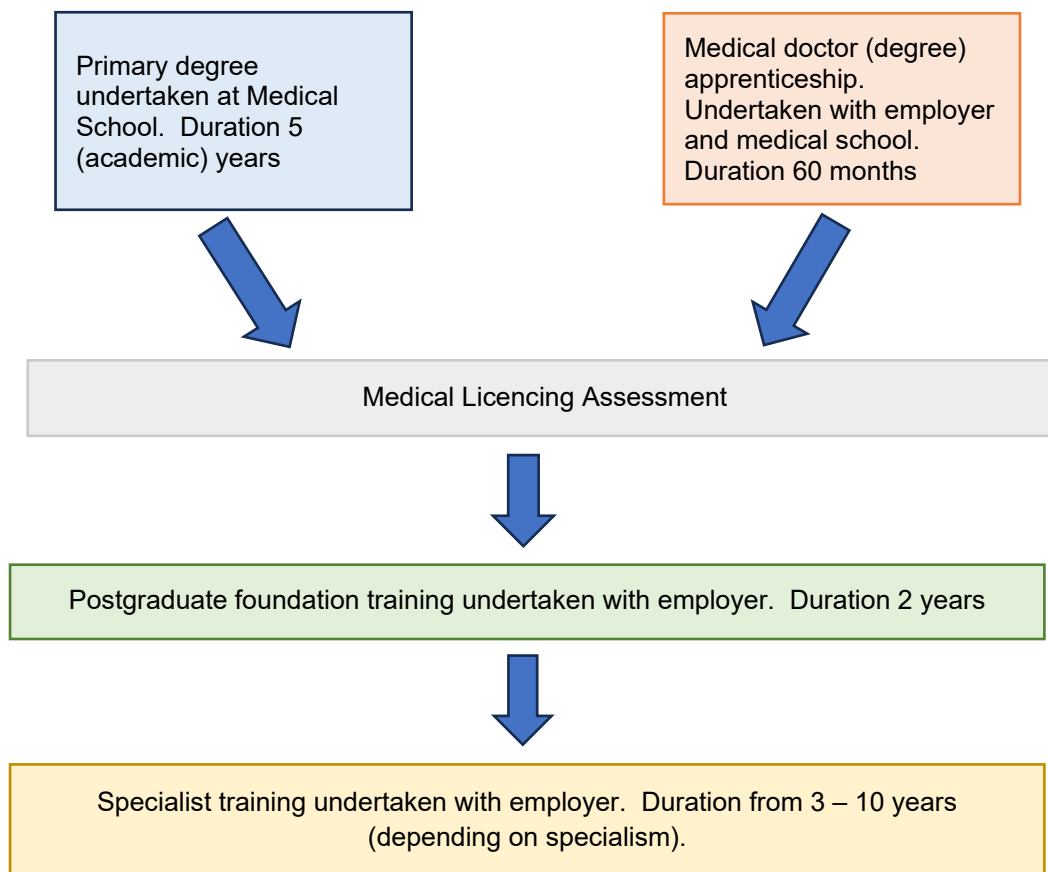
**Annex 1**

Medical Doctor (Degree) Apprenticeship

This paper provides a summary of the new doctor apprenticeship launched by the NHS in July 2023. It is anticipated that the first apprentices will commence the programme in September 2023. Further details can be found at <https://haso.skillsforhealth.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2022/07/20220620-UPDATED-June-2022-Resource-Pack-Medical-Doctor-Degree-Apprenticeship-v5-1.pdf>

The apprenticeship offers an alternative way of completing the primary medical degree and it is hoped that this pathway will aid the recruitment of doctors by attracting those in currently underrepresented groups of the profession, who may find the costs or other factors associated with full time education a barrier.

**Medical Doctor training:**



The flow diagram shows that the apprenticeship is an alternative route to complete the undergraduate training and the remainder of the medical training remains the same.

**Employer and Medical school**

- The employer advertises the apprenticeship, but they must have already been approved by the regulator (in this case the GMC) and be linked to an approved medical school.
- The medical school must already be accredited to deliver an undergraduate degree before it can be accredited to deliver an apprenticeship.

- The medical school must also be approved by the Institute for Apprenticeships and Technical Education.
- The medical school must be on the Education & Skills Funding Agency Register of Apprenticeship Training Providers.
- The apprenticeship degree needs to be validated by the parent university, even if it is an adapted version of the current validated medical degree.
- The apprenticeship programme and delivery of training by the employer must be aligned to the GMC accreditation standards.
- The employer is the main location for the apprenticeship training, but the programme will have been developed by the medical school.
- All practical and theoretical training must take place within normal working hours – i.e. the apprentice cannot be expected to work a full working week, and then complete theoretical studies on top of this.
- The programme can be flexible in length and can allow for breaks, through discussion with both the employer and medical school.
- The programme can take into account prior learning, so could be shortened for someone with extensive work experience (e.g. a nurse wishing to train to become a doctor) or with a relevant degree (e.g. biomedical science).
- There must be links between the employer and the medical school to ensure the training is subject to QA.
- The apprentices must receive the support they require from both the employer and the medical school.
- The medical school must ensure that the employer has completed relevant training in teaching, learning and assessment.

#### **The cost of an apprenticeship and the apprenticeship levy:**

- The apprentice is paid a salary by their employer from the start of their apprenticeship. The apprentice pays for their own travel and subsistence.
- The course (tuition) fees are generally covered by the employer, BUT the employer receives significant support with paying the fees, depending on the size of the organisation:
  - Large organisations contribute towards an apprenticeship funding scheme (called the levy) and can then use this funding to contribute towards the course (tuition) fees.
  - Smaller organisations pay 5% of the course (tuition) fees and the government pays the remaining 95%

#### **How will the Medical Doctor Degree Apprenticeship be funded?**

- Funding for the first 200 medical doctor apprentices to begin training over the next two years has been confirmed. A Health Education England (HEE) employer support funding package has been agreed for a pilot programme to support healthcare employers to meet the costs of taking on apprentices, including staffing costs while apprentices are undertaking their education and training.
- HEE pilot funding of £10,000 per year will be available to employers for each apprentice who starts on the apprenticeship programme in academic years 2023/24 and 2024/25, with a maximum of £50,000 per apprentice for the duration of the course.