

13 July 2021

Email: president@rcvs.org.uk

Website: www.rcvs.org.uk

Dear Veterinary Student,

Re: Temporary changes to EMS regulations, to support veterinary students during the COVID-19 pandemic

I would like to take this opportunity to introduce myself as your new RCVS President, having taken over from Dr Mandisa Greene at RCVS Day last week. I am writing to update you on the outcome of the latest review of RCVS' temporary EMS Policy, which was recently considered by RCVS Council. It has been agreed to further amend the EMS regulations temporarily for the current 3rd year students (4th year students for the University of Cambridge), who are due to graduate in 2023.

As with our previous reviews, RCVS requested data from all schools to show the current EMS completion rates by year cohort, against the figures that would normally be expected at this time of the year. This data was then used, alongside consideration of the wider issues relating to EMS, to help inform Council on whether any further reductions in requirements were necessary,

The data returned suggested that the current amendments to the number of weeks of pre-clinical EMS (for the 1st and 2nd years) remained appropriate, as did the current reduction of requirements in place around clinical EMS for the 4th and final year students. However, the current levels of completion of clinical EMS by 3rd year students appeared lower than expected, which indicated that further amends to policy would be necessary. Following consideration by RCVS Council, I am happy to be able to update you all with the latest updates to EMS policy:

For the current 3rd years (4th year students at the University of Cambridge), and in addition to the reduction agreed in December 2020, it has been agreed to reduce the requirement by a further four weeks. Therefore, the clinical EMS requirement for the graduating class of 2023 will now be **13 weeks** of clinical EMS experience.

We recognise that the pandemic has been difficult for everyone and that not being able to access the full quotient of hands-on experience is not an ideal situation, but there are some online learning resources that can supplement the reduced number of weeks' hands-on EMS and should help you to meet your personal learning objectives.

For all year groups, however, we are continuing to stress that these amendments to policy should be viewed as a minimum requirement and not a target. EMS is extremely important for gaining that "real life" practical experience where you can develop your confidence in using the skills and techniques which you have worked hard to develop during your programme, and you will greatly benefit from completing as much additional EMS as you are able to.

We will continue to review the situation in the event of any restrictions being re-introduced, or other actions that may cause further disruption to the availability of placements. The next review of temporary amendments to EMS policy will take place in October and we will communicate with you again shortly after it has been considered.

In the meantime, I hope that this update has helped alleviate some of the concerns that you may have had. I would like to wish you all success with your continuing studies, and I hope that you all have a pleasant, safe, summer.



Dr Kate Richards
Dr Kate Richards
President, RCVS