

06 December 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 am writing to continue to keep you informed of the latest updates and decisions around the temporary EMS requirements.

At the September meeting of RCVS Education Committee, it was confirmed that the pre-clinical EMS requirement for the in-coming first years joining their veterinary degree programme in 2021 would remain at the standard amount of 12 weeks at this point in time. However, it was agreed this will be kept under close consideration as you progress through the academic year, with on-going reviews to EMS policy to ensure this remains appropriate.

The reviews have been conducted on a three-monthly basis since 2020, formally conducted by the RCVS COVID-19 Taskforce. In August 2021 it was agreed that all further reviews would be conducted by the Education Committee.

The most recent review of the temporary amends to EMS policy was carried out by Education Committee at their meeting in November. As for previous reviews, the committee considers data from each of the veterinary schools on EMS weeks completed for each year group, in addition to the current Covid restrictions in place and potential impact on placement availability.

Following the latest review, the committee agreed that no further changes to the temporary EMS policy would need to be made at this stage, with the data suggesting that each year group was more or less on track to be able to meet their required number of weeks. The current requirements for each year group can be found on the [RCVS website](http://www.rcvs.org.uk).

However, I do wish to reassure you that RCVS is still committed to carrying out these on-going reviews of the temporary EMS policy so that any change in circumstances due to the pandemic can be considered and temporary amendments to EMS policy made accordingly. The next review is due to take place in February 2022.

I would also like to clarify that the requirements for EMS weeks are a minimum, and that if you have the ability to be able to obtain further weeks experience, then this is strongly encouraged. EMS provides students with valuable experience and an opportunity to practice applying your knowledge and skills in a range of workplace settings. The temporary reduction in EMS requirements for some cohorts has only been put in place to acknowledge that the availability of placements has been

reduced as a result of the pandemic, and placements should always still be undertaken only where it is safe to do so, for both yourself and the provider.

It is potentially a concerning time with news of a new variant possibly bringing further risk and disruption, but I hope that you can be reassured that this will be taken into account in further reviews.

I wish you the best and hope that you are able to enjoy a Merry Christmas, and I shall be in touch in the New Year with any further updates.



Dr Kate Richards
BVM&S MRCVS

President, RCVS