

Agenda for the meeting to be held on 2 February 2026 at 1 Hardwick Street, London, EC1R 4RB at 10am

1.	Welcome and apologies for absence	
2.	Declarations of interest	
3.	Education Committee minutes a) Minutes of meeting held on 25 November 2025	Paper attached
4.	Matters arising	
5.	Education Department update	Oral report
6.	Primary Qualifications Subcommittee (PQSC) a) Minutes of the PQSC meeting held on meeting held on 13 th January 2026 b) SETU (South East Technical University Waterford). c) 2026 visit panel member ratification	Paper attached Oral report Paper Attached
7.	AP Qualification Subcommittee: Minutes from the meeting on 2 December 2025	Paper attached
8.	VetGDP and CPD: Minutes from the VetGDP and CPD engagement meeting 3 rd December 2025 (including EPAs 13 and 14)	Paper attached
9.	Veterinary Clinical Career Pathways (VCCP) a) Minutes from VCCP working group meeting 12 December 2025	Paper attached
10.	Specialists a) Minutes from the Specialist Subcommittee meeting on 9 January 2026 b) RCVS Specialist Information & Guidance Pack c) Specialist list for ratification	Paper attached Paper attached Paper attached
11.	Advanced Practitioner a) Advanced Practitioner Criteria Review	Paper Attached
12.	Statutory Membership Examination (SME) a) Minutes from the SME exam board held on 12 November 2025 and 17 December 2025 b) Update on candidate numbers	Paper Attached Oral Report

13.	Joint statement on the use of Artificial Intelligence (AI) in health and care professional education by the Education Inter Regulatory Group (IRG)	Paper attached
14.	VN Update	Oral report
15.	Accreditation methodology action plan	Paper attached
16.	RCVS Accreditation in Turkey	Oral Report
17.	Risk register (EC and SME) Items to add to the Risk Register	Paper attached
18.	AOB	
19.	Date of next meeting	19 May 2026 remote 9.30 start

Britta Crawford
 Committee Secretary
 January 2026
b.crawford@rcvs.org.uk
 020 7202 0777

Education Committee (EC) Membership From July 2025

Secretary: Britta Crawford
(0207 202 0777, b.crawford@rcvs.org.uk)

Armitage-Chan E	External member, educationalist
Bennett S	Council member
Gordon P	Council member
Hutchinson T	Council member
Jones M	Council member
Law R	Student member
McLaughlan C-L	Lay member
Ormandy E	External member, educationalist
Parkin TDH #	Council member (President)
Pinhey B	VN Council member
Savage L	Student member

#Chair

Observers (non-voting)

Officer: not required as Officer present

Chairs of Subcommittees and Working Parties that report to Education Committee:

Advanced Practitioner Qualification Subcommittee	Bescoby S
Examination Board	McLaughlan C-L
Panel of Assessors for Advanced Practitioner Status	Hutchinson T
Primary Qualifications Subcommittee	Whiting M
Specialist Recognition Subcommittee	Barrett D
VetGDP & CPD Compliance Subcommittee	Paterson S
VetGDP & CPD Engagement Subcommittee	Cook O

Education Committee Terms of Reference

From the Scheme of delegation from the RCVS Council to committees 24 June 2025

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 or the College, 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.

Summary

Meeting	Education Committee
Date	25 November 2025
Title	Education Committee Minutes from the meeting held on 25 November 25
Summary	Education Committee Minutes from the meeting held on 25 November 25
Decisions required	To approve
Attachments	None
Author	Britta Crawford Senior Education Officer b.crawford@rcvs.org.uk / 020 7212 0777

Classifications

Document	Classification ¹	Rationales ²
Paper	Unclassified	NA
Appendix 1	Confidential	1

1 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.

2 Classification rationales

Confidential	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. To allow the Committee or Council to come to a view itself, before presenting to and/or consulting with others 2. To maintain the confidence of another organisation 3. To protect commercially sensitive information 4. To maintain public confidence in and/or uphold the reputation of the veterinary professions and/or the RCVS
Private	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 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

Minutes of Education Committee (EC) meeting on 25 November 2025 (online)

EC Members:

Dr E Armitage-Chan,	External Member & Educationalist
Dr S Bennett	RCVS Council Member
Mr P Gordon	Council member
Mr T Hutchinson	RCVS Council Member/Chair of Panel of Assessors for Advanced Practitioner Status
Dr M Jones	RCVS Council Member
Mr R Law	Student Member
Dr E Ormandy	External Member & Educationalist
*Miss B Pinhey	VN Council member
Professor T Parkin#	RCVS Council Member & Chair
Ms L Savage	Student Member

Chairs of Education Subcommittees and Working Parties that report to EC:

Professor D Barrett	Specialist Recognition Subcommittee
*Dr S Bescoby	Advanced Practitioner Qualifications Subcommittee
*Dr O Cook	VetGDP and CPD Engagement Group
Mrs C-L McLaughlan	SME Board Chair
*Dr S Paterson	VetGDP and CPD Compliance subcommittee/Officer Team member as observer
Dr M Whiting	Primary Qualifications Subcommittee (PQSC)

*Denotes absence, #Denotes Chair of this meeting,

In attendance:

Mrs B Crawford	Senior Education Officer
Ms L Garwood	Education Officer
Ms C Hobson	Examination Manager
Ms C Holliday	Senior Education Officer
Mr I Holloway	Director of Communications
Ms L Lockett	CEO
Mr J Nicholls	Lead for Undergraduate Education
Ms C Padgett	Director of Legal and Registrar
Dr L Prescott-Clements	Director of Education
Ms R Smith	Education Officer
Ms J Soreskog-Turp	Lead for Postgraduate Education
Ms H Stinchon	Senior Education Officer
Mr S Wiklund	Head of Legal Services/Assistant Registrar
Ms K Williams	Education Quality Improvement Manager

Welcome and apologies for absence

1. The chair welcomed everyone to the meeting. It was noted that apologies had been received from Dr Paterson, Dr Cook, Dr Bescoby and Miss Pinhey.

Declarations of interest

2. Ms Savage confirmed her conflict of interest for the Cambridge discussions and agreed that she should step out for those items.

Election of vice-chair

3. The Committee agreed Mr T Hutchinson as Vice chair of the Committee.

Education Committee minutes

4. The minutes of the meetings held on the 23 September 2025 were noted as a true record.

Matters Arising

5. Actions from the previous meeting were either on the agenda or had been completed. It was queried whether Council had discussed the exact date in 2029 for the end of the recognition of graduates from vet schools accredited by the European Association of Establishments of Veterinary Education (EAEVE) and the Secretary was requested to arrange it for the January agenda.

Action: Council to confirm date**Education Department Update**

6. Dr Prescott-Clements gave a brief update on the work of the department as most areas were to be covered in the meeting. The Committee was informed that Dr Prescott-Clements had attended a meeting of the Vet Schools Council in Bristol. Mr Nicholls had met with members of the Japanese Vet School to discuss their accreditation. The Education Team has welcomed a new team member, Lauren Garwood, as Education Officer.

Advanced Practitioner (AP) Criteria

7. The Committee was presented with a paper outlining the current criteria required to apply for AP status along with the rationale behind each criterion. To uphold the integrity of the process and assure consistent standards associated with AP status, the paper proposed a number of amendments to the application criteria. The proposals aim to maintain the robustness and credibility of the accreditation process, whilst introducing flexibility for applicants.
8. The suggested changes were that the requirement for references and governance statements should be replaced by (1) a cover letter detailing a critical reflection by the applicant of how they meet the criteria for AP status, to justify the application, and signpost relevant evidence for the panel reviewers and (2) quality improvement evidence. It was suggested that the self-certification of experience tick-box would be replaced by a case log with a degree of reflection and a case study. The CPD requirement would remain the same but be made clearer with better guidance for applicants and a standardised recording format to assist the review of applications. It was also proposed that there should be an additional criterion for evidence of peer coaching / mentoring / teaching.

9. For the purpose of re-application, it was proposed that current Advanced Practitioners (APs) should be able to take a period of leave without jeopardising their ability to retain or regain AP status upon their return to practice.
10. The Committee was reminded that CPD can be paused for a period of time when members are on parental leave, for example. The Committee heard that the rationale behind having a logbook of cases was that, in such cases the caseload can be reviewed to ensure that the applicants continue to be involved in case management. The Committee agreed that the guidance would need to be explicit as to how many periods of leave would be allowed and in what given period of working time.
11. The Committee discussed which cases would be allowed to be recorded and by whom depending on whether the clinician had asked for advice. It was agreed that by having to record a case log the committee did not want to create conflict over cases or discourage practitioners asking for advice.
12. The Committee felt that the number of cases in a case log need not be uniform for all designations and species, giving farm practice as an example where you would have a smaller number of herd-based cases. It was agreed that there would need to be input from different subject areas when establishing guidelines.
13. The Committee also discussed the number of years' experience necessary to apply for AP status and felt that this should not include the period on the VetGDP.
14. The Committee agreed with the proposed changes and asked the subcommittee to put together more detailed guidelines, with input from the necessary parties, and bring it back to Committee for final approval.

ACTION: Update and develop new guidelines to bring back to Education Committee.

AP Qualifications Subcommittee: Notes from the meeting held on 22nd and 23rd September 2025

15. The Committee received and noted the minutes from the 2-day meeting of the AP Qualification Subcommittee which has been set up to look at all external qualifications leading to AP status. The paper included the full annexes to provide Education Committee evidence of the depth and thoroughness of the subcommittee's work. Education Committee noted that the next meeting would be in December and agreed that they would like to receive the full detail of feedback to providers as they had for this meeting.

CPD and VetGDP: Minutes from the VetGDP and CPD compliance subcommittee held on 6 October 2025

16. The Committee noted the minutes of the meeting. The Committee was informed that the CPD Compliance Strategy paper had been delayed due to the significant workload arising from the Competition and Market's Authority project. The team is exploring several potential solutions, including collaboration with the RCVS Practice Standards Scheme (PSS) to consider how CPD compliance might be enforced. It was felt that it would be preferable to finalise a comprehensive strategy and present it to the subcommittee in the new year.

Veterinary Clinical Career Pathways (VCCP)

Minutes of the VCCP Working Group meeting

17. Education Committee received and noted the minutes from the Working Group meeting on 9 October 2025. The meeting heard how useful it had been to have an in-person meeting where they had discussed flexible pathways to specialist training and how we can work with EBVS to overcome the barriers. The group also started to look at the specific content (syllabus) appropriate for GP specialist training.

Definition of clinical roles (VCCP Workstream 2)

18. The group had discussed the definitions of veterinary clinically roles: Veterinary General Practitioner (Vet GP), Advanced Practitioner (AP), and Specialist, with the aim of ensuring clarity for both the public and the profession and these had been updated following the feedback and discussion from Education Committee at the last meeting. The Committee heard that these have been presented to the Public Advisory Group and their feedback taken on board.
19. It had come to the Committee's attention that EBVS were also creating guidance and definitions of specialist roles including AP status, which were understood to be broader and from a European perspective. It was felt that this should be further investigated to ensure that the work was not contradictory.

ACTION: Education Team to contact EBVS re definitions

20. A Committee member raised a concern about the Vet GP definition potentially having the unintended consequence of a member ending up in front of the disciplinary committee for not following the letter of the definition when not referring a case that is complex and/or uncommon. It was agreed to change the wording to say, "may refer": When a case is complex, uncommon, or requires additional expertise or specialised equipment, the Vet GP *may refer* the animal to a colleague". This would reassure the Vet GP that they can use their own judgement as to whether a case is within their own competence or needs to be referred.

ACTION: Amend wording of definition of Vet GP to clarify when referrals can be made

21. The Committee also asked for the table to be clear that Specialists can receive referrals from other specialists.

ACTION: Amend table to make it clear that Specialists can receive referrals from other Specialists.

22. The Committee understood that once they were happy with the VCCP proposal they would be reported to Council with a view to be put out to consultation to the profession. Education Committee agreed that all three work streams should be presented to Council together and were happy to wait for the other workstreams to be completed.

Specialist list for ratification

23. The Committee was happy to ratify the two names on the list.

ACTION: Notify recent specialist applicants of successful application

Primary Qualifications Subcommittee (PQSC)

Ms Savage left the meeting

Minutes of the meetings held on the 1 October and 3 November 2025

24. The chair of the Primary Qualifications Subcommittee (PQSC), Dr Whiting, presented the notable points from the minutes and informed the Committee that the Australasian interim reports had been received which cover Adelaide, Charles Sturt, James Cook and Murdoch universities. PQSC had also received reports from the Hong Kong School (Jockey Club College of Veterinary Life Sciences (City U)). These reports were all accepted without need for further information or follow up. The Committee noted that the AVMA agreement had been due to be on the PQSC agenda but there is still some work needed and therefore this will be brought to PQSC in January.
25. The Committee heard the University of Glasgow School of Biodiversity, One Health, and Veterinary Medicine had asked for feedback on their reasonable adjustments policy document, specifically related to reasonable adjustments for a specific student. PQSC was reluctant to provide specific feedback as the facilities and needs at each school would be different and therefore each school would need to assess what was reasonable for them.
26. The Committee felt that it would be useful to have further guidance and examples as it was difficult for individual schools to know what is appropriate and that would provide consistency between schools. The Committee was reminded that the Education Department had produced reasonable adjustments guidance that had been provided to all schools and was also in the RCVS website. This guidance provided various examples; however, it was high level guidance as it was the schools responsibility to assess what reasonable adjustments, they were in a position to provide. It was agreed that it would be more suitable for the schools to reach a consensus where appropriate.
27. The Education Committee also heard that during the last meeting PQSC had considered the University of Surrey's articulation plans that involve their concept of holding the early years of the degree in a different university outside the UK. PQSC felt that there wasn't sufficient information in the proposal for them to make a decision and invited the Head of Surrey vet school to attend the January PQSC meeting to answer the subcommittee's questions.

Cambridge University, Department of Veterinary Medicine, accreditation event

Professor Cobb and Dr Connell joined the meeting, as joint chairs of the visit, to answer any questions or points of clarification.

28. The Committee was told that The Department of Veterinary Medicine, Cambridge University, had their previous accreditation event in 2024 which resulted in a "conditional accreditation" classification, with a full revisit against all standards being due in September 2025. The RCVS accreditation event for the Cambridge Department of Veterinary Medicine took place between June and September 2025. The visitation took place between 7-12 September 2025. The report was sent to the Department for its period of formal consultation and had been returned along with their response that included proposed actions and timescales for implementation.

29. PQSC considered the report at its extraordinary meeting in October, and considered the report again, alongside the Department response, at their scheduled meeting on the 21st of October. Members systematically considered each commendation, recommendation and suggestion in turn, taking into account which unmet, or partially met, standards could be monitored through annual reporting, and which would require an in-person presence for triangulation or review. The response from the veterinary department, indicating actions being taken along with projected timescales for completion or implementation, was also considered.
30. Having discussed the progress made by the veterinary department to date, as well as the outstanding recommendations, PQSC considered which of the accreditation classifications available was most appropriate. Whilst it was agreed that full accreditation for a period of seven years was not appropriate, the committee was also in agreement that “terminal accreditation” should not apply either.
31. In deciding between “accreditation for a shorter period” and continuation of “conditional accreditation” it was noted that despite the commendable progress made by the Department in a short timeframe, there were still a large number of recommendations, and it was agreed that if such a report were received from any other accreditation event there would be strong concerns. It was therefore agreed that PQSC’s recommendation to the Education Committee that the Cambridge programme should remain on “Conditional Accreditation” be agreed, with a focussed revisit to occur in October 2026. It was agreed that this would provide the Department with the time to meet its stated timeframes, or to be able to demonstrate significant progress with some of the actions which would, understandably, take longer to action.
32. The Committee heard that leading up to the 2026 focussed revisit, PQSC also requested that a series of interim reports, demonstrating progress against the Department’s stated timeline. These reports would then feed into the considerations of the scope and focus required for the focussed revisit. It was requested that a progress report be submitted by the Department for consideration at the January 2026 PQSC meeting, with a further report provided for consideration at the April 2026 PQSC meeting.
33. Both PQSC and Education Committee emphasised how impressed they were with the progress that had been made in challenging circumstances and noted how very different the recent visit had been to the previous one a year before. It was agreed that there should be huge credit to the staff and school for all the hard work which had clearly been put into meeting the recommendations. Three particular achievements were highlighted: the implementation of a patient management system across equine farm and small animal; the implementation of “my progress” - an e-portfolio for tracking student development, which is being used in an innovative way; and curriculum mapping as part of a holistic curriculum review. It was noted that the student feedback was a paradigm shift from where it had been before, as they provided a unified voice of support for the school.
34. It was noted that PQSC had received confirmation from the legal team that they could assign conditional accreditation a second time.

35. The Committee asked about the curriculum review and when they would start to implement the changes following the review. It was explained that they were going through a seven-stage review, of which they were currently on stage 3B. The review didn't explicitly mention implementation as it was felt that would follow the review. It was agreed this would be followed up with the school.
36. It was made clear that there was now good communication between the vet school and the broader university and that they reported being hugely supportive. It was understood that the vet school had operated at a loss for some time and that the broader university would accept this to a certain extent, but the losses would need to be reduced over time.
37. The Committee checked that the timing of the next visit was appropriate and wouldn't disadvantage any incoming intake of graduates. October, rather than September, was chosen so that the visiting team would have access to on-site students.
38. The Committee questioned whether the necessary change was achievable in 12 months or whether this would create a cycle of 12-month visits. It was felt that between the pace and level of achievements already made and the clear timetable and reporting for further improvements that the changes would be made in the time frame.
39. The Education Committee agreed the recommendations of PQSC that that Cambridge remain at conditional accreditation for a further 12 months until October 2026 where a focused revisit would take place.

ACTION: Grant the programme at Cambridge veterinary department conditional accreditation with a focused revisit to take place in October 2026. Request that Cambridge provides interim reports in January and April 2026 against actions stated in their timeline provided.

Ms Savage re-joined the meeting.

New veterinary programme in the Republic of Ireland (ROI)

40. The Committee heard that The RCVS has been approached by the Atlantic Technological University (ATU), Donegal, Ireland, regarding a new veterinary programme that is being commenced in September 2026. They have expressed their intentions to seek accreditation for their Bachelor of Veterinary Medicine and Surgery (BVMS) programme from the RCVS and are building their programme to ensure compliance with the RCVS accreditation standards. For overseas programmes, it is normal to wait until there has been several graduating cohorts before accreditation can be considered. However, there has been recent precedents whereby the RCVS has been able to accredit new programmes overseas when their first cohort graduates.
41. PQSC considered the proposal for the RCVS to liaise with the Veterinary Council Ireland (VCI) for accreditation of the BVMS programme at the ATU. Members agreed that liaising with the VCI would have advantages in the run up to the final visit, and for the interim visit in year three, however, the committee agreed that the final visit should be a RCVS only visit, as the VCI accredits using standards based on the European Association of Establishments for

Veterinary Education's (EAEVE) standards and methodology. Whilst there are many similarities between the standards and processes of both the RCVS and EAEVE, there remain some key differences in focus. In having an RCVS only panel for the first, formal visitation (when the first cohort graduates), it would ensure the panel were fully able to focus on the RCVS standards, rather than focusing on different/joint rubrics where the RCVS standards may not be prioritised.

42. Education Committee agreed with the proposal for the RCVS to liaise with the VCI for accreditation of the BVMS programme at the ATU up until their final visit, which will be a RCVS only visit.

ACTION: Education Team to feedback to VCI and ATU

Accreditation Methodology changes

43. The Committee received a paper setting out the need for a longer lead time to Vet School accreditation visits, bringing most of the process forward several weeks, allowing the department more time to deal with contingencies, as well as allowing time to fit in the evidence consideration meetings ahead of the visitation. This would also give the school undergoing accreditation more notice of the schedule.
44. In addition, with the increase in distributed teaching sites being used by programmes, it was proposed to introduce a separate process for the consideration of these sites. This would include a separate repository deadline for evidence relating to these off-site partners, which a panel could consider before making a risk-based judgement on which placements require an in-person presence. These could be viewed via a video in conjunction with the meetings with key staff during the visitation, and which practices have good outcomes evidence demonstrating that a separate visit is not required. This would provide a period leading up to the visitation where the panel can travel out and visit any placements required. With the increase in numbers of off-site partners, along with their wide geographical spread, it was agreed that it is no longer feasible to visit these places during the visitation week, and this period is required to ensure that panels can see all aspects of the programme which they require to assure themselves that standards are being met.
45. Education Committee agreed with PQSC that these changes were appropriate.

ACTION: Education Team to update the methodology as agreed.

International Postgraduate Veterinary Education (PGVE) Symposium Update

46. The Committee noted that the PGVE symposium had been highly successful, with overwhelmingly positive feedback received from all delegates. It was intended that the event should serve as a platform for ongoing engagement with postgraduate veterinary education and drive more research in this area - an aim that was strongly supported by all delegates. It was further reported that Canadian colleagues had expressed interest in hosting the next symposium, with additional interest shown by potential hosts in Zurich and California.
47. The Committee was informed that the next step would be for a small working group to meet to agree how the symposium should be taken forward. It was understood that the symposium would develop its own distinct identity, including a dedicated website, while the RCVS would

continue to support the booking system. The intention is to hold the next event within the next 12 to 18 months.

RCVS EMS National Booking Database

48. The Vice chair took over the Chair for this agenda item.
49. The Committee was aware that the Chair of Education Committee formally wrote to all UK Veterinary Schools on 23 October 2025, requesting an urgent update on each schools' intention to utilise the database, an estimated date of implementation and the plan for informing their students and EMS providers of their intent to use the platform.
50. The Committee noted that six schools responded within the specified deadline: Edinburgh, Glasgow, Harper & Keele, Liverpool, Nottingham and RVC. Three of these schools suggested that they are using the database and have approved bookings, but looking at the data, it is less than 10 bookings for each of those schools that have been approved. Two further schools suggested that they do plan on using the database, but it would take in excess of two to three years before they are ready to do so. Two further schools suggested that they would not use the database at all. The Committee was asked to make a decision on whether the College should put any further resources into the database and how we should move forward.
51. The Committee heard that since the paper had been written, there were a few further significant events which emphasised the need for a decision on moving forwards. One school had told the RCVS that they were about to make a significant investment into the making the database work and wanted confirmation that the RCVS would continue to support it. A large corporate employer was about to sign up to the database but wanted to be sure that all the schools would be using it before they commit their time and resources.
52. It was reported that Bristol was keen to use the database, but due to some legal issues and potential issues with linking with their own database it would also take some investment and potentially two to three years to come on board.
53. The Committee heard that a corporate employer had requested to be removed from the database, due to them having only secured one booking to date. When questioned, the corporate employer said that they felt that it was pointless using the database unless it was mandatory for all the schools to use it and it wasn't worth their time and effort to keep their page updated for the small number of bookings that came through. This further raised concerns that if the database wouldn't be in full use for at least three years, then the College would lose the goodwill of the placement providers. A committee member voiced that, as there were some schools who had stated that they were not going to use the database, it would mean that placement providers would still have to use multiple ways to book different students which could ultimately lead to disengagement.
54. It was acknowledged that the students have used the system and responded positively. Veterinary schools have long reported challenges in widening participation, particularly for students with limited financial or practical resources. The database helps address this by allowing students to search for placements that meet their needs. Supporting students who

face widening participation barriers has been a core objective of the project from the outset. It is therefore essential that if the database does not move forward that there are a clear plan and communication for how to support these students.

55. Concerns were raised over the duty of care to students regarding withdrawing placements that would be deemed unsuitable. A potential flaw with a centralised database is that there isn't the oversight that exists when it's a direct relationship between the student and the Vet School. The Committee was reminded that the responsibility for direct oversight would still lie with the Vet School and was part of the accreditation standards. The Veterinary Schools Council (VSC) had been provided with a flow chart for communication in such an event to ensure that the correct mechanisms were in place and were asked if anyone wasn't happy, to which there was no response. It is something that could still be worked on if there was some nervousness around the issue.
56. It was reported that 1133 students had logged on to the database. 262 placements had been requested and 30 had been approved.
57. The Committee asked if the database could be used as a search facility for students. The Committee was told that the placement providers wouldn't be willing to commit their time to adding information to the database when they would still have the issues with booking the graduates across many different systems. The onus for the administration would be on the student which would not help the providers who only signed up because the booking system would all be in one place. It was reiterated that the database will only be effective if all three parties – the RCVS, the Veterinary Schools, and the placement providers – are fully engaged and supportive. The plans for the database were presented to the Vet Schools Council two years ago.
58. The Committee asked about on-going costs and were told that the bulk of the cost had been in setting up the database. There would be some ongoing cost for maintenance but at a less significant level.
59. The Vice Chair summarised that there is a lot of resource required by the vet schools to push this forward and in some cases at least a three-year period before they can fully commit. In the meantime, the major employers are losing faith in the database. Education Committee agreed that it was a fantastic idea but that the difficulties are insurmountable. Education Committee was asked to vote if they were in favour in continuing to move forward with the database. There were no votes in favour and 6 against.
60. The Committee reflected on project implementation and agreed that the College needs a clearer sign off from the stakeholders on support for these sorts of projects in advance, as it was felt from the College perspective that the support had been there from the Vet Schools. It was noted that during the course of the project there was some frustration in terms of who the point of contact and decision makers were at the Vet Schools and who were able to make the decision to commit to the project.

ACTION: Following the decision to cease the EMS database, communications to be considered to stakeholders.

Immigration Rule Change

61. The Committee received a paper setting out a change to the wording of UK immigration rules regarding new entrant requirements for Skilled Worker visas.
62. The RCVS had received two queries from UK employers of veterinary surgeons in relation to the immigration rules. One received in late April related generally to RCVS recognition of qualifications for interns in the context of “working towards a recognised qualification in a UK regulated profession”. The second query, received in early May related specifically to the change in wording and potential issue for residencies in that it has been suggested by some employers of veterinary professionals that there is not presently a large enough pool of UK veterinary graduates to meet the demand for veterinary interns and residents, who study to qualify as specialists on the current typical salary offered for these roles.
63. However, the Committee heard that the RCVS found no demonstrable adverse impact on the veterinary profession in the UK and therefore felt it would not be considered appropriate for the RCVS as a professional regulator and Chartered body to lobby government on behalf of individual stakeholders. Therefore, it was not proposed to take any further action at present unless further concerns arise.
64. The Committee agreed with this decision and decided that those involved with employing interns and residents would keep an eye on if there were any implications from the change.

Review of Postnominals Approval Criteria

65. The Committee received a letter from an applicant following the decision not to approve their qualification for inclusion on the Register. The applicant stated that their qualification is rigorous and equivalent in level to other qualifications currently recognised, notwithstanding a different method of assessment.
66. Education Committee, in agreement with the Post-nominals Group, acknowledged that the qualification represents a significant academic achievement. However, it was agreed that the applicant had not been able to provide the RCVS with the evidence required for the qualification to be approved. It was suggested that the applicant might contact the Royal Agricultural College to explore whether recognition could be obtained there, which could potentially provide a route to recognition by the RCVS.

ACTION: RCVS to contact applicant with outcome of postnominal discussion at EC

Statutory Membership Examination (SME)

Minutes from the exam board held on 30 July 2025 and 29 September 2025

67. The Committee received and noted the minutes of the exam board meetings held on the 30 July 2025 and the 29 September 2025. It was reported that, again, this was the largest cohort with 143 candidates going through the practical exam (Objective Structured Clinical Exam – OSCE). Praise was given to the Education Team and examiners for the extraordinary amount

of work that was achieved, which had received lots of positive feedback from examiners and candidates. It was reported that there had been some mitigating circumstances with candidates who could not obtain visas to attend the exams. The pass rates for the exam components were:

- March written exams – 30.74%
- May re-sit written exams - 49.23%.
- OSCE – 55.94%
- The overall pass rate of the RCVS 2025 SME - 29.62%

68. It was noted that these results were in line with previous years and the full analysis will be presented to Education Committee in Spring 2026.

Refugee Policy

69. Education Committee received a paper providing an update on the SME refugee policy. This followed feedback from the Exam Board, which had identified that the existing policy was outdated. A revised policy had been reviewed by the Exam Board earlier in November.

70. The current policy indicates that the RCVS will fund one attempt at the English Language examination and potentially unlimited attempts at the SME examination. Where a candidate is successful in the written exams and progresses to the OSCE, the RCVS will fund accommodation, contribute towards travel costs and arrange food vouchers where required.

71. The Committee was informed that, in recent years, there has been a significant increase in the number of refugee and asylum seeker candidates. While some candidates have been successful, a significant proportion have entered and re-entered the examination process but making little progress. As application numbers continue to rise and funding remains limited, the Education Department is seeking to ensure that available resources are used effectively.

72. A revised policy was therefore proposed under which refugee and asylum seeker candidates would continue to receive support, with greater emphasis placed on identifying those most prepared for the examination. Readiness would be assessed through performance in a formative examination and the submission of evidence of seeing clinical practice. Under this proposal, the RCVS would fund one initial examination attempt and one re-sit. It was acknowledged that this approach would need to strike a careful balance, as there was no intention to create unnecessary barriers to completion of the examination.

73. The Committee queried whether data could be gathered from previous candidates, regardless of refugee status, to better inform assessments of examination readiness. Questions were also raised about the criteria and process for selecting funded candidates. Members expressed concern that refugees may need to pass the examination as quickly as possible in order to support themselves and asked about the potential implications of any delay.

74. The Education Committee agreed the revised policy, which will now be submitted to FRC for approval. Subject to approval, it will be circulated alongside the guidance for the exam in 2026 and apply from the 2027 examination diet.

ACTION: SME Refugee policy to be considered by FRC

Joint Statement from Inter-Regulatory Group about Artificial Intelligence (AI)

75. Education Committee was presented with a paper with a final draft of a potential joint statement on the use of AI in health and care professional education, by the Education Inter Regulatory Group (IRG) and the background to reaching this point. The Committee was asked if they would like to release a joint statement with the IRG on the 14 January 2026 or wait and publish separately to allow time for further consideration. EC queried if there was a potential clash with other AI communications from the College.

ACTION: Education Team to check with internal RCVS comms if there is a conflict between the IRG AI statement and the RCVS AI position

76. It was queried if the statement should be considered first by Council before it is released. This is to be clarified and brought to Council if appropriate.

ACTION: Education Team to check procedure and present to Council if appropriate.

Date of the next meeting

77. The Date of the next meeting is 2 February at Hardwick Street starting at 10am.

Summary

Meeting	Education Committee
Date	2 February 2026
Title	Veterinary Clinical Career Pathways (VCCP) Working Group minutes from the 12 December 2025.
Summary	Veterinary Clinical Career Pathways (VCCP) Working Group minutes from the 12 December 2025.
Decisions required	None
Attachments	None
Author	Jenny Soreskog-Turp Lead for Postgraduate Education j.soreskog-turp@rcvs.org.uk / 020 7212 0701

Classifications

Document	Classification ¹	Rationales ²
Paper	Unclassified	

¹Classifications explained

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²Classification rationales

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Private	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 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

Veterinary Clinical Career Pathways (VCCP) Working Group**Notes of the meeting held on 12 December**

Members: Nick Cooper Chair

*Heather Bacon

*Erin Burnett

Tim Charlesworth

Karen Coumbe

*Phil Cramp

Louise Dingley

John Fishwick

*Emily Gascoigne

*Jennifer Hammond

Peter O'Hagan

Aoife Reid

*Adam Tjolle

Kirsty Young

*Absent

In attendance: Jenny Soreskog-Turp Lead for Postgraduate Education

Welcome and Apologies for absence

1. The Chair welcomed all attendees to the meeting.

Minutes of the meeting held on the 9 October

2. The minutes from the meeting on the 9 October were reviewed and a minor point of wording was discussed regarding how the role of RVNs in supporting surgeons in clinical practice. It was agreed that the wording should reflect the broader scope of support rather than implying only surgical assistance. Subject to this clarification, the minutes were accepted.

Action: Update minutes in relation to RVN career pathways

Workstream 2 - Definition of veterinary clinical roles

3. The paper containing definitions and a summary table, previously discussed, was confirmed as the finalised version approved by the Education Committee. It was noted that the work would be paused and not taken forward to Council or consultation until proposals from work streams one and three were available, allowing alignment across all streams
4. It was noted that related work being undertaken at a European level by EBVS on definitions of specialists and advanced practitioners, which had come to light at postgraduate symposium. Although this work appeared to be at a draft stage and developed by an executive group, it was recognised that dialogue may be required in due course to avoid duplication and to understand areas of divergence.

Workstream 3 – Updated of discussion at Education Committee

5. Discussion highlighted that while some resistance to additional quality assurance was anticipated, it was important that standards were proportionate, achievable and applied consistently. It was noted that assessment processes would be central to maintaining standards and that work was already under way through a new committee reviewing qualifications for advanced practitioner status.
6. Overall, it was reported that the Education Committee was satisfied with progress and supportive of the direction of travel.

Progress to Date and Next Steps for the Coming Year

7. As this was the final meeting of the year, the working group reviewed progress to date and next steps across the work streams.
8. For workstream two, the aim of providing clear guidance to the profession and the public on the scope and focus of clinical roles was reiterated. It was noted that, following focus group feedback, there was no clear consensus on alternative titles, with most favouring retention of the term “advanced practitioner” alongside clearer definitions.
9. The working group were in favour of continuing to use the title “advanced practitioner”, while recognising potential confusion with other professional titles, particularly those used in allied professions. It was suggested that public-facing materials should also explain related professional roles to improve clarity. It was acknowledged that acronyms and overlapping terminology remained a challenge and that confusion already existed within the profession regarding different qualifications.
10. The working group emphasised the importance of engagement with relevant professional groups. It was agreed that, following Council consideration and prior to wider public consultation, key stakeholder groups should be given the opportunity to review and comment on the proposed definitions. It was felt that would be beneficial in building consensus and reducing later opposition.
11. For work stream three, the extensive information-gathering undertaken over the year was summarised, including focus groups, surveys of European colleges, interviews with stakeholders and exploration of alternative pathways. It was agreed that the next step was to summarise this material into a report and develop a proposal to support consultation.
12. Work stream one was acknowledged as more complex. Although progress appeared slower, substantial groundwork had been completed, including curriculum aims, overarching objectives and purpose statement and initial work on syllabus development. Significant work remained on programme structure, assessment, implementation and quality assurance, which would form a major focus in the coming year.
13. Potential risks identified through focus groups were highlighted, and members were invited to reflect on these and provide comments by email ahead of the January meeting.
14. The next meeting was confirmed as a face-to-face meeting on 21 January, starting at 10:30.

Summary

Meeting	Education Committee
Date	2 February 2026
Title	Specialist Subcommittee Minutes 2026
Summary	Minutes of the Specialist Subcommittee meeting held on 9 January 2026
Decisions required	To note.
Attachments	None.
Author	Hayley Stinchon Senior Education Officer h.stinchon@rcvs.org.uk / 020 8148 5055

Classifications

Document	Classification ¹	Rationales ²
Paper	Unclassified	

1 Classifications explained

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Specialists Subcommittee (SSC) - Minutes of the meeting held via Teams on 9 January 2026

Members: Dr Alex Dugdale
Dr Linda Horspool
Professor David Barrett Chair
Professor Roger Smith

In attendance Mrs Hayley Stinchon
Dr Linda Prescott-Clements
Ms Jenny Soreskog-Turp

Apologies for absence

1. Apologies received from Dr Lisa Boden and Dr Caroline Kisielewicz.

Declaration of interests

2. None to report.

Minutes of the previous meeting held in January 2025

3. The minutes were agreed as a true record of the previous meeting.
4. Reference was made to discussions at the previous meeting regarding application for deer specialism, following correspondence from the President of the Deer Veterinary Society. It was confirmed that this matter remains ongoing, and that further follow-up will be undertaken. However, it was noted that since the last meeting, two applicants have successfully completed the specialist application process for pig medicine. As pig specialist applicants faced similar barriers to those encountered by deer specialist applicants, the successful pig applications provide a positive foundation for informing and supporting colleagues aspiring to achieve specialist status in deer medicine.
5. The duplication of specialist categories will be refined in line with the new website in 2026.

Minutes of the previous meetings of Education Committee held in 2025**Veterinary Clinical Careers Pathway (VCCP)**

6. An update was provided on the VCCP project currently underway within the Education Department, all relating to specialist roles and development.
7. Reference was made to the three different workstreams on curriculum development, terminology and role clarification, and flexible routes to specialism. The project has identified several barriers within specialist domains, such as the absence of referral centres in some countries and limited access to trained supervisors.
8. Furthermore, it was noted that some colleges have robust quality assurance processes in place, while others have very little. Although the European Board of Veterinary Specialists

(EBVS) require European colleges to have quality assurance measures established, these requirements are high-level and focus on the existence of a process rather than assessment of its effectiveness, meaning this does not guarantee consistent standards.

9. The Education Committee agree in terms of risk concern and have encouraged the Education Department to continue to investigate the current processes and propose next steps.

Action: Education Department to continue with investigations and report back.

Specialist Summary for 2025

10. The subcommittee was presented with a paper highlighting a summary of specialist activity for the year 2025. This included the list of new specialists, the percentage of specialists in each domain and the gender ratio of RCVS specialists.
11. It was noted that the number of European specialists applying to become RCVS specialists emphasises the importance of the VCCP project, ensuring quality measures across the board.

CPD Compliance

12. There is still inconsistency amongst applicants and assessors when determining what should be considered suitable CPD and, more commonly, how this CPD is recorded.
13. Throughout the applications in 2025, there have been a few applicants who have not reflected on their CPD for previous years. CPD reflection became a compulsory requirement in 2023. Although it could be debated that retrospective reflecting from over 12 months ago may no longer be beneficial to the RCVS member, it is still a requirement. The subcommittee agreed that future applications will be rejected if reflections for a minimum of 35h per annum since 2023 have not been recorded.
14. Guidance has been updated to require specialists to state whether their CPD relates to their specialist domain within their application, however, this is not consistently being adhered to. Currently, the 1CPD recording platform does not easily allow applicants to identify CPD within their specialist category. A development request has been submitted, and a response is awaited regarding the timeline for adding a tick-box function on the 1CPD app.
15. Although the 1CPD app is not compulsory for overseas veterinarians to use, it was suggested that the subcommittee propose a mandatory use of 1CPD for all specialist applicants (with the exception of those on the temporary register) to the Education Committee. This would eliminate separate CPD spreadsheets from overseas vets, that are often difficult to decipher.
16. There appears to be some confusion around what type of CPD equates to 'external' CPD. The Specialist Information and Guidance Pack suggests that there should be an element of 'external' CPD within an applicant's submission, however, this is often overlooked by the applicants. The subcommittee queried whether it might be more relevant to assign a percentage of the CPD as an external focus, in line with the Advanced Practitioner application guidance, with a definition of what 'external focus' refers to.

Action: Follow up with the 1CPD app developers regarding an additional tick-box for the specialty category.

Action: Propose to Education Committee to mandate 1CPD recording for all specialist applicants (except those on the temporary register).

Action: Propose to Education Committee alternative wording to the CPD guidance in the Specialist Application and Guidance Pack.

Specialist Application & Guidance Information Pack

17. Dates and specialist fees had been adjusted to meet the requirements of the pack for 2026. These changes were noted by the subcommittee.
18. Wording surrounding the CPD requirement element of the pack was altered during the meeting, using tracked changes to present to Education Committee. The following changes are suggested:
 - Removal of the sentence suggesting that overseas vets are not required to use the 1CPD app.
 - Additional sentence to suggest that CPD records should include a minimum of 50 hours external focus during a five-year period, with examples of external CPD offered as guidance.
 - Highlighting in bold the requirement to annotate CPD appropriately.

Action: Propose to Education Committee alternative wording to the CPD guidance in the Specialist Application and Guidance Pack.

Review of the recent new and reapplication for RCVS Specialists

19. All pending applications were discussed amongst the subcommittee. Of the seven applicants pending an outcome, all are to be given the opportunity to submit further evidence of contributions before a decision on acceptance is agreed. The subcommittee identified 28 successful applicants, whose outcomes are subject to final approval by the committee.

AOB

20. As the reapplication assessment submission window coincided with the Christmas period, it was agreed that the subcommittee would convene later in January 2027 in order to allow sufficient time for the thorough review of assessments and the collation of any additional supporting evidence from applicants, where required.

Date of next meeting

To be confirmed for 2027.

Summary	
Meeting	Education Committee
Date	2 February 2026
Title	Joint statement on the use of Artificial Intelligence (AI) in health and care professional education by the Education Inter Regulatory Group (IRG)
Summary	<p>Following several drafts of the joint statement from the IRG on the use of AI in education that have been shared with the committee, the final statement has been agreed.</p> <p>The statement has also been reviewed by the VN Education Committee for their response and information and shared with the VSC for their information.</p> <p>The statement and proposed publish dates have also been shared with the CEO who confirmed that its publication was in line with other work being carried out by the college on the use of AI.</p> <p>The statement is due to be published week beginning 19th January and is being coordinated by the RCVS comms team.</p>
Decisions required	None
Attachments	Final IRG joint statement on the use of AI in health and care professional education.
Author	<p>Kirsty Williams Education Quality Improvement Manager k.williams@rcvs.org.uk / 02079651105</p>

Classifications		
Document	Classification¹	Rationales²
Paper	Unclassified	

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Using Artificial Intelligence (AI) in health and care professional education

Introduction:

- As regulators, we set the knowledge, skills, understanding and professional behaviours expected of health and care professionals. Education providers are required to meet our education and training standards and professionals our professional standards.
- The education landscape is in a state of change. We know that learners are using AI (in particular, generative AI) in many different ways to support their learning journeys¹ and if used appropriately, AI can be a positive tool for learners as they develop the skills and knowledge required for future practice.
- While there are many benefits with the use of AI in education, such as improved efficiencies, the creation of more realistic simulations, and its use as a personalised learning tool - there are also risks. These can include an overreliance on AI and the loss of core skills, as well as the potential for biased or misleading outputs, which can all impact on patient safety.
- We want to ensure that learners who use AI in their education receive proper support and understand both the risks and benefits of the technology. Learners also need to understand how AI can be applied in their future practice and develop the skills necessary to use this technology ethically, safely and effectively. Ensuring that our standards are not compromised through the increasing use of AI is highly important to service users and the professions that we regulate.
- We know that education providers and other stakeholders will have their own guidance on the use of AI. [The Office for Students](#) is playing an important role setting out its position on AI that follows its principles based approach to regulation. Additionally, the [Quality Assurance Agency](#) has curated a range of resources relating to generative AI and the ways it can be used as a positive tool while also maintaining academic standards.
- To ensure our standards continue to aid learners and education providers, we have produced a set of guiding principles for providers of health and care education to proactively consider in the design and delivery of their educational programmes. The aim of this statement is not to supersede existing guidance, but to complement and provide clarity around regulator expectations as well as countering the risks associated with the use of the technology.

Principles

The following are a set of key principles that we, as regulators, believe all education providers we quality assure should consider in the delivery of their programmes. We recommend that these principles be considered centrally by education providers who offer multiple approved health and care programmes.

¹ Student generative AI survey 2025, Higher Education Policy Institute, <https://www.hepi.ac.uk/reports/student-generative-ai-survey-2025/>

Regulators have different approaches to considering how education providers are developing their capabilities linked to AI. We would welcome the opportunity through engagement activities to see how these principles have been considered.

Accountability

- Learners, education providers and staff appropriately communicate where and how AI is being used.
- Learners are accountable for their use of AI and understand and adhere to their institutions' AI policies.

Academic integrity

- Education providers ensure that assessment methods continue to remain reliable and valid, with the increased accessibility of AI for learners.
- Even when using AI, learners must still meet the requirements linked to each regulator's professional standards.

Development of AI literacy for staff and learners

- Staff responsible for teaching and learning linked to AI have appropriate skills and knowledge and are supported by their institution to meet their responsibilities and develop in their role.
- Staff developing and managing assessments have sufficient knowledge and skills in AI to ensure assessments are in line with the 'academic integrity' area above.
- There is support for learners and staff in their use of AI, through a positive learning culture, the right to challenge and access to adequate resources, within education and training.
- Learners and staff develop skills to identify biased, inaccurate or misleading content in AI responses.
- Learners understand the ethical use of AI in line with their profession's practice standards, including understanding how to comply with data protection legislation and guidance to maintain patient confidentiality.
- In line with ensuring equality and diversity in education, education providers ensure equitable access to AI that does not amplify existing inequalities between learners from different backgrounds or discriminate with respect to protected characteristics.

Preparation for practice

- Education providers prepare learners for appropriate use of AI in their future practice. This includes understanding the practical, legal and ethical use of technologies available, as well as developing the critical thinking skills required to become an autonomous professional.
- Learners demonstrate AI explainability. This means that they understand how decisions are made and are equipped with the skills to explain their use of AI to service users or caregivers in a way that is clear and easy to understand, including the outlining of any risks.
- Education providers equip learners with the skills to develop their understanding of AI and similar technologies given the rapid pace of change once in practice.

Glossary

For the purposes of this document, we have used the following definitions of AI:

- **Artificial intelligence (AI)** – AI is the use of digital technology to create systems capable of performing tasks commonly thought to require human intelligence, NHS England, <https://transform.england.nhs.uk/information-governance/guidance/artificial-intelligence/>
- **Generative AI** – Generative AI is a subset of AI capable of generating text, images, video or other forms of output by using probabilistic models trained across one or more domains, Government Digital Service, <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/ai-insights/ai-insights-generative-ai-html#introduction>

Using AI in health and care professional education

Purpose:

The purpose of this statement is to be clear about our collective position with regards to the use of AI in health and care professional education and training. Education providers want to understand regulator's views with respect to the use of AI in health and care professional education and want reassurance that their use of AI will not affect the accreditation of their courses.

Remaining silent in this area creates uncertainty and confusion around what is expected by regulators. Providing a joint statement on principles for AI use offers clarity, ensuring that education provider use of AI does not impact on their ability to produce safe, skilful and competent graduates.

Through issuing a joint statement, this also reduces regulatory overlap or inconsistencies for education providers that run programmes approved by different regulators.

Key audiences:

Key audiences are quality assurance and professional leads at education providers approved by the regulators. A secondary audience is the general public as the statement will give them confidence as we will be clear about our position in relation to appropriate and ethical use of AI in education.