Guidance for Applicants for RCVS Fellowship

Overall Fellowship criteria

Fellowship applications will be judged by the relevant Fellowship panel on whether one or more of the criteria listed below have been met to a standard appropriate for the award of the Fellowship. Applicants should be aware that their application will be benchmarked against those of previously successful applicants in the same route on whether the standard of excellence necessary for the award of the Fellowship has been achieved.

- Original innovative discovery or application of knowledge or development of the veterinary profession in a ground-breaking way
- Sustained contribution to scholarship
- Producing a body of creative work that will have been disseminated, for example,
  - in a body of publications,
  - in teaching materials,
  - in educational documents,
  - in political documents
- Indisputable advancement of their subject
- Providing leadership to the veterinary profession
- Advancement of the public understanding of the veterinary profession

Specific Requirements for Each Route

Meritorious Contributions to Clinical Practice

A mandatory 2,000-word summary describing the outstanding aspects of your professional achievements and their contribution to the advancement of the profession including, for example, clinical or educational scholarship and leadership.

Please include an indication of the particular discipline in which you are working and for which you wish to be considered, and your current caseload.

- Provide details of any significant bodies of work which would demonstrate one or more of the following:
  - the creation and interpretation of new knowledge, through original research or other advanced scholarship, of a quality to satisfy peer review, extend the forefront of the discipline, and merit publication
  - a systematic acquisition and understanding of a substantial body of knowledge which is at the forefront of an academic discipline or area of professional practice
  - evidence of excellence and mentoring in the subject area (for example, serving on national committees, providing guidance and mentorship to junior staff),
– the general ability to conceptualise, design and implement a project for the generation of new knowledge, applications understanding at the forefront of the discipline, and to adjust the project design in the light of unforeseen problems

– a detailed understanding of applicable techniques for research and advanced academic enquiry

– award of any other relevant post-graduate qualification/s

• Holders will:

– Be able to make informed judgements on complex issues in specialist fields, often in the absence of complete data, and be able to communicate their ideas and conclusions clearly and effectively to specialist and non-specialist audiences

– Continue to undertake applied research and development at an advanced level, contributing substantially to the development of new techniques, ideas or approaches.

• Please note that applicants do not need to be RCVS Specialists to apply for the Fellowship, but the Board accepts that this may be the most appropriate route for many Specialists who are working in full-time clinical roles.

**Meritorious Contributions to Knowledge**

A mandatory 2,000-word summary describing the outstanding contribution and impact that has been made to the advancement of the profession including, for example, scientific or educational scholarship and leadership.

A considerable body of work and evidence of experience after initial qualification as a veterinary surgeon. Typically, an expectation of outputs likely to be achieved approximately 15 years post-qualification.

A portfolio that will most likely include:

• The candidate’s publications,

• Evidence of Doctoral-level achievement (PhD or other Doctorate),

• Evidence of excellence and mentoring in the subject area (for example, serving on national committees, training of postdoctoral scientists),

• Scientific prizes, research grant funding and awards,

• Demonstration of contribution to advancing the broader subject (for example, serving on scientific panels or grant-giving bodies).
• Any other contributions to the profession the applicant would like to highlight.

Please note that applicants do not need to be RCVS Specialists to apply for the Fellowship.

Meritorious Contributions to the Profession

Applicants for this route may be drawn from any part of the profession.

Applicants:

• Must provide a mandatory summary (of not more than 2000 words) describing the outstanding contribution that they have made and its positive impact on the advancement of the profession
• Should set out clearly how their leadership has made a significant difference in the chosen area of expertise; this might include (but is not limited to) work in education, politics involving the profession, and influencing at a national and/or international level
• Will need to provide a significant body of evidence to support their application. In this context, evidence must include a clear description of the work carried out and the positive impact that this has made in advancing the objects of the College
• Are encouraged to provide supporting statements from recognised and valid sources which confirm the claims made by the applicant (these are in addition to the three professional references set out below). While it is expected that many of the narrative statements will come from Fellows/Members of the profession, other contributions are also acceptable providing they are relevant to the application. In all cases, supporting statements must include text which declares that there is no conflict of interest in supporting the applicant.

Application Guidance

The following details regarding publications apply to all three routes:

Publications

Published articles form a significant part of the assessed output for some routes to Fellowship. Articles that are subject to peer-review carry more weight than those which are not subject to peer-review. In order to balance the size and activity of different fields of publication, it is useful to use bibliometric analysis tools that are the same as those used by other organisations to assess quality of publications. One criterion is to determine the quartile in which a journal lies in its field. Quartile 1 journals are recognised as publishing higher quality articles than those in quartiles 2, 3 or 4. These quartiles are for defined fields so that they do not disadvantage those publishing in smaller fields. Other assessments are to examine the number of times an article is cited by others. This is an important factor since citations of work suggest that the article in question has influenced the understanding and actions of the citing author. Naturally it takes time for citing articles to appear after publication, but if an article is several years old and is cited little or not at all, that suggests it has had less impact than one which is cited more. The H-index is a statistic which combines several
parameters, and gives an indication of the lifetime impact of the author’s work. H-indices are produced by different organisations, and some are more generous than others. University assessment of staff uses “Scopus” to compare H-index and we have also adopted that as a standard rather than the more or less generous alternatives.

It is important to say that these metrics are only part of the information that is used to assess published output, and all other parts of the application are considered.

Identification of your publications

If you wish to cite journal articles as part of your application, it is important that the panel can identify your published articles accurately. In many cases author names and initials do not provide a unique identifier, so we would ask applicants for Fellowships to register for an ORCID i/d. ORCID provides a unique digital identifier that distinguishes you from every other author and, supports automated linkages between you and your professional activities ensuring that all your work is recognised.

Registration for ORCID

To register for an ORCID identifier, go to https://orcid.org/register and complete the boxes in the registration page. You will then be transferred to a page where you can add publications. On the “Works” menu click “add some now” and then use one of the database services to identify your papers. Europe PubMed Central is a good one. Click to agree to link the PubMed record to ORCID. If the name you use for your publications is different from the default entered by the system, edit it in the search box. If you publish under different names/initials, you can add those publications all to your ORCID record. The search will come up with your papers and you can select those that are yours to add to your record. Follow on through the continue boxes to link the selected papers to your ORCID profile.

When you publish new papers, you may be able to add your ORCID identifier to your profile as author, in which case the article will link to your profile automatically. If not, then you can search and add it as for past papers. You will need to ensure that your ORCID profile is kept up to date and contains all papers you wish to be considered in support of your application.

References

All routes will require three professional references, which are taken into account in judging an application against the Fellowship criteria previously described. Applicants should note, however, that supportive references do not in themselves guarantee the success of an application. Also, members of the Fellowship Board and credentials panels may not act as referees for applicants. Finally, applicants for the Fellowship may not act as referees for other applicants who are applying in the same application round.

Referees should be asked to confirm the accuracy of the application to the best of their knowledge and comment on how the candidate meets the overall criteria for the Fellowship as listed on page 1 of this guidance note.
Additional Information for Applicants

1. Once applications are received, they will be considered by at least three members of the credentials panel for that route. These assessments are passed to the Chair of that panel who makes an overall assessment of the application and puts forward a recommendation to the Fellowship Board. The Board will then make the final decision on the recommendation and outcome of the application. A full list of the members of the Fellowship Board and credentials panels is provided on the RCVS website. Please note that, as mentioned above, members of the Board and credentials panels may not act as referees. Members of the panels are asked to declare any conflict of interest that would prevent them from making an objective assessment of an application for Fellowship. If any applicant feels that a panel member in their chosen route, or a member of the Fellowship Board, would have a significant conflict of interest that would affect their assessment, they are asked to point this out when submitting their application.

2. Applicants will note that there is a certain degree of overlap between the requirements for each of the three routes. You would be encouraged to choose the route that you feel is most appropriate for your application. If you would like to speak with one of the panel members to help you decide which route would be best, please contact us on fellowship@rcvs.org.uk. A list of those Fellows that applied successfully through each route is also available on the RCVS website to help guide the candidate.

3. Once the application has been assessed by the chosen credentials panel, if the panel feels that the application might be more suited to a different route, we will contact you to ask if you wish your application to be referred to an alternative panel. If you choose to go ahead, you will be given the opportunity to add additional information to your application, although this may be required within a short timescale if you wish the application to go forward within the same application round. You will also have the option of confirming that you would like your application to go forward under the route for which you originally applied.

4. If your application is unsuccessful you will be offered feedback by the Chair of the relevant credentials panel. The RCVS will arrange initial email contact with the Chair, and the form that the feedback takes from there is a matter for discussion between the Chair and the applicant. Applicants should understand that this feedback is intended to be helpful and to inform and guide a future application. Panel Chairs will not enter into lengthy debates on points of detail, nor are they empowered to re-consider the decision of the Board.

An unsuccessful candidate can also request a mentor from within the Fellowship. The mentor will work with and offer advice to the candidate going forward to help develop a stronger application.

5. There is currently no limit to the number of times that an application may be made, however applicants would be advised to take account of any feedback they receive. The decision of the Fellowship Board is final and there is no appeal process. Instead the applicant is strongly encouraged to reapply as and when appropriate.
6. There is no application fee. Applicants who are successful in achieving the Fellowship will be required to pay an annual fee of £80.