

Meeting	Standards Committee
Date	29 April 2015
Title	The revised Practice Standards Scheme
Classification	Unclassified
Summary	This paper provides an update on proposals for the revised Practice Standards Scheme; a summary of the responses to the recent consultation exercise, and the Practice Standards Group's proposed amendments following the consultation feedback
Decisions required	The Committee is invited to review the proposals with a view to recommending their approval to RCVS Council.
Attachments	Annex A: Overview of consultation responses and proposed changes Annex B: Updated Small Animal Modules Annex C: Email consultation responses Annex D: Online consultation responses Annex E: Amended PSS Rules
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Review of the Practice Standards Scheme

1. In June 2013 RCVS Council gave approval for the development of a new structure for the Practice Standards Scheme.
2. The redeveloped of the Scheme has been led by the Practice Standards Group and the new structure has been designed to address issues that were raised in response to a concept note (consultation) the RCVS issued in 2012 and extensive feedback from the current members of the Scheme and the wider profession.
3. Specifically the new Scheme provides:
 - A more 'behavioural' approach to inspection and a movement away from 'box-ticking'.
 - A more flexible Scheme, which would allow all types of practice to join and progress.
 - A pathway for improvement and a means of recognising practices which are striving for excellence.

Aims of the Revised Scheme

4. In redeveloping the Scheme the Practice Standards Group worked towards the following aims:
5. To ensure that the new Scheme:
 - considered those aspects that impact the veterinary care of animals, not just facilities and equipment;
 - provided a pathway for practices to improve and show what they are good at;
 - was clear and understandable to the public.

What stays the same; what changes?

Modular Format

6. Recognising the range and variety of veterinary practices the accreditations recognised under the existing Practice Standards Scheme will remain as:

Core Standards - comprising standards relevant to all veterinary practices;

General Practice (GP) – (Small animal ; Equine; Farm Animal) reflecting the requirements of a primary care practice. A GP must meet all Core Standards as well as specific GP standards.

Emergency Service Clinic - (ESC) reflecting the requirements of a designated out of hours provider.

An ESC must meet all GP standards as well as specific ESC standards.

Veterinary Hospital - (VH) reflecting the requirements of a general practice allied with additional facilities and protocols for the investigation and treatment of more complex cases. A Veterinary Hospital must meet all Core and General Practice standards as well as specific VH standards

7. The requirements for accreditation in each of these categories will remain essentially the same; broadly covering equipment, facilities and services offered.
8. The layout of the requirements for these accreditations, however, has been reorganised into a modular format. This ensures greater clarity by showing what is required topic by topic and allows practices to approach accreditation in a manageable and logical way.
9. The complete PSS modules are outlined below; however some of these modules do not apply to Equine or Farm Animal Practices:

Anaesthesia	Clinical Governance	Client Experience	Dentistry
Diagnostic Imaging	Emergency and Critical Care	Infection Control	In-Patient Care
Laboratory and Post Mortem	Medicines	Medical Records	Nursing
Out-of-Hours	Out -Patient Care	Pain Management	Practice Team
	Premises	Surgery	

Introduction of Awards

10. The most significant change to the Scheme is that over and above the base accreditations of Core, General Practice; Veterinary Hospital - additional Awards will be available for each premises. Requirements are set out in the Awards section of each module. Practices can choose if they want to be inspected for none, for some or for all of the Awards.
11. The Awards focus on behaviours and outcomes impacting on veterinary care, the veterinary team and the experience of the client. They will provide practices with a clear pathway to improve which

is not reliant upon significant investment in facilities or equipment. Moreover they will allow for greater differentiation between practices and provide a powerful marketing tool.

12. Awards will be available at either 'Good' or 'Outstanding'. This follows a similar format to that used by Ofsted in the inspection of schools and should therefore be recognised and understood by the public.

13. The Awards available are outlined below:

Small Animal	Equine	Farm Animal
<ul style="list-style-type: none">•Team and Professional Responsibility•Client Service•Patient Consultation Service•In-patient service•Diagnostic Service•Emergency and Critical Care	<ul style="list-style-type: none">•Team and Professional Responsibility•Client Service•Ambulatory Service•In-patient service•Diagnostic Service	<ul style="list-style-type: none">•Team and Professional Responsibility•Client Service•Advisory/Consultation Service•Diagnostic Service

14. Awards have been specifically tailored to take into account the differences between Small Animal / Equine and Farm Animal practice and the following will be available:

How will practice premises qualify for an Award?

15. Each Module contain a section entitled 'Award points', within this section there are clauses which are allocated points.

16. 'Good' in a Module will mean that over 60% of the total available Award points have been achieved; 'Outstanding' in a Module will mean that 80% or more of the total available points have been achieved. To achieve any Award a premises will need to obtain 'Good' or 'Outstanding' in every individual Module making up the Award. To be 'Outstanding', however, it would need to obtain an 'Outstanding' score across all of the individual Modules making up the Award.

18. The tables below show how the individual Modules fit together to form the Awards:

Small Animal Awards		
Team and Professional Responsibility	Client Service	Patient Consultation Service
Clinical Governance Infection Control Medical Records Medicines Practice Team	Client Experience	Infection Control Medicines Nursing Out-of-Hours Outpatient Care Pain
Diagnostic Service	In-patient Service	Emergency and Critical Care Service
Diagnostic Imaging Laboratory and Clinical Pathology	Anaesthesia Dentistry Infection Control In-patient Care Nursing Out-of-Hours Pain Surgery	Emergency and Critical Care In-patients Nursing Pain

Equine Awards		
Team and Professional Responsibility	Client Service	Ambulatory Service
Medical Records Clinical Governance Infection Control Practice Team Premises Medicines	Client Experience	Outpatient Care Pain Nursing Medicines Out-of-Hours Infection Control
Diagnostic Service	In-patient Service	
Diagnostic Imaging Laboratory and Clinical Pathology	Nursing In-patient Care Pain Anaesthesia Surgery Out-of-Hours Dentistry Infection Control	

Farm Animal Awards	
Team and Professional Responsibility	Client Service
Medical Records Clinical Governance Infection Control Practice Team Premises Medicines	Client Experience
Diagnostic Service	Advisory / Consultation Service
Diagnostic Imaging Laboratory and Clinical Pathology	Outpatient Care Nursing/Paraprofessionals Pain Anaesthesia Surgery Out-of-Hours Infection Control

19. It is recognised that there is some overlap and that some Modules may contribute to more than one Award. This is to ensure that all relevant topics are covered in individual Awards. It is also recognised that on occasion there is overlap between the Awards section and Veterinary Hospital requirements. This recognises that some requirements of Veterinary Hospitals already go beyond facilities and equipment

Will all practices be eligible to achieve an award?

20. The Awards will be open to all practices whether they are accredited to Core Standards, General Practice or Veterinary Hospital.

21. For a practice accredited to Core Standards some of the Awards may not be achievable due to the constraints of the premises or the work undertaken, however it is expected they would be able to attain Awards in 'Team and Professional Responsibility' and 'Client Service'. Where a Core practice would like to apply for an Award they would also need to comply with the 'General Practice' requirements within the applicable Modules.

Inspectorate

22. The new Scheme places a greater emphasis on the advice and guidance that inspectors can provide to practices to help them along a pathway to improvement. In recognition of this we propose dropping the term 'inspectors' and using the term 'assessors'.

23. Assessors will receive professional training specifically in behaviour-based inspections. This will ensure that assessors provide the highest possible standards and consistency of inspection and that the process is not simply a 'tick-box' exercise. There will also be an employed Lead Assessor tasked with monitoring inspections and providing guidance.
24. External professional advice has been sought to help recruit assessors and to train them in the new behavioural approach to inspection.
25. In recognition of the change in approach to inspection the current inspectors will not automatically transition to the new Scheme. Instead, those inspectors who wish to become assessors will need to re-apply for the position and to attend the same training as the new recruits.
26. The Scheme will begin to recruit Assessors in spring and there will likely be around 20 assessor posts available. Recruitment of the Lead Assessor role will not take place until April 2016 at the earliest. This will ensure that we can recruit from the widest possible field and any of the new Assessors would be well placed to apply for the role.
27. In order to manage the transition to the new Scheme and the training and recruitment of new Assessors, Pam Mosedale, former Lead Inspector, has been seconded for one year from her role as a PI Investigator to the post of 'PSS Veterinary Adviser'. She will assist in the development of the Modules, and the recruitment, training and performance review of the new cadre of Assessors.

IT System

28. A bespoke online IT System is being built to support the new Scheme. This system will allow practices to make applications online and will lead them step-by-step through the requirements of the Scheme.
29. Practices will be able to upload all the documents they require for accreditation prior to inspection. This will help to free up time on the day of inspection and to allow the assessor to spend more time talking to team members and providing advice and guidance to the practice. The system also includes a facility for practices to set up reminders for key events (such as when Portable Appliance Testing (PAT) is due) and when documents need to be updated.
30. The system is designed to be convenient and to save practices time, by ensuring that all the documents they require for inspections are readily available in one place. The system will also ensure the faster and more efficient processing of evidence and applications by assessors and the PSS Team.
31. The system is being built by Skillwise who also developed the Nursing Progress Log (NPL) and Professional Development Record (PDR) systems for the RCVS. At present it is expected that the RCVS will be provided with a working version of the system for testing in September.

Fees

32. The Scheme is not run for profit; it must however be self-funding. If the Scheme were to generate any surplus it would be fed back in for the benefit of the Scheme, including marketing to improve recognition amongst the public and profession
33. In order to deliver the new Scheme and its enhanced benefits it will be necessary to increase the annual fees. It is envisaged that the annual fee will be £350 + VAT for Principal Premises and £100 + VAT for Branches. This is an increase from the current cost of £244 + VAT for Principal Premises and £62.33 + VAT for Branches.
34. Under the old and new system £34 of price is the Register of Veterinary Practice Premises (RVPP) fee that veterinary practices are required to pay, whether or not they are members of the Scheme. This part of the fee is not subject to VAT.
35. Awards will be charged on the basis of assessor time, which is charged in half-day blocks. It is estimated that it would be possible to inspect two to three Awards per half-day, dependent upon the type of practice and the Awards selected. Assessor time is likely to be charged at £175 + VAT per half-day.
36. It is also expected that there will be an increase to the fees for new joiners (currently £450.83 + VAT).

Transitional Arrangements

37. Upon launch practices will automatically migrate to the new Scheme at their current accreditation level, for example, General Practice – Small Animal.
38. Practices may apply to be inspected for Awards at any time. Routine inspection dates will not change under the new Scheme and practices do not need to delay or bring forward their routine inspection in order to be inspected for Awards. The Scheme will endeavour to make assessors available for those practices that wish to apply to be inspected for Awards outside their routine inspection cycle.

Consultation

39. Between 9 February 2015 and 24 March 2015 the RCVS consulted on the proposals for the new Scheme. This consultation did not seek feedback on the new structure on the principle of the introduction of the Awards as the new Scheme was built upon the responses we received to the 2012 Concept Note (consultation), feedback from current members of the Scheme and extensive input from the veterinary representative bodies through the Practice Standards Group (PSG). Instead, this final stage of the consultation process focused on the details of the Awards and the weightings attributed to the clauses in the Awards section.
40. There were 98 individual responses to the online consultation and a further 15 responses were received by email. Broadly speaking the consultation responses were supportive of the direction the Scheme was taking, the introduction of the Awards and the greater emphasis on outcomes and behaviours. Reoccurring concerns were expressed, however, in relation to the public awareness and understanding, and the ability of the RCVS to effectively market the Scheme.

41. The full responses to the online consultation are available at Annex D. Please note that some pages have been removed from the document. These pages simply reported upon how people navigated through the document and were the result of the way the consultation was set up to allow users to navigate to those sections that were relevant to them. They do not contain any feedback and have been removed in order to aid the Committee's review of the document.
42. The collated responses received by email are available at Annex C.
43. Over three days between 25-27 March, a team lead by Jacqui Molyneux (Chair, Practice Standards Group), considered all of the feedback in relation to the Small Animal Modules and indicated a number of areas to be amended to take account of the comments received.
44. Practice Standards Group met on 1 April to consider the results of the Consultation and suggested amendments, and to decide on additional changes in response to the consultation feedback.
45. Annex A provides an overview of the responses to the general consultation questions and highlight where PSG has proposed making amendments. Whilst Annex B provides the draft Small Animal Modules which have been updated in light of the consultation. Please note, however, that there are some tracked comments in this document where changes are still being considered by PSG.
46. A further meeting on Practice Standards Group will be held on 20 April to consider amendments to the Equine and Farm Animal Modules. In the main these will mirror the amendments to the Small Animal Modules. These will be sent to the Committee for consideration as soon as they are completed and the Committee will have the opportunity to provide comments and feedback electronically.

PSS Rules

47. The proposed changes to the Scheme and in particular the introduction of the Awards and IT system necessitate an update to the rules of the Scheme. The Committee is invited to consider the amended rules as presented in Annex E.

Decisions required

48. The Committee is invited to review the proposals for the new Scheme and the proposals for amendment following the consultation exercise, together with the proposed new rules, with a view to recommending their approval to RCVS Council.