Council Meeting

Thursday, 23 January 2020 at 10:00 am to be held at the RCVS, Belgravia House, 62/64 Horseferry Road, London SW1P 2AF

(Lunch break will be taken at suitable point in the agenda)

Agenda

1. President’s introduction
   Oral report

2. Apologies for absence
   Oral report

3. Declarations of interest
   Oral report

4. Minutes of the meeting held on 7 November 2019
   Refer to Council minutes

5. Matters arising
   a. Obituaries
      Oral report
   b. Council correspondence
      Oral report
   c. CEO update
      Oral report

6. Matters for decision by Council and for report (unclassified items)
   a. Under care/out of hours review – update
      Oral report
   b. Addendum to Practice Standards Scheme Rules re: Data sharing
      Unclassified
   c. Certificate in Advanced Veterinary Practice – updates
      Unclassified
   d. Graduate Outcomes
      Unclassified
   e. Statutory Examination for Membership – re-sit policy
      Unclassified
   f. RCVS Strategic Plan 2020 – 2024
      Unclassified

7. Reports of committees – to note
   a. Advancement of the Professions Committee
      Unclassified
      (Professor D J Argyle)
   b. Audit and Risk Committee
      Confidential
      (Ms E Butler)
   c. Education Committee
      Unclassified
      (Dr S Paterson)
   d. Finance and Resources Committee
      Unclassified
      (Dr C P Sturgess)
8. **Reports of statutory committees – to note**
   a. Preliminary Investigation Committee (Registrar) Unclassified
   b. RVN Preliminary Investigation Committee (Registrar) Unclassified
   c. Disciplinary Committee and RVN Disciplinary Committee (Registrar) Unclassified

9. **Notices of motion**

10. **Questions**

11. **Date of next meeting**
    Thursday, 5 March 2020 at 10:00 am

12. **Matters for decision by Council and for report (confidential items)**
    a. Discretionary Fund report Oral report / Confidential
    b. Estates Strategy – update Confidential
    c. Concept paper re: Professional Conduct System Confidential
    d. Approval of new Legal Assessors Private / Confidential
    e. Audit and Risk Committee Chair Term of Office Confidential

13. **Any other College business**

14. **Risk Register, equality and diversity**

Dawn Wiggins
Secretary, RCVS Council
020 7202 0737
d.wiggins@rcvs.org.uk
Council Meeting

Minutes of the meeting held on Thursday, 7 November 2019 at Belgravia House, 62-64 Horseferry Road, London SW1P 2AF

Members:
Dr N T Connell (President in the Chair)
Dr C J Allen
Professor D J Argyle
Mr C T Barker*
Miss L Belton
Ms A K Boag
Professor D Bray
Professor E Cameron^
Mr J M Castle
Dr D S Chambers*
Ms E K Cox
Professor S Dawson*
Dr M A Donald
Dr J M Dyer
Professor G C W England
Ms L Ford
Ms L V Goodwin*

Dr M O Greene
Professor R A Hammond
Mr D J Leicester
Miss R M Marshall
Professor S A May
Mrs C-L McLaughlan
Dr S Paterson
Mr M L Peaty
Dr C L Scudamore
Professor K Smith
Dr N C Smith*
Dr C P Sturgess
Dr C W Tufnell
Mr T J Walker
Professor J L N Wood*
Ms J S M Worthington

*Absent
^Not in attendance

In attendance:
Mr R Burley  Chief Technology Officer (CTO) (agenda item 8 only)
Ms E C Ferguson  Registrar
Ms L Lockett  CEO
Ms C McCann  Assistant Registrar / Director of Operations (DoO)
Mr F Michaux  Lead Software Developer (agenda item 8 only)

Guests:
Dr S Doherty  Senior Vice-President, British Veterinary Association (BVA) (open session only)
Professor C Proudman  Head of School of Veterinary Medicine, University of Surrey (open session only)
President’s introduction

1. The President extended a warm welcome to guests and outlined the order of the meeting.

2. It was noted that there had been some issues with the Boardpacks system on different operating systems and if members continued to have problems to let the Secretary know who would liaise with the IT Department.

Apologies for absence

3. Apologies for absence were received from:
   - Mr Barker
   - Dr Chambers
   - Professor Dawson
   - Ms Goodwin
   - Dr Smith
   - Professor Wood
   - Miss Middlemiss CVO, Observer

4. Professor Cameron was not in attendance.

Declarations of interest

5. There were no new declarations of interest.

Minutes of the meeting held on 3 October 2019

6. Council had the opportunity to comment on the minutes electronically.

7. The minutes were accepted as a true record of the meeting.

Matters arising

Obituaries

8. There were no written obituaries received.

9. Council and guests stood and observed a minute silence for all members of the College who had passed away since the last meeting, and to reflect upon the forthcoming Armistice Day and all of the troubles that people had faced, and continue to face, worldwide.
Council correspondence and matters for report

RCVS Council Election 2020

10. A notice would shortly go out to members via RCVS e-news, and to those six members who will retire at the 2020 AGM. The deadline for submissions is 5:00 pm on Friday, 31 January 2020. Council were reminded that they were not permitted to nominate anyone to stand for Council and that registered addresses were to be used for the Nomination Form.

Elections for: Vice-President (Junior), Treasurer, and Chairs of Advancement of the Professions, Education and Standards Committees

11. Notices of these elections had been sent to members electronically and also tabled at the meeting. The closing date for these applications is 5:00 pm on Tuesday, 4 February 2020 and the elections would be an agenda item at the March 2020 Council meeting.

Matters for decision or note by Council (unclassified items)

CEO update

12. The CEO outlined the report and stated that it would be the last one in the current format – there would be a new format to coincide with the new Strategic Plan 2020 – 2024. She outlined the work undertaken on:

- Vivet;
- Mind Matters;
- Certification work undertaken with Defra;
- VN Day;
- New Chairs of DC and PIC;
- RCVS awards.

13. There would be some work carried forward from the current plan, some of which will now become more operational; meanwhile other parts will be revitalised as part of the new Strategic Plan. It was noted that there had generally been good progress across the whole of the current Strategic Plan.

14. There were no questions and the report was noted.

Under care review – update

15. The Chair of Standards Committee, Dr Donald, gave an update of the work undertaken since the last Council meeting, that had two key drivers:

- completing the first stage of the process – i.e. gathering evidence - using an external consultancy, in order that this can be independent and robust, and to make sure such evidence was useful; and,

- to do this in as timely a manner as possible.
16. The process to launch a call for evidence had taken time and the decision regarding a research partner was in the final stages. The Committee would meet the following week to discuss proposals; and this would include whether to choose an independent company to undertake the consultation (and any guidance they would need); whether to undertake further tendering; or do the work in-house.

17. It was questioned how in-depth the consultancy’s understanding would be of the veterinary professions and the environment in which the RCVS operates, particularly with regards to the feedback from the call for evidence. It was confirmed this would be taken into account and the College was taking the time to have the discussions to ensure there was clarity and understanding of what was required.

18. Concern was expressed about the perception the College was being slow and the importance of producing interim updates should be considered – it was not that nothing was happening, it was that the profession was not aware of what was happening. It was confirmed that work was being undertaken with the Communication Department to help keep the profession informed.

19. The update was noted.

**Brexit – update**

20. The Registrar updated Council around veterinary certification, and that whilst activity was currently focused on a ‘no deal’ EU exit, this could change in the future.

21. It was questioned whether EU colleagues were kept up to date in the current fractured climate, and made to feel valued. It was confirmed that once the College received clarity and matters progressed within government itself, then the College could communicate further at that time. There were also members of staff and RCVS representatives due to attend the forthcoming Federation of Veterinarians of Europe (FVE) meeting to be held in Brussels the next day, and it was important to remain engaged with Europe – to this end, the College would host the 2020 FVE General Assembly.

22. It was further questioned whether there was any more the College could do with regards Official Veterinarian (OV) training as it was cumbersome to revalidate, or to encourage its members to become OVs. It was confirmed that the College always encouraged its members to try different career paths. The College was, however, unable to define the role of the OV, as that was the responsibility of the Animal and Plant Health Agency (APHA); whilst there was a lot of work ongoing on certification matters, there was not much more the College could do currently.

23. The update was noted.

**Discretionary Fund**

24. The Director of Operations (DoO) reported that there was a Discretionary Fund of £300,000 as part of the annual budget, for any new project not already covered within the annual budget and there was a process of approval for any application. The following projects had been approved that totalled £226,000, leaving a £74,000 balance in the current budget:
- 2019 Surveys of the Professions;
- review of Advanced Practitioner status;
- new HR IT system;
- new telephone handsets and a more integrated approach to communications;
- research relating to proposals for a VN prescriber role.

25. The report was noted.

Report of committee – to note

Veterinary Nurses Council (VNC)

26. The Chair, VNC, introduced the report and highlighted the following items:

- Harper Adams University (HAU) had been granted accreditation for post-qualification Certificates in Advanced Veterinary Nursing in four separate disciplines, with a Level 6 Graduate Certificate and a Level 7 Postgraduate Certificate in each discipline;

- VN Futures had a session at the British Veterinary Nursing Association (BVNA) Congress that was well received; focus had been on school ambassadors and One Health;

- the VN Day held at London Zoo on 17 October had been a fantastic event, and thanks given to the Veterinary Nursing and Communications Departments.

27. The differences in the Levels of post-qualification Certificates was clarified and it was noted that it was up to the course provider to decide on the topics it covered.

28. It was further noted that encouragement was given for offering placements at the RCVS to VN students and, whilst there may be some issues fitting this in with the clinical training hours requirement, it was something that should be investigated. It was further noted that care had to be taken that students were not in a work placement for more than 52 weeks.

29. The report was noted.

Presentation

Mr Bray joined the meeting.

1CPD app

30. The Chief Technology Officer (CTO) outlined the new reflection-based Continuing Professional Development (CPD) platform that the College intended to launch in 2020, with thanks to stakeholders who had been assisting with a testing phase.
31. The app would help members of the profession to plan / do / record / and reflect on CPD. The planning function would also allow for spontaneous CPD; and the reflection area was able to capture free text and elements of tagging, as well as overall objectives within an individual’s approach to CPD. The purpose of reflection was to feed back into future planning, to become a continuous circle.

32. Historically there had been a number of support tools for members, that did not feed into the annual renewal process:

- Personal Development Record (PDR) for vets and veterinary nurses;
- Professional Development Phase (PDP) for graduates;
- Student Experience Log (SEL) / Nursing Progress Log (NPL) for students.

33. The new app was a platform to bring all of the reflective learning together and would integrate with the ‘My Account’ area provided 1CPD was used to record the information. It was primarily a digital experience by a smart phone and backed up by a web experience for those members that did not want to use a phone app. The app and web experience would go ‘live’ mid-January and would be available to any vet or veterinary nurse that wished to use it – it would be good practice to use the app prior to reflective CPD becoming mandatory in 2022.

34. The Lead Software Developer (LSD) demonstrated the various functions of the app before inviting questions.

35. Questions and comments included but were not limited to:

- at the Veterinary Defence Society (VDS) reunion meetings there had been confusion with new graduates around PDP;
  - PDP capability would be integrated into the 1CPD app as part of the rollout of its ‘Phase 2’ release in the middle of 2020, relevant data from the existing system would migrate and there would be explanatory text at that time;

- it should be emphasised that there was no CPD requirement when in the PDP phase, so there should not be a double entry;

- on the PDR there was currently the ability to share links with other people, would this be built in?
  - there would be some sharing capabilities; including the use of Quick Response (QR) codes (matrix bar codes);

- would the CPD already undertaken be transferred over?
  - yes, this would be done automatically;

- this app would be acceptable to all veterinary schools;
- with all of the work that had gone in to this app, was there any opportunity for using it in other areas, for example, in the medical CPD sphere where the College could potentially recoup some of the costs of development?
  
  o focus was currently on the College’s own vets and veterinary nurses and the enrichment of all partners / stakeholders, however, it would be a shame not to be able to share the app at a later stage and bring funds in to further improve the service for its members, so this would be considered;

- could the app duplicate from other areas in terms of functionality of text sites for CPD? i.e. for a certificate showing CPD had been undertaken;
  
  o phase 1 could not currently absorb from third party systems; the platform would allow data in and out, that was the technology that would underpin and have a share tool – owned by the members themselves. One challenge was the myriad of different places where CPD could be gained so there was a fairness aspect to consider in terms of building partnerships. Work could be undertaken to allow data to be exported outwards but resources needed to be considered and the IT team would need to refer back to the CPD Working Group on such policy matters;

  o there was discussion around the way data might be used; it was emphasised that there would be very clear information in the app on this; it would emphasise consent and on when, why, whether the member consented to sharing;

  o the CPD audit was an annual ‘capture’ of information, so would have to be retrospective for the previous year; it was hoped that when the system was up and running the College would be able to see trends in the types of CPD undertaken and monitor that over, for example, a ten-year period, but this data would be anonymised;

  o there would also be automatic reminders to do CPD if there had been a prolonged period of, say, three or six months, without recording any, to help prevent members falling behind with their CPD; the language around reminders would be carefully considered;

  o Council was reassured that active levels of discussions were also ongoing at the Working Group and feedback from the trial groups in particular re: sharing. Transparency and permissions around CPD were really important, and the College would be explicit about how the data would be collected and used;

- had Advanced Practitioners and Specialists been considered?
  
  o yes, there would be a dedicated field for both groups and guidance would be included;

- at the time of the launch, would a video guide be included?
  
  o yes, it would be part of the information provided.
36. The President thanked the CTO, LSD and stakeholders who had been testing the system for their impressive work.

**Notices of Motion**

37. There were no notices of motion received.

**Questions**

38. There were no questions received.

**Date of next meeting**

39. The date of the next meeting was Thursday, 23 January 2020, commencing at 10:00 am.

**Risk Register, equality and diversity**

40. There were no items highlighted from the open session of the meeting.

[Pages 9 to 17 confidential to Council Members ONLY]

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<th>Meeting</th>
<th>Council</th>
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<tr>
<td>Date</td>
<td>23 January 2020</td>
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<tr>
<td>Title</td>
<td>Addendum to the Practice Standards Scheme rules in relation to data sharing</td>
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<tr>
<td>Classification</td>
<td>Unclassified</td>
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<tr>
<td>Summary</td>
<td>This paper outlines a proposed amendment to the PSS rules regarding the sharing of data between individual practices belonging to corporate groups and the relevant centralised head or support office.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Decision</td>
<td>RCVS Council is invited to approve the enclosed wording to be added in to the Practice Standards Scheme Rules, regarding data sharing between veterinary practices and RCVS, as recommended by Standards Committee.</td>
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| Author     | Lily Lipman  
Senior Manager, Practice Standards Scheme  
Tel: 020 7202 0754  
l.lipman@rcvs.org.uk |
Amendment the Practice Standards Scheme rules in relation to data sharing

Introduction

1. The Practice Standards Scheme has member practices that belong to corporate groups with varying types of business model. While some are owned centrally by the corporation, others are owned partially by joint venture partners. Some business models maintain independent looking and feeling practices, while others refurbish and re-brand the premises with corporate livery during the merger phase. Within this complex landscape, the RCVS is tasked with producing a uniform and transparent policy that complies with all data protection and marketing legislation and best practice.

2. The RCVS Practice Standards Scheme (PSS) team have traditionally shared ‘conditions letters’ which contain the list of deficits the practice will have to amend in order to achieve accreditation, and the deadline requirements for evidence of these amendments, for individual practices with the corporate head/support office or principal premises via email. It is a mutually beneficial arrangement: the corporates benefit from this information from a planning and logistics point of view; it allows support offices to prime the practices to be ready for assessment, it provides the practice with the relevant support, and it also allows larger corporations to track themes and trends in their practices’ deficiencies. Additionally, this data sharing provides support for the PSS team; it allows a single point of contact for multi-site overview, it primes practices to be ready for their assessment and it removes some of the administration work from the team with regards to following up of deadlines and evidence.

Background to the proposed amendment

3. At present, the Scheme does not have a written policy on data sharing. Instead, sharing conditions letters has been done by convention, rather than by a formal, written arrangement.

4. Following a discussion with the RCVS Governance Officer, it was recommended that the PSS team cease to provide this data by email and instead give the relevant head or support office access to the documents via Stanley as it would be more secure and less prone to accidental data breaches (for example, sending to the wrong email address). During the same period of time, the PSS team received enquiries from practices regarding the nature of data sharing between the RCVS and their head offices. As mentioned above, there are several different types of business model in larger veterinary corporates and the RCVS may not know the exact business relationship between a premises and the head office, and how that may change over time.

5. The nature of the data in question is a mixture of non-sensitive personal data, for example names of staff, and non personal data, which can include commercially sensitive information. The RCVS may process/share the personal data in order to facilitate the running of the Scheme without consent of the individuals by virtue of exemptions contained within the General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR), however the position is less straight forward regarding the non-personal data. As such, it has been advised that the Rules should be amended to include reference to data sharing and that this amendment should be publicised so that the position is clear to both new and existing members of the scheme.

The proposed amendment

6. In light of the above, the following amendment to the PSS Rules is proposed:
'By becoming a member of the Scheme, the practice accepts that any of its data related to the RCVS Practice Standards Scheme may be shared with the parent practice, or, in the cases of larger businesses, the head office, support office, or equivalent. The type of data shared may be anything from nature and dates of deadlines, to information on practice deficiencies. Where this data sharing is deemed inappropriate by the practice, it is the practice’s responsibility to contact the RCVS in order to manage the ongoing data sharing policy.'

7. This amendment was approved by the Standards Committee on 11 November 2019, subject to ratification by Council.

Decision required

8. Council is therefore asked to approve the proposed amendment to the PSS rules, as recommended by the Standards Committee.
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<tr>
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| Title   | Certificate in Advanced Veterinary Practice  
          Rules and Accreditation Agreement |
| Classification | Unclassified |
| Summary | Universities wishing to provide the assessment of modules for the Certificate in Advanced Veterinary Practice (CertAVP) must first sign the CertAVP Accreditation Agreement.  
Upon review, this accreditation agreement was found to reference the CertAVP bye-laws made in 2006. The bye-laws the College currently work from were made in 2012 in exercise of powers contained within Article 21 of the 1967 Supplemental Charter. When the new Supplemental Charter came into force in 2015, it repealed the 1967 Charter and all earlier bye-laws including the CertAVP ones from 2012.  
To ensure the documents are current and comply with the Supplemental Charter we have updated the CertAVP By-Laws to become “Rules” and updated the Accreditation Agreement to reflect this. |
| Decisions required | Council is asked to recommend to Council to approve the attached “CertAVP Rules” and “Accreditation Agreement”. |
| Attachments | Certificate in Advanced Veterinary Practice Rules  
Accreditation Agreement for Provision of module assessment for the Certificate in Advanced Veterinary Practice |
| Author | Britta Crawford  
Education Manager  
020 7202 0777  
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Certificate in Advanced Veterinary Practice Rules

Made by the Council of the Royal College of Veterinary Surgeons on XXXX, to come into force on XXXX

Citation

1. These rules may be cited as the Certificate in Advanced Veterinary Practice Rules 2020

Interpretation

2. In these rules:-

   - "accredited" means approved to assess one or more modules comprised in the Certificate Scheme; “accreditation agreement” means a legally-enforceable agreement in writing entered into between the College and a university under which the university is and continues to be accredited;

   - “accredited university” means a university in respect of which there is an accreditation agreement in force;

   - “approval” means approval on behalf of the College by the Council, the Committee or any board or sub-committee of the Committee with delegated powers to issue such approval;

   - “assessment” means assessment by an accredited university of the performance of a candidate in a module provided by that accredited university;

   - “candidate” means a person seeking to enter or undertaking the Certificate Programme;

   - “Certificate” means the Certificate of Advanced Veterinary Practice;

   - “Certificate Programme” means the process of obtaining credits in modules assessed by accredited universities;

   - “Certificate Scheme” means the scheme for the accumulation of credits for modules to qualify for the award of the Certificate;

   - “Committee” means the Education Committee;

   - “credit” means recognition of the satisfactory completion of a module by an assessment process;

   - “designated species or subject area” means a species or area of veterinary practice designated by the Committee as a species or area of veterinary practice in relation to which a candidate may specialise in completing the Certificate Programme;

   - “enrolment” means notification to the College of a candidate’s wish to participate in the Certificate Programme;
- “enrolment form” means the form prescribed for the purpose of enrolment;

- “module” means an element of the Certificate Programme, designated by reference to a particular area of veterinary practice, veterinary medicine or veterinary surgery;

- “part-time equivalent” means the part-time equivalent of the relevant period of full-time practice calculated in accordance with rules made by the Committee;

- “prescribed” means prescribed by the Committee;

- “Registrar” means the Registrar of the College appointed in accordance with Section 9 of the Act;

- “synoptic assessment” means an overall assessment by the College, or in such other manner as the College shall approve, of the performance in the relevant modules of a candidate wishing to be awarded a Certificate in a designated species or subject area; and

- “university” means a university in the United Kingdom recognised as such by the relevant Government Department.

Award of Certificate

3. The Certificate shall be awarded by the College under the powers in Article 5 of the Supplemental Charter to a candidate who has satisfied the requirements of these rules.

Objective of the Certificate

4. (1) The objective of the Certificate shall be –

(a) to provide a modular route to a recognised level of attainment for practising veterinary surgeons, indicating a level of competence and ability to deliver a consistently high standard of practice to their clients; and

(b) to provide a structure for continuing professional development and lifelong learning.

(2) The arrangements for the award of the Certificate and the interpretation of these rules shall be such as to further and be consistent with the objective set out in paragraph (1).

Standard of the Certificate

5. The standard of attainment for the award of the Certificate shall be equivalent to the “M” level set by the QAA in the national qualifications framework, in accordance with the level description set out in Schedule 2.
Accreditation

6. The College may enter into an accreditation agreement with a university, whether or not the university offers a veterinary degree which is recognised under the Act for the purposes of registration.

Enrolment for the Certificate Programme

7. (1) A candidate shall be eligible to enrol for the Certificate Programme if they –

(a) are registered under the Act or holds a qualification which would entitle them to be so registered;

(b) have completed the Professional Development Phase of post-graduate training, or have been practising as a veterinary surgeon for at least one year or its part-time equivalent; and

(c) have paid such enrolment fee as may be prescribed.

(2) A candidate shall enrol for the Certificate Programme by completing and submitting to the Registrar an enrolment form.

(3) The information to be supplied by a candidate for the purpose of enrolment shall comprise –

(a) the name, address, index number and telephone number of the candidate, together with their e-mail address, if applicable;

(b) the title and date of conferment of the veterinary qualification which would entitle them to be so registered, if the candidate is not registered under the Act;

(c) an indication whether the candidate is enrolling to complete the Certificate Programme as a whole or is intending to complete one or more individual modules only; and

(d) such other information as may be prescribed.

(4) The Registrar shall acknowledge the enrolment form submitted by each candidate and if satisfied as to the eligibility of the candidate shall confirm that the candidate is enrolled for the Certificate Programme.

(5) A candidate shall notify the Registrar of any additional modules they are undertaking, or proposes to undertake, and of any modules which they are no longer undertaking.

(6) Enrolment of a candidate shall lapse after ten years have expired from the date on which the Registrar confirms enrolment in accordance with (3).
(7) The Registrar may make arrangements for enrolment to be carried out electronically and if such arrangements have been made the provisions of these rules shall be interpreted accordingly.

Completion of modules

8. A candidate shall complete a module and be entitled to the award of a credit for that module if they receive a satisfactory assessment from an accredited university providing that module.

Award of credits

9. A candidate who completes a module shall be entitled to receive a certificate of credit issued by the accredited university which carried out the assessment.

Entitlement to award of the Certificate

10. (1) A candidate shall be eligible to be awarded the Certificate if they –

(a) are registered under the Act or hold a qualification which would entitle them to be so registered;

(b) have practised as a veterinary surgeon for a total of not less than three years, or its part-time equivalent;

(c) are currently enrolled for the Certificate Programme;

(d) have completed the Certificate Programme by being satisfactorily assessed in such number and combination of modules as are specified in the Certificate Scheme set out in Schedule 1;

(e) have, if applying for the Certificate in a designated species or subject area and if required by the Committee to do so, satisfactorily undergone a synoptic assessment; and

(f) have paid such fee for the award of the Certificate as may be prescribed.

(2) An eligible candidate wishing to be awarded the Certificate shall apply to the Registrar accordingly, and shall supply such documentary evidence of their eligibility, including production of certificates of credit, as the Registrar shall require.

(3) The Committee may require such further information as it shall specify to be supplied by a candidate for the purpose of verifying eligibility for the award of the Certificate, for record-keeping or quality assurance purposes, or such other reason as it shall think fit.

Default and waiver powers

11. (1) The Committee may in exceptional circumstances and notwithstanding the foregoing provisions of these rules make
arrangements for assessment of a candidate undertaking a particular module to be carried out directly by the College.

(2) The Committee may waive the provisions of these rules in any individual case where it considers it reasonably necessary to do so in order to avoid serious hardship or injustice to any candidate.

Form of Certificate

12. The Certificate when awarded shall be signed by the President and Registrar and be substantially in the following form –

“THIS IS TO CERTIFY THAT……………………… has fulfilled the necessary requirements and has been awarded the Certificate in Advanced Veterinary Practice, having completed the following subject modules –

[Titles of modules completed by the candidate to be stated]"

Use of post-nominal letters

13. (1) A candidate who has been awarded the Certificate may use the post-nominal letters “CertAVP”.

(2) A candidate who has been awarded the Certificate in a designated subject or species area may use the post-nominal letters “CertAVP” with the addition in parentheses of such letters representing the appropriate subject or species area as the Committee shall decide.
SCHEDULE 1

CERTIFICATE SCHEME

1. A candidate shall be eligible to be awarded the Certificate if they have –
   (1) obtained 60 or more credits in a combination of modules in accordance with the following requirements of this Schedule; or
   (2) have satisfied such modified requirements as may be prescribed.

2. Where modified requirements have been prescribed for eligibility to be awarded the Certificate, this Schedule shall be regarded as amended accordingly.

3. The Certificate Programme shall consist of the following specific modules, which shall normally attract the number of credits shown in parentheses –
   (1) Foundations of Advanced Veterinary Practice (10 Credits)
   (2) Small Animal Practice (10 credits)
   (3) Production Animal Practice (10 credits)
   (4) Equine Practice (10 credits)
   (5) Laboratory Animal Science (10 credits)
   (6) Veterinary Public Health (10 credits)
   (7) Zoological Medicine (10 credits)

4. Additional modules, designated by reference to broad areas of veterinary practice or specialist branches of veterinary medicine and surgery and which shall each normally carry 10 credits, may be assessed by accredited universities, subject to the prior approval of the College.

5. Subject to paragraph 6, in order to complete the Certificate Programme, a candidate shall complete –
   (1) the Professional Skills Module;
   (2) the Clinical Skills Modules; and
   (3) at least one module drawn from those listed in paragraphs 3(3) – 3(8), together with any other additional modules assessed in accordance with paragraph 4.

6. A candidate for the Certificate in a designated species or subject area shall complete -
(1) the Professional Skills Module;

(2) the Clinical Skills Module; and

(3) such other modules as may be prescribed.
THE ROYAL COLLEGE OF VETERINARY SURGEONS

ACCREDITATION AGREEMENT FOR PROVISION OF MODULE ASSESSMENT FOR THE CERTIFICATE IN ADVANCED VETERINARY PRACTICE

This Agreement is made the………day of… .................................

BETWEEN –

(1) The Royal College of Veterinary Surgeons, of Belgravia House, 62-64 Horseferry Road, London SW1P 2AF (“the College”)

AND

(2) The University of……………………………………………… (“the University”)

(together known as “the Parties”)

WHEREBY it is agreed as follows –

1. Interpretation

1.1 In this Agreement, unless otherwise specified, words and expressions bear the same meanings as in the Certificate of Advanced Veterinary Practice Rules made by the Council of the College on………………………………………………

2. Accreditation

2.1 The College agrees subject to the terms of this Agreement to accredit the University to assess for the purpose of the Certificate in Advanced Veterinary Practice the performance by candidates for the Certificate in modules provided by the University, in consideration of which the University agrees to provide assessment facilities for candidates wishing to complete those modules and has paid to the College the accreditation fee of
£…….(…….pounds) receipt whereof the College hereby acknowledges.

3. **Modules covered by this Agreement**

3.1 The modules to which this Agreement applies shall be those included in the Certificate in Advanced Veterinary Practice Programme, set out in the First Schedule to this Agreement, subject to any additions, amendments or deletions agreed in writing from time to time by the College and the University, in which event the Schedule shall be treated as modified accordingly.

4. **Assessment**

4.1 Modules are to be assessed against criteria and standards that have been agreed by the College.

5. **Incorporation of Application Form**

5.1 The University agrees that its performance of its obligations under this Agreement shall be in accordance with the statements made in its application form for accreditation signed on………………..20XXby……………………………………………… on behalf of the University (“the Application Form”), the contents of which shall be regarded as incorporated in and treated as part of this Agreement.

6. **College Rules for the Administration of the Modular Certificate in Advanced Veterinary Practice**

6.1 The College and the University agree to use their best endeavours to perform their obligations under this Agreement in accordance with Rules for the administration of the modular Certificate in Advanced Veterinary Practice laid down by the College (“the College Administration Rules”), the text of which is set out in the Second Schedule to this Agreement, and where any matter in connection with this Agreement is not regulated by the specific terms herein, it shall so far as possible be governed by the provisions in the College Administration Rules.

7. **Facilities and support for candidates**

7.1 The University agrees to provide academic facilities and other support to candidates on the same terms as it does to other post-graduate students in the University undertaking courses of a similar nature.

8. **Certificates of credit**

8.1 The University agrees to award certificates of credit to candidates completing modules provided and assessed by the University and to supply to and keep the College supplied with specimen copies of such certificates in their current form.

9. **Quality Assurance**
9.1 The University agrees that it will apply its existing postgraduate quality assurance arrangements to all aspects of the Certificate in Advanced Veterinary Practice assessment, and where applicable, tuition and the process of awarding certificates of credit.

10. Appeal

10.1 The University agrees that candidates shall be entitled to such appeal rights in connection with assessment for certificates of credit as apply generally within the University.

11. Recognition of credits awarded by other universities

11.1 The University agrees that it will consider recognising credits awarded by other universities accredited by the College so far as may be necessary for the purpose of admitting candidates to any module provided by the University or for the purpose of counting towards the award of any post-graduate degree, diploma or other qualification awarded by the University, and the College agrees to act as a clearing-house to validate claims for such credits if required.

12. Monitoring

12.1 The College shall be entitled to take steps to monitor the operation of this Agreement for the purpose of ensuring compliance, quality assurance and proper record-keeping, and in particular (but without limitation) shall be entitled to require the University to supply such information, whether in writing or electronically or by way of personal interview, as it may reasonably require.

12.2 We will collect certain elements of personal data when administering the Annual Quality Assurance Report. This data will include the name of module leader, assessors and external examiner. In order to be compliant with the General Data Protection Regulations and Data Protection 2018. We will process this data on a public task basis. And will store on our secure servers for no longer than is necessary. If you have any queries in relation to how the RCVS Process data please see our privacy policy or contact us at education@rcvs.org.uk

13. Copyright

13.1 The University agrees that it shall not claim copyright or any other form of intellectual property rights over the standards defined in any particular module which is provided and assessed in accordance with this Agreement.

14. Use of College logo

14.1 The College agrees that the University shall be entitled to use in printed and electronic form in connection with the provision of and assessment for modules such badge, logo or design representative of the College as shall be designated by the College in writing for the purpose.
14.2 The University shall not be entitled to use for any purpose whatsoever the coat of arms of the College as granted by the College of Arms on 1 July 1845.

15. **Duration of accreditation**

15.1 Accreditation under this Agreement shall run from the date of this Agreement until terminated in accordance with this Agreement.

16. **Termination**

16.1 This Agreement shall terminate immediately if the University ceases to be recognised by the relevant Government Department in the United Kingdom.

16.2 Either Party may by written notice to the other Party immediately terminate this Agreement where the other Party has materially breached this Agreement and has failed to remedy that breach within 30 days of the date of service of a written notice specifying the breach and requiring that it be remedied.

16.3 This Agreement may be terminated by either Party giving not less than six months' notice in writing to the other.

16.4 In the event of termination in accordance with this Clause, all outstanding rights and obligations under this Agreement shall not be prejudiced or affected.

17. **Whole agreement**

17.1 The Parties acknowledge that this Agreement, including the Application Form and the College Rules, comprises the whole agreement between them relating to the accreditation of modules for the Certificate in Advanced Veterinary Practice.

18. **Severance**

18.1 If any provision within this Agreement is found to be void, voidable or otherwise unenforceable, the provisions of the rest of this Agreement shall survive unless the original intentions of the Parties are as a consequence defeated, in which circumstances the College shall be entitled to terminate this Agreement.

19. **Assignment**

19.1 This Agreement is specific to the University only and is not capable of being assigned.

20. **Notices**

20.1 Any notice to be served on either Party by the other shall be sent by prepaid
recorded delivery or registered post to the address of the relevant party shown at
the head of this Agreement and shall be deemed to have been received by the
addressee within 72 hours.

21. **Proper Law and Jurisdiction**

21.1 Any dispute arising in connection with this Agreement shall be determined and
governed by English law.

22. **Waiver**

22.1 The failure by either Party to enforce at any time or for any period any of the terms of
this Agreement shall not constitute a waiver of them or of the right at any time to
enforce all the terms of this Agreement.

23. **Headings**

23.1 Headings contained in this Agreement are for reference purposes only and should
not be incorporated into this Agreement.

24. **Dispute resolution**

24.1 The Parties shall use good faith efforts to resolve any dispute arising out of this
Agreement. In the event that any dispute cannot be resolved it shall be settled by
the Parties by mediation in accordance with the Model Mediation Procedure (“the
Model Procedure”) laid down by the Centre for Dispute Resolution (“CEDR”), which
shall be commenced by one Party giving notice to the other Party requesting a
mediation in accordance with the Model Procedure, with a copy to CEDR. The
mediation shall be before a single Mediator agreed by the Parties.

24.2 If the mediation referred to in Clause 21.1 fails to produce a resolution of the dispute
satisfactory to both Parties, or if the Parties cannot agree upon a Mediator the
dispute shall be referred to the arbitration of a single arbitrator to be agreed by the
Parties or in default of agreement to be appointed by the President for the time being
of the Chartered Institute of Arbitrators, such arbitration to be conducted in
accordance with the Arbitration Acts.

IN WITNESS whereof the College and the University have caused this Agreement to be
signed by their duly authorised representatives on the date first appearing

SIGNED on behalf of the
ROYAL COLLEGE OF
VETERINARY SURGEONS

..............................................

[Registrar]
SIGNED on behalf of the UNIVERSITY
OF...........................

..........................................................

[Title of signatory]
FIRST SCHEDULE

MODULES TO BE PROVIDED AND ASSESSED BY THE UNIVERSITY UNDER THIS AGREEMENT

[Titles and other details to be listed]
SECOND SCHEDULE

COLLEGE RULES REGARDING THE PROVISION AND ASSESSMENT OF MODULES
The Postgraduate Certificate in Advanced Veterinary Practice
Rules for the administration of the modular system

Background
This document sets out the detailed rules for the administration of the modular Certificate in Advanced Veterinary Practice. It supplements the bye-laws agreed by RCVS Council.

It has been written for the guidance of universities and other organisations and individuals who are planning their involvement with the scheme. The rules were first developed by RCVS’s Professional Development Sub-Committee and endorsed in February 2006 by RCVS’s Specialisation and Further Education Committee. Bye-laws, based on these rules, were agreed by Council on 1 June 2006. The rules have been updated in February 2015 to reflect the implementation of the new Charter.

The aim and level of the qualification

Aim
1. The aim of the qualification is to provide a modular route to a recognised level of attainment for practising veterinary surgeons, so that they may perform as competent independent practitioners, delivering a consistently high standard of practice to their clients.

2. The framework also aims to provide a structure for continuing professional development and lifelong learning.

Level
3. The qualification is set at the Quality Assurance Agency’s (QAA) level 7 in the Framework for higher education qualifications. The following level descriptor is adapted from the QAA definition of qualifications at this level, and should be used as an indicator of the level required by all modules in the qualification.

Candidates will need to demonstrate:
• a thorough understanding of the knowledge base and a critical awareness of developments at the forefront of their area of professional practice;
• a comprehensive understanding of techniques applicable to their own area of practice;
• originality in the application of knowledge, together with a practical understanding of how established techniques of research and clinical enquiry are used to create and interpret knowledge in their professional area;
• conceptual understanding that enables them to;
  - evaluate critically current literature and research in their professional area and
  - evaluate clinical methodologies and techniques, and develop critiques of them and, where appropriate to propose new approaches to professional practice.
Typically, holders of the qualification will be able to:

- deal with complex issues in an organised and creative manner, make sound judgements in the absence of complete data, and communicate their conclusions clearly to veterinary colleagues and to non-veterinary audiences, including clients;
- demonstrate self direction and originality in tackling and solving problems, and act autonomously in planning and implementing tasks in their professional area of work;
- continue to advance their knowledge and understanding, and to develop new skills to a high level;

and will have the qualities and transferable skills necessary for professional veterinary work requiring:

- the exercise of initiative and personal responsibility;
- decision-making in complex and unpredictable situations; and
- the independent learning ability required for continuing professional development.

The framework of qualifications

4. The framework of postgraduate qualifications at Annex 1 shows where the RCVS Postgraduate Certificate in Advanced Veterinary Practice sits in relation to other qualifications, and the possible progression and transfer routes that may be open to candidates. The framework has been designed to allow progression via RCVS qualifications, university postgraduate degrees or residency based programmes such as European Diplomas. None of the routes are mutually exclusive and the intention is that credits achieved as part of the RCVS modular certificate could be used towards university postgraduate degrees and vice versa.

The structure of the qualification

5. The structure of the qualification is set out at Annex 2. It is based on a credit accumulation and transfer system, where 1 credit equates to approximately 10 hours of activity by the candidate, and 60 credits are required for the full qualification.

6. The ‘notional’ 10 hours per credit includes time spent on courses, private study and research as well as time spent putting together case books, essays and other assessment-related work. This is not a rigid time limit but should be used as guidance when modules are being designed. Some candidates may need to spend more or less time on their modules depending on their experience. Most modules are designed to be worth 10 credits requiring around 100 hours of study time.

7. Modules may be taken on their own, or in combination with others. Candidates are free to take modules in any order, but it is strongly suggested that candidates take the A and B modules first as they provide good preparation for the C modules. Modules are divided into groups of A, B and C modules, with C modules offering a wide choice of subjects/species areas.

8. To achieve the full qualification, candidates must undertake the ‘key skills’ module which is intended to cover topics and objectives common to all areas of veterinary practice. The ‘A’ module - Foundations of Advanced Veterinary Practice (A-FAVP.1) is worth 10 credits and
covers topics which RCVS considers are essential, regardless of the subject area in which the individual works. At least one other full ‘B’ module (usually 10 credits) must also be completed, covering a broad area of practice. Candidates may make up the remainder of their credits either through a combination of broad based ‘B’ modules and/or ‘C’ modules (10 credits each), depending on their interests or what is of most relevance to the area in which they work.

9. Provided the required A and B modules have been completed, candidates may chose any combination of modules they wish, and this will entitle them to apply for the Postgraduate Certificate in Advanced Veterinary Practice (CertAVP).

10. Alternatively, candidates may follow a prescribed combination of modules to lead to a CertAVP with a designated title, such as Small Animal Practice, Dermatology, Animal Welfare, etc. (CertAVP[SAP]). The RCVS has defined the combination of modules that are required for particular titles. Alternatively, for some subjects, candidates may propose a combination of modules that they believe would warrant a particular subject/species designation. The decision on whether to add a new title to those already available will be taken by the RCVS.

Accreditation of Universities

The assessment of candidates

11. Apart from some exceptional cases, RCVS does not itself undertake the assessment of individual modules but instead devolves responsibility for this to accredited universities. RCVS encourages universities to integrate the RCVS framework of modules with their own postgraduate awards in order to give candidates a wide range of progression pathways to postgraduate qualifications.

12. RCVS accreditation is only open to universities. This recognises their experience in running assessment and quality assurance systems, as well as the fact that they are publicly accountable institutions.

13. Candidates who complete the required number of modules for the CertAVP through accredited universities are entitled to apply for the full qualification certificate from RCVS. However, for certificates with a designated title (e.g. CertAVP[Dermatology]), candidates also need to undertake a final ‘synoptic’ assessment in addition to the assessment of individual modules. Synoptic assessments are undertaken by RCVS, and by universities that have been approved by RCVS to run them.

General Principles

14. Universities are able to apply for accreditation by RCVS to assess modules forming part of the RCVS framework for the Postgraduate Certificate in Advanced Veterinary Practice. Accreditation is given to the assessment and quality assurance arrangements for the module(s), and not for any associated course that the university may wish to run.

15. The accreditation of a university to assess modules takes into account the university’s general quality assurance (QA) arrangements for the awards, as well as their proposals for assessing the modules. Where assessment is linked to courses, information will be sought on how the
course will be delivered so that information can be provided for potential candidates, but RCVS will not accredit the course delivery per se.

16. Universities are required to submit an application form for accreditation and an accreditation fee, and provide information and assurances about their assessment and QA systems, as well as information on how they plan to assess each module they wish to offer.

17. A wide range of course delivery methods are allowed and encouraged, including distance learning and flexible part time provision. Modules may be delivered through a variety of courses, and offered singly or in combination to form an integrated course. Where modules are integrated, however, the university must be able to issue certificates of credit for single modules if requested by the candidate, and report achievement of single modules to RCVS.

18. Universities may work with other non-university organisations in the delivery of courses and assessment of modules. However, assessment of modules must be within the university’s quality assurance system, or within the veterinary school’s QA system which must be in line with the main university’s QA system, although examiners may be drawn from all sectors, as applies to existing HE qualifications.

19. Modules may be those developed by the RCVS, or may in some circumstances be developed by the university or other organisations.

20. Modules may form part of other qualifications awarded by the university, for example Masters’ degrees.

21. Where an accredited university offers courses as well as assessment towards a module or modules, it will also be required to allow access to assessment to external candidates who have not been enrolled on the university course. This is to enable those who wish, to undertake private studies to achieve credit points towards the RCVS certificate.

22. Candidates are free to gain credits from a number of different universities. When the required number of modules in the correct combination has been achieved, RCVS will issue successful candidates with the Postgraduate Certificate of Advanced Veterinary Practice. Universities which have been accredited to assess modules may also apply for accreditation to run synoptic examinations.

23. Continued accreditation for each module is subject to receipt by RCVS of satisfactory internal quality assurance reports, occurring at least every 5 years, to ensure that modules and systems remain up to date. RCVS reserves the right to terminate or suspend accreditation in the event of receiving negative quality audit reports, or in the event of negative or ‘limited confidence’ QAA reports on the university’s assessment systems that might affect the modules.

24. Universities will have their own enrolment procedures for candidates, but should note that candidates must also enrol with RCVS either for individual modules or the full qualification if they wish to achieve RCVS recognised credits. RCVS acts as a ‘clearing house’, checking that candidates are eligible to enrol and maintaining their records of credit achievements.
Candidates must be enrolled with RCVS before taking their first assessment, otherwise the credit may not count towards their final qualification.

**Governance and Quality Assurance Arrangements**

25. Accreditation is offered only to UK universities or other institutions of higher education recognised by the relevant UK government department and falling under the remit of the Quality Assurance Agency. Accreditation is not restricted to universities with veterinary schools.

26. The university must apply its usual quality assurance arrangements to the modules it assesses, including arrangements for appointing, coordinating, standardising and training assessors/examiners, to ensure fair assessment and maintenance of standards over time.

27. The university and/or any associated partners must have access to expertise in the subject matter of the module(s) concerned.

28. Universities may enter into partnerships/consortia arrangements, with other universities, associations or other private organisations. It enables a number of veterinary-related associations to become actively involved in the system. Where such arrangements are proposed, there must be a written statement clearly outlining each organisation’s responsibilities in the delivery and assessment of modules, with a single university having final accountability for assessment and quality assurance for the modules offered.

29. The University’s policies relating to health and safety, data protection, equal opportunities and disability discrimination must apply equally to any non-university organisations involved in such partnership arrangements.

30. The university will need to keep RCVS informed of any proposed changes to such partnerships or licensing arrangements, and RCVS will retain the right to withdraw accreditation if it considers that such arrangements might jeopardise the integrity or standard of the qualification.

**Appeals procedures**

31. The university must have an appeals procedure available to candidates pursuing modules. (RCVS’s appeals procedure will apply for candidates being assessed by RCVS.) The appeals procedure should normally apply to the systems and procedures for assessment, and not to the professional judgement of examiners/assessors.

**Open Access to Modules - Credit Accumulation and Transfer**

32. Universities taking part in the RCVS modular programme, where modules also form part of other university degrees, need to be prepared to consider candidates’ RCVS credits achieved at other RCVS accredited institutions as credit towards their own awards (e.g. Masters’ degrees) where the subject matter warrants it. RCVS act as the ‘clearing house’ to validate credit transfer claims if required.

33. A university may offer a group of modules together as a single programme or course, but must have systems to enable candidates to be issued with certificates of credit for individual modules
if requested by the candidate. The university must be able to report on candidates’ achievement of individual modules to RCVS.

34. Candidates must be able to enrol at the university for single modules and for an “assessment only” route if they wish. Fees levied by the university for assessment will need to be clearly differentiated from fees for the provision of courses/training and should not be so excessive as to discourage candidates from taking the “assessment only” route.

Content and Level of Modules and Assessment

35. In cases where subject matter is not already covered by a module previously defined by RCVS, universities and other institutions may submit their own modules for accreditation as part of the RCVS framework. Where approval for new modules is being sought, RCVS will seek to ensure that this does not lead to unnecessary proliferation or duplication of modules covering essentially the same subject area. Once accredited by RCVS, the module (i.e. its syllabus and learning objectives) will become part of the RCVS framework and available for other accredited centres to offer.

36. Universities are expected to follow the RCVS specification for the module, but may expand this by the provision of further curriculum details, more specific learning objectives and guidance to candidate. Universities may propose alternative assessment methods to those suggested, provided these are still a valid means of assessing the module’s objectives.

Administration Requirements

37. The university must ensure that adequate administrative resources are made available to support the assessment of the modules it offers. This includes systems for maintaining records of candidates’ progress and achievement, and reporting on these to RCVS in an agreed format on a regular basis.

38. Where modules are offered by e-learning/distance learning, there must be reliable and secure backup facilities to protect data.

39. The university must maintain auditable assessment records, and allow RCVS or its nominated representatives confidential access to these to enable periodic audits of the process to be undertaken if required.

Certification

40. The university must be able to issue module certificates of credit to successful candidates without unnecessary delay (but allowing for any necessary quality control checks).

41. The design of certificates of credit may follow the universities’ usual design style for such awards, but will also need to include the following items:
   - the module title as defined or approved by RCVS, any unique reference number as previously agreed with RCVS, the amount of credit represented by the module; date the module was awarded;
   - the candidate’s full name (for RCVS Members, this should be as shown in the RCVS Register of Members);
- an indication that the module forms part of the RCVS Postgraduate Certificate in
  Advanced Veterinary Practice (and/or other university degree) and is not itself a full
  qualification;
- the RCVS logo may be used by accredited universities on certificates of credit for
  modules.

**RCVS Enrolment process for Candidates**

**Initial Registration**

42. Candidates who wish to claim RCVS credits and/or the full qualification must register their
  intention at the outset with RCVS. This is to enable RCVS to maintain information on the take-
  up of modules to assist with future planning, as well as to check on the candidate’s eligibility for
  the Certificate. Individuals are free to enrol with universities to take courses and be assessed
  for modules, but will need to be enrolled with RCVS in order for them to count as credits
  towards a full RCVS qualification.

43. Initial enrolment with RCVS is available either for individual modules OR for the whole
  qualification.

**Enrolment for Individual Modules**

44. Initial enrolment with RCVS for individual modules is a relatively simple administrative process,
  to record the candidate’s name, the designation and the module(s) they wish to pursue, and will
  involve a check on the candidate’s eligibility – e.g. previous qualifications, completion of PDP for
  post 2007 applicants or current CPD records.

45. As university programmes may start at any time of the year, RCVS has a flexible enrolment
  system that is available throughout the year and not tied to any fixed deadlines.

46. A candidate’s enrolment period with RCVS for any individual module or for the full qualification
  is valid for up to 10 years.

**Registration for a full qualification**

47. Enrolment with RCVS for the full CertAVP without a particular subject/species designation
  involves an administrative check on the candidate’s eligibility, as above, plus a check on the
  combination of modules offered to ensure that it is a valid route towards the Certificate in
  Advanced Veterinary Practice. Candidates are required to specify which modules they intend to
  follow and the centres where they propose to be assessed. Transfers to other modules and/or
  other centres at a later date is allowed, although an administrative charge may need to be
  levied if transfer entails reconsideration by a subject panel.

48. Where a candidate wishes to work towards a named certificate (e.g. CertAVP[Small Animal
  Practice]), they need to follow the combination of modules already approved by RCVS. If they
  wish to take a non-approved combination of modules, their application may need to be
  considered by a panel of experts to determine whether the proposed combination of modules is
  a valid route towards the named qualification. The extent to which applications will need to be
  considered by a panel will depend on the subject area concerned.
49. Candidates who have completed other recognised qualifications in subject areas directly relating to one or more RCVS modules may claim exemption for one or more modules at the discretion of RCVS. Candidates claiming exemption are required to enrol for a whole certificate and have their claims validated by RCVS.

50. Candidates enrolling for a full qualification are asked to specify the accredited centre or centres where they plan to take the modules, but are able to transfer to other centres at any time by notifying RCVS.

51. Initial enrolment for the full CertAVP qualification is available throughout the year and is not limited by any specific deadlines.

52. Registration for the full CertAVP or any subject/species designated version is valid for up to 10 years. To claim the full qualification, all modules must have been achieved within the previous 10 years.

53. Candidates must inform the RCVS when they no longer wish to pursue a CertAVP.

Support for enrolled candidates
54. RCVS holds a database with details of all accredited modules – including detailed subject content and information about assessment methods, together with a list of all the universities accredited to offer each module, and course details provided by the universities. Outline information is provided on the RCVS website for all potential candidates to help them chose between centres and modules.

Fees
55. As the RCVS postgraduate qualifications system needs to be self-financing, RCVS charges a fee to universities applying for accreditation, and to candidates to cover the costs of running the modular framework. Enrolment and annual renewal fees for candidates are kept low enough to encourage people to enrol and engage with the system. Candidates also need to pay fees to the universities for module assessment, as well as for any courses they wish to attend.

56. Candidates enrolling for the whole certificate, but claiming exemption in lieu of taking some individuals modules may be required to pay a fee for consideration of their exemption claim.

57. Candidates taking a Certificate in a designated subject/species will need to pay a synoptic assessment fee to cover the costs of that assessment.

Certification Procedures
Individual Modules
58. Universities are responsible for issuing module credit certificates to candidates, and will report credits awarded to RCVS on a regular basis. RCVS maintains a database of credits awarded for each individual enrolled on the scheme.
59. Candidates who have already completed other qualifications that RCVS considers to be equivalent in terms of their level and content to one or more RCVS modules may be granted the appropriate module credit(s) in lieu of undertaking an assessment, but will not be issued with a separate credit certificate for the modules so claimed. Candidates claiming equivalence will be required to enrol with RCVS for a full certificate.

**Awarding the full CertAVP**

60. A synoptic assessment will normally be required for all certificates with designated subject/species titles, unless otherwise determined by the relevant RCVS committee. Candidates claiming the CertAVP without a designated title are not required to undertake a further synoptic assessment with RCVS.

61. To claim the standard CertAVP, the candidate must apply to the RCVS.

62. To claim the full certificate with a species/subject designation, the candidate must either apply to the RCVS for their synoptic examination where appropriate or contact the relevant provider. When the RCVS has confirmation that the synoptic examination has been passed a certificate will be issued.

63. The final certificate awarded to candidates by RCVS lists the modules achieved.

64. RCVS aims to offer at least one synoptic assessment series per year, depending on demand. RCVS may need to put candidates on a waiting list for assessment, to ensure that there are sufficient candidates presenting for a subject during any one series. In the event of an assessment series being cancelled due to low candidate numbers, RCVS would aim to assess any waiting candidates at the next series, but not keep any candidate waiting for longer than 1 year.

65. Equally, it may be necessary, depending on candidate numbers, for RCVS to limit the number of candidates being assessed during any one series, or for any particular named certificate, depending on the availability of examiners. Candidates who are not admitted to their chosen assessment series will be added to a waiting list and entered for the next available slot.

66. Candidates taking their synoptic assessment with RCVS will need to submit an entry to RCVS by a fixed deadline. Entry dates are normally around 3 months in advance of the assessment.

67. In cases where a synoptic assessment is not required for award of the full qualification, candidates must still apply to RCVS for their certificate, confirming which modules they have achieved and the centres that awarded them. A CertAVP will be issued after the claim has been verified against RCVS’ records.

**Eligibility rules for candidates**

68. To enrol for RCVS module credits, candidates must either be MRCVS, or, if they are not currently practising in the UK, must hold a registerable qualification that would enable them to join the RCVS Register.
69. Candidates who graduated after 2007 must normally have completed the RCVS Professional Development Phase (PDP) before they enrol either for single modules or the full certificate. Exceptions will be considered for subject areas where there is no relevant PDP pathway, although all candidates will need to have had the equivalent of at least one year’s veterinary experience after graduating before they can enrol on the scheme.

70. Candidates graduating before 2007 must have had the equivalent of at least one year’s full time experience working in clinical practice before they are eligible to enrol either for single modules or the full certificate, and must provide documented evidence of their participation in CPD - in accordance with RCVS guidelines - for at least one full year.

71. To be awarded the full Certificate in Advanced Veterinary Practice, the candidate will need to
   - hold a registerable veterinary qualification
   - have the equivalent of at least 3 years experience of working in practice since graduation
   - have previously enrolled for the programme with RCVS
   - have achieved a total of 60 credits through RCVS accredited centres, with the approved combination of modules. Or satisfy such modified requirements as mat be prescribed by the Education Committee.

72. To be awarded the Certificate in Advanced Veterinary Practice in a designated species or subject area, (e.g. CertAVP(subject/species), the candidate will need to have met the conditions above, plus they will need to have achieved the required number of credits in the combinations approved or previously specified for that subject by RCVS, and passed the appropriate RCVS synoptic assessment. Education Committee may waive the requirement for a synoptic assessment.

73. Education Committee may require such further information as it shall specify to be supplied by a candidate for the purpose of verifying eligibility for the award of the Certificate, for record-keeping or quality assurance purposes, or such other reason as it shall think fit.

74. Candidates who fail the synoptic assessment will be given one opportunity to retake the assessment. After two attempts candidates may be asked to undertake further training and/or be advised to retake modules at the examiner’s discretion. A third attempt may be allowed at the discretion of RCVS.

75. Universities are free to accept other candidates onto their courses that do not fulfil the above eligibility rules, but such candidates will not be able to have their achievements recorded as RCVS credits, or be awarded the CertAVP.

Acquiring additional Certificates
76. Candidates who have achieved the CertAVP, and who then want to work towards a designated subject/species title will need to take any additional modules required for the subject/species
area, and pass the relevant synoptic assessment. Similarly, candidates who have achieved a CertAVP with one designated title, and who wish to take further modules that would entitle them to a second or further designation will need to take at least one further relevant module and apply for a further synoptic assessment for the new subject/species area concerned.

77. If successful at the synoptic assessment, candidates will be able to use the appropriate postnominals to indicate their qualification on their personal or practice stationery, for example, CertAVP[Derm;SAP;Anaesth).

Further information
78. Further information about the system, accreditation procedures and modules appears on the RCVS website. If you have any queries about the system, please contact the RCVS Education Department by email at certavp@rcvs.org.uk

79. Alternatively, you can write to RCVS at the following address:

Education Department
Royal College of Veterinary Surgeons
Belgravia House
62 - 64 Horseferry Road
London SW1P 2AF

T 0207 222 2001
F 0207 202 0702
www.rcvs.org.uk
Veterinary Postgraduate Qualifications Framework

Specialist' status is open to those who hold a Diploma or equivalent level qualification.
Revised structure of the Certificate in Advanced Veterinary Practice

Candidates must take a total of 60 credits consisting of:

**A module**

A-FAVP.1

Foundations in Advanced Veterinary Practice


**B modules**

Candidates should take at least one B module from a choice of 6 including:

- B-SAP.1 Small Animal Practice
- B-PAP.2 Production Animal Practice
- B-EP.3 Equine Practice
- B-LAS.4 Laboratory Animal Science
- B-VPH.5 Global Veterinary Medicine
- B-ZM.6 Zoological Medicine


**C modules**

Candidates should take up to four C modules from a choice of over 60. (Candidates may take more B modules in place of some C modules if they wish to follow a very broad programme)

- 10 credits
- 10 credits
- 10 credits
- 10 credits

Candidates may take their modules in any order but are strongly advised to take the A module first as they provide valuable preparation for the following modules.
If candidates wish to have a designated certificate, for example CertAVP (Equine Practice), they must choose the relevant B and C modules and take a further synoptic examination.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Meeting</th>
<th>RCVS Council</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Date</td>
<td>23 January 2020</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Title</td>
<td>Graduate Outcomes: Consultation results and next steps</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Classification</td>
<td>Unclassified</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Summary**

This report presents the background to the Graduate Outcomes project, and describes progress in relation to the overarching vision for this work described in the Vet Futures report and action plan.

A summary of the wide-ranging discussions and research carried out since June 2017 is described, and the resulting options that were presented in the Graduate Outcomes consultation exercise for consideration by the profession.

The executive summary of the results of the consultation is presented, in addition to subsequent work to develop proposals for further advance key areas of education as a result.

**Decisions required**

RCVS Council is asked to consider the results of the consultation, and the proposals presented in this report for the further development of the RCVS Day One Competences, the Professional Development Phase, and requirements for undergraduate veterinary education with regard to Extra-Mural Studies, clinical education for general practice and ‘tracking’.

**Attachments**

- Annex 1: Guiding principles for the Graduate Outcomes project
- Annex 2: Executive Summary of the Graduate Outcomes Consultation with the profession
- Annex 3: Example of an Entrustable Professional Activity (EPA)

**Author**

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020 7202 0732
Graduate Outcomes: Consultation results and next steps

Background

1. In November 2015, following a comprehensive review of the key issues facing the veterinary team and subsequent engagement with stakeholders, the joint RCVS/British Veterinary Association (BVA) Vet Futures project reported a vision to lead the profession into the future. The ‘Vet Futures – Taking Charge of our future: a vision for the veterinary profession for 2030’ report described 34 recommendations, under six ambitions around animal welfare, vets’ wider role in society, mental health and wellbeing, careers, thriving businesses and leadership.

2. A number of these recommendations, encompassing all six ambitions, focused upon the education and support of veterinary students and new graduates (Table 1).

3. A detailed action plan to support the delivery of these recommendations was published in 2016. This action plan described 24 initiatives, many of which aimed to address multiple recommendations within a theme. The action plan proposed that the recommendations relating to education and support of students and new graduates (Table 1) should be addressed primarily through the following initiatives:

   I: Review Outcomes for Graduates to ‘develop clarity around the outcomes required by graduates for their future veterinary careers, and use this to inform a review of Day One Competences’.

   J: Review of Extra-Mural Studies to ‘review the purpose and relevance of EMS, including non-clinical EMS’

   O: Focus on Reflective Practice to include training for undergraduate students, and improving opportunities for reflective practice in the PDP, in addition to an outcomes-based approach to CPD.

   There are also elements of the following initiative in the action plan, relevant to education and support of students and new graduates:

   P: Online Mentoring to include consideration of the pastoral role of PDP deans, and better guidance for employers on the development of new graduates

4. In summary, the rationale for initiative “I” (the broadest initiative of those relating to education) was to ensure that veterinary curricula foster the knowledge, skills and attributes needed of future vets, and ensure students have realistic expectations around their future careers, and are adequately prepared. With a recent focus on professional skills, the desired outcomes upon

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1 https://www.vetfutures.org.uk/resource/vet-futures-action-plan-2016-20/
graduation should be explored, in addition to innovative educational strategies (including the potential for species tracking).

5. In order to progress these initiatives, the Vet Futures action plan indicated that a working party involving key stakeholders should be set up, led by the RCVS, and including representatives from the Veterinary Schools Council Education Committee, Association for Veterinary Students and employers. This Graduate Outcomes Working Party (GOWP) was established and met for the first time in June 2017.

6. Following a review of other organisations’ work in this area and detailed discussion of the issues, the GOWP presented a more detailed work plan to RCVS Council in June 2018, in addition to guiding principles agreed by the group (Annex 1). The GOWP had initially considered Day One Competences (D1C) for future graduates (especially professional competences) including implications for the structure of the veterinary degree and the postgraduate setting, the transition into practice including the role of Extra-Mural Studies (EMS) and the Professional Development Phase (PDP), and the recruitment of students and retention of vets in practice. Further discussions of the GOWP refined these topics in light of the original Vet Futures recommendations, and explored a number of potential options in each area. Furthermore, it was agreed that ‘student recruitment’ was being taken forward by Veterinary Schools Council (VSC), and therefore should not be included in the Graduate outcomes consultation.

Graduate Outcomes Consultation

7. The final Graduate Outcomes consultation focused upon a range of options corresponding to four intertwined areas as follows;

I. D1C
   Presentation of a new conceptual model for the D1C, in addition to new individual competences on professional skills.

II. PDP
   Building on 2017 research to evaluate the PDP and explore if / how it should be developed, the consultation aimed to explore what further ‘structure’ for the PDP would be useful and appropriate.

III. EMS
   Presentation of a range of options for restructuring and / or implementing EMS, which would achieve a more consistent quality and value for veterinary students.

IV. Clinical Education
   Consulting on the appropriate balance of general practice and specialist education for vet students, in order to prepare them for the workplace.
### Table 1: Vet Futures ambitions and recommendations relating to the education and support of veterinary students and new graduates

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Vet Futures Ambition</th>
<th>Recommendations</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A leading force for animal health &amp; welfare</td>
<td>2. Enhance moral reasoning and ethical decision-making in education, policy-making, practice-based research and everyday veterinary work</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Valued for our wider roles in society</td>
<td>7. Promote and celebrate the wider roles of veterinary surgeons and veterinary nurses outside clinical practice within the veterinary profession and the general public, starting with school-age children, both to help recruit future veterinary surgeons and nurses, and to develop a better informed public</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>8. Make a broader range of extramural studies (EMS) opportunities available to veterinary students including (non-veterinary) business, public policy and international fields</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Confident, resilient, healthy and well-supported</td>
<td>12. Develop peer support and / or mentoring in all UK Vet Schools and improve support for vets post-graduation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>15. Help veterinary professionals to work with uncertainties, and develop reflective practice, starting with undergraduates</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A broad range of diverse and rewarding career paths</td>
<td>16. Explore and consult on a sustainable structure for the veterinary degree, including the viability of limited licensure, allowing veterinary students to focus their studies and specialise during the veterinary degree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>17. Ensure that veterinary undergraduates are provided with career ‘roadmaps’ and encouraged to undertake relevant work experience as part of EMS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>20. Explore how we can encourage a more diverse profession (in relation to ethnicity, socio-economic background, gender etc.) including reviewing the application and selection process for UK vet schools</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thriving, innovative, user-focussed businesses</td>
<td>25. Enhance business and finance skills amongst veterinary professionals through education, EMS and continuing professional development (CPD)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Exceptional leadership</td>
<td>31. Explore ways to develop the next generation of veterinary leaders including by identifying and nurturing talent, and providing them with the skills and opportunities to succeed</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* NB it is important to note that other projects and initiatives may also be contributing to achieving these ambitions and recommendations
8. The Graduate outcomes consultation ([https://www.rcvs.org.uk/news-and-views/publications/graduate-outcomes-consultation/](https://www.rcvs.org.uk/news-and-views/publications/graduate-outcomes-consultation/)) was launched at London Vet Show on 15 November 2018, closing on 20 January 2019. The initial consultation consisted of a comprehensive online questionnaire gathering both quantitative and qualitative feedback on each of the four areas. Following this, a range of one-to-one stakeholder interviews, and focus groups, was held in order to explore the emergent issues further.

9. The profession engaged positively with the consultation. A total of 3,686 individual participants responded (7.6% of those invited). In addition, 38 organisational responses were received, including from VSC, BVA, PDSA and Unite the Union. In the second phase of the consultation, 28 one-to-one interviews were carried out with a range of volunteers representing the breadth of veterinary practice. Finally, a further 50 individuals provided feedback on the consultation areas via seven focus groups, held across the UK.

10. In June 2019, a 446-page report detailing the results of the consultation was presented by the independent consultants commissioned to implement the consultation (Work Psychology Group – WPG). The findings for each of the four areas in the consultation were carefully considered and discussed at length by the GOWP and with RCVS Education Committee, to which the GOWP reports. Where the results were less clear, additional working groups and stakeholder meetings were held to discuss the findings and agree a way forward.

11. The Executive Summary of the results of the Graduate Outcomes consultation, written by WPG, is included in Annex 2. The full report is available upon request.

12. Following careful consideration of the consultation results in each of the areas of D1C, PDP, EMS and Clinical Education, the GOWP and RCVS Education Committee recommend that Council approves the proposals regarding a way forward for each. These are presented individually below, and RCVS Council is asked to endorse these proposals.

13. The results of the consultation were clearer in the areas of D1C, and the PDP, but less clear in the areas of EMS and Clinical Education. This was partly due to the design of the last two sections, and partly due to apparent differences in understanding of the terms used, which is covered in more detail later. Consequently, detailed proposals have been put forward for the further development of RCVS D1C and a framework for a new, supportive postgraduate programme to replace the current PDP. The way forward for EMS, Tracking and Clinical Education needs further discussion – although the direction of travel has been agreed by Education Committee, detailed proposals will be developed following further discussion of the options available and consultation with stakeholders.
Consultation results summary (see also Annex 2)

The Graduate Outcomes consultation reviewed the RCVS D1C to ensure they remain fit for purpose and fully represent the skills and attributes required of future veterinary graduates to work safely and independently upon entering the profession. The profession was asked to provide feedback on:

- The proposed conceptual model (Annex 3), including proposed additional and / or revised domains of competence.
- The relative importance of domains within the model.
- Feedback on proposed new or revised (individual) competences.
- Feedback on areas from the existing competences considered no longer relevant, or any gaps.

The consultation results indicated there was support from the profession for the conceptual model, and the GOWP was happy to recommend that this should be accepted and adopted. Some of the qualitative feedback from the consultation had raised the issue of technical language and jargon, and it was agreed that this should be addressed through the provision of clear explanation and guidance for each domain. This would be in addition to introductory guidance explaining how the model should be considered as a ‘framework’ which represents the competences as a whole and how each area contributes to the bigger picture. The six new competence domains outlined in the consultation were also supported by respondents, and will be adopted (with some domains being joined together).

The consultation results indicated a degree of concern with regard to the reference to an individual’s ‘confidence’ within D1C, the risk being that this could be misinterpreted as confidence in the absence of competence. The GOWP felt that the interpretation of this should be made clear in future documentation.

The majority of the profession did not feel that any existing competences should be removed. However, a minority of respondents questioned the relevance of veterinary business teaching. The GOWP reviewed this area and has combined two very similar competences which referenced ‘demonstrate knowledge’ and ‘apply a basic understanding’ in relation to business. It was also agreed that reference to Animal Welfare should be included in the guidance for the D1C model.

Next steps: D1C project plan²

The project will be taken forward by the RCVS Education Department in three phases:

1. Development of the guidance and supporting documents for the D1C conceptual model

   This will include the development of clear, introductory guidance, in addition to specific guidance for each of the domains within the model. An accessible online version of the model will be developed for the website, which will be interactive and enable users to link to the individual D1C within a domain and also see the specific guidance for that area.

² The full Project Initiation Document (PID) considered and approved by GOWP and Education Committee is available upon request.
2. Updating the list of competences and domain headings

Once the documents in phase 1 have been approved by Education Committee, the existing D1C document will need to be updated to include the new (individual) competences within the consultation, formatted within the domains from the model.

3. Publication and implementation of the new D1C and conceptual model

Once the conceptual model and revised D1C have been approved by Education Committee, the documents will be published on the RCVS website and circulated to the vet schools, and other stakeholders such as international accreditation bodies. The revised competences will also need to be shared as soon as possible with the RCVS Working Group for the Review of Accreditation Standards, to ensure that this work considers the latest developments.

A date for when they are formally implemented will be agreed as part of the implementation / communication strategy

**How this work will address Vet Futures recommendations**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Vet Futures Recommendations</th>
<th>Actions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2. Enhance moral reasoning and ethical decision-making in education, policy-making, practice-based research and everyday veterinary work</td>
<td>The new conceptual model for the Day One Competences includes the domains ‘Clinical reasoning’ and ‘One health / public health’, covering these areas</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15. Help veterinary professionals to work with uncertainties, and develop reflective practice, starting with undergraduates</td>
<td>The new conceptual model for the Day One Competences includes the domains ‘Professional identity, self-awareness &amp; self-reflection (adaptability)’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16. Explore and consult on a sustainable structure for the veterinary degree, including the viability of limited licensure, allowing veterinary students to focus their studies and specialise during the veterinary degree</td>
<td>The new D1C aim to reflect the knowledge, skills and attributes needed by future vet graduates, and veterinary curricula will need to ensure these are met</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20. Explore how we can encourage a more diverse profession (in relation to ethnicity, socio-economic background, gender etc.) including reviewing the application and selection process for UK vet schools</td>
<td>Within the new D1C Model, the ‘Collaboration &amp; Communication’ domain includes the need to demonstrate inclusivity and cultural competence, through respect for diversity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25. Enhance business and finance skills amongst veterinary professionals through education, EMS and continuing professional development (CPD)</td>
<td>Business and finance remains a Day One Competence, and will therefore be part of the veterinary syllabus</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>31. Explore ways to develop the next generation of veterinary leaders including by identifying and nurturing talent, and providing them with the skills and opportunities to succeed</td>
<td>The consultation results have indicated the profession supports the new D1C as relevant and appropriate for future veterinary professionals</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Consultation results summary (see also Annex 2)

This area within the Graduate Outcomes consultation built upon previously-commissioned research\(^3\) to evaluate the existing PDP, which highlighted strong support for the current phase, but that it should be less of a tick-box exercise, include guided reflection and should strengthen support for new graduates in the workplace. Consequently, the consultation focused upon understanding better what type of support would be acceptable by the profession, and where the priorities for the future PDP should lie. Questions included:

- Where the focus of the PDP should lie (mentorship, clinical skills, professional skills etc.)
- Types of support that would be welcomed (e.g. mentoring, supervision, professional development activities, guided reflection, informal or formal assessment etc.)
- Benefits and challenges associated with a more supportive PDP
- Should a future PDP be accredited by RCVS?
- Should a future PDP be quality assured by RCVS?

The themes emerging from the Graduate Outcomes consultation around PDP, and the proposals agreed as a result, are summarised below:

- **Support for radical change, moving away from a tick-box exercise**
  
  Responses from the veterinary profession – across different roles and disciplines – indicated a clear appetite for radical change away from a box-ticking exercise around individual D1C. The profession welcomed a range of measures to support graduates in the working environment that encompasses an holistic approach to practice, involving a balance between professional and clinical skills across a range of activities. The new approach should be sufficiently flexible to accommodate different veterinary roles, and be driven by graduates with mentor support.

- **A more structured and supportive environment for graduates**
  
  In terms of the types of ‘structure’ considered appropriate for a future programme, the initiative favoured by most respondents was ‘mentoring’, but there was also support for “greater flexibility and balance within PDP structure”, the introduction of “informal assessment” in the form of peer observation with feedback, a degree of “supervision” i.e. on a sliding scale as the graduate requires, such as more direct supervision in the early stages to help the graduate gain confidence, reducing as confidence and competence develop, and “reflection”.

- **RCVS accreditation and quality assurance**
  
  The majority of respondents supported RCVS accreditation of a future PDP, and there was also strong support for the RCVS quality-assuring this period.

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**Next steps: developing a supportive programme for new graduates - project plan**

The present PDP is based upon a series of competences that can be hard to translate into the whole everyday activities that encompass being a vet. To move firmly away from a tick-box system and to take a more holistic and contextual approach to the skills needed by a veterinary surgeon, the GOWP supported a system utilising informal Entrustable Professional Activities (EPAs).

EPAs integrate individual competences in a manner that reflects entire activities carried out in the workplace. Essentially, EPAs are a translation (integration) of competences into units of professional practice i.e. whole activities; meaningful descriptors of the work of an everyday vet integrated to ‘real’ case situations involving dealing with clients, a range of unique clinical contexts and practice. EPAs usually require multiple competences in an integrative holistic nature. EPAs would allow regular review and qualitative feedback from mentors, peers and all members of the veterinary team. Annex 3 shows an example of an EPA from the Competency-Based Veterinary Education (CBVE) Framework published by the Association of American Veterinary Medical Colleges (AAVMC).

A detailed project plan to develop a new programme of support for graduates’ transition from vet school into the workplace, which includes the initiatives supported by the profession in the consultation, has been agreed by the GOWP and Education Committee. The programme will recognise that they are a qualified veterinary surgeon, but support them in becoming a confident and capable, independent practitioner.

The objectives of the project to develop the new programme are as follows:

- **Give the new programme a clarity of purpose;** it should be clear that that it is a period of structured support for graduates, which although primarily led by the graduates themselves, will involve a range of measures to support them through a workplace mentor.

- **Identify a name for this new period;** reflecting that the purpose of the phase is to support new graduates without taking away their status as a qualified veterinary surgeon. By renaming the new approach, it makes a clear distinction between the existing PDP and the new programme, allowing us to step away from the negative connotations associated with the current PDP as it being a “tick-box exercise”. A separate new name for the e-portfolio would help differentiate the programme and “learning platform”.

- **Develop a bank of EPAs;** representing all areas of veterinary practice. Also to develop an EPA toolkit so that individuals can write their own EPAs where necessary, which can feed into the bank. The bank needs to be sufficiently broad and flexible to allow all graduates, encompassing different veterinary roles, to identify an appropriate set of EPAs with their mentor that reflects their own circumstances (including those returning to profession). EPAs will be developed though a working group with appropriate validation from a range of veterinary professionals.

- **Develop an e-portfolio system for graduates to record their progress;** structured around EPAs so that their reflections, peer and mentor feedback, case studies, etc. can be recorded. The system will support their evaluation (with rationale) of their progress towards becoming a confident, independent practitioner, to the point where they no longer feel they need regular mentor support in an area. The e-portfolio system will also support and encourage feedback from graduates (and mentors) on their experience when submitting their portfolio for sign-off upon completion of the programme, to inform the quality assurance process. There will be a
mechanism for graduates to flag a problem at any time if they were not receiving sufficient support. The system will align with developments in the 1CPD recording platform.

- **Agree the RCVS’ definition and expectations of a mentor for this period;** and establish a process to ensure that every graduate has a trained workplace mentor. As part of this process, we will explore mechanisms to support small and / or single-handed practices in meeting these expectations for supporting new graduates.

- **Create and develop a programme of mentor training** using an e-learning package. The training should ensure that mentors understand what is required of them and of the graduate so that they understand how much or how little support is needed as the graduate progresses though the programme. The learning package will ensure that mentors understand how to provide regular interventions effectively, such as guided reflection, peer review of practice, constructive feedback, realistic goal setting and review.

- **Develop a process of accreditation and recognition** for practices, setting out the requirements for support of the graduate, including mentoring (with completion of training through the e-learning package), allocated time, resources and expectations. The requirements should not be onerous, and we will look at ways to support small independent practices in meeting these, as well as larger corporate practices.

- **Develop a system of quality assurance** that would allow the RCVS to assess any shortcomings of the scheme and adopt a position of continuous improvement. This would need to be in line with our existing ENQA commitment to evaluate our processes.

- **Recruit a range of volunteers to pilot the new programme,** to ensure that it is fit for purpose prior to implementation.

- **Develop an implementation and communications plan** prior to the launch and beyond, ensuring that the profession is informed, comfortable and prepared for the changes.

The development phase of this work is expected to take around one year, with the aim being to introduce the new programme within two years. A full project initiation document (approved by Education Committee) is available upon request.

Task and finish groups with relevant expertise will be established for the different phases of the project, and Education Committee will have oversight of the work.
### How this work will address Vet Futures recommendations

Table 3: How the postgraduate programme development project will address aspects of the Vet Futures recommendations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Vet Futures Recommendations</th>
<th>Actions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2. Enhance moral reasoning and ethical decision-making in education, policy-making, practice-based research and everyday veterinary work</td>
<td>EPAs will include clinical reasoning and decision making, and peer review and reflection in this area across a range of clinical contexts will be required in the graduates' portfolio</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12. Develop peer support and/or mentoring in all UK Vet Schools and improve support for vets post-graduation</td>
<td>The future programme for graduates will focus on providing support as required, including the use of guided reflection and peer review/feedback as a priority. This will be implemented through a named mentor for each graduate within the workplace</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15. Help veterinary professionals to work with uncertainties, and develop reflective practice, starting with undergraduates</td>
<td>An e-learning package for mentors will be developed by RCVS, and mentors will be obliged to make a commitment to support their graduate. Mentors will receive recognition for this through accreditation (e.g. an award as a training practice, or similar), and monitored through quality assurance processes (e.g. graduate feedback and checks within Practice Standards Scheme (PSS) inspections)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25. Enhance business and finance skills amongst veterinary professionals through education, EMS and continuing professional development (CPD)</td>
<td>The new graduate programme will include EPAs for all areas of practice, including non-clinical areas</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>31. Explore ways to develop the next generation of veterinary leaders including by identifying and nurturing talent, and providing them with the skills and opportunities to succeed</td>
<td>Through enhanced development of reflective practice and the support of a trained mentor, skills will be enhanced and talent nurtured</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Progressing a new approach to EMS, Tracking and Clinical Education

As a number of the issues included within the EMS and Clinical Education sections of the Graduate Outcomes consultation were co-dependent and/or concomitant, the results of these sections were considered together by the GOWP and Education Committee.

Consultation results summary (see also Annex 2)

Unlike the other sections within the consultation, the results from the EMS and Clinical Education sections were more variable, often ambiguous and, in places, contradictory.

- EMS

The consultation presented a number of options for ways in which the delivery of EMS could be improved, including ‘Early clinical exposure’, ‘A block placement at the end of the veterinary programme’, implementing ‘Parallel Animal Husbandry EMS (AHEMS) and clinical EMS’ and incorporation of EMS into the curriculum through a system of ‘Externships’. The consultation also asked whether EMS should facilitate a transition into the PDP.

A lack of clarity and/or ambiguity around the EMS options presented in the consultation was noted, and therefore the results were interpreted with caution. The results indicated that the profession recognised the need for changes to how EMS is delivered, but there was no clear consensus on how it should be structured in future. There was a degree of support for each of the options presented, although ‘parallel AHEMS and Clinical EMS’ was considerably less popular. It would also be difficult to deliver. There was support for ‘Early clinical exposure’, although it was noted that there was some confusion around the detail underpinning this and how it would be implemented.

An ‘EMS block placement’ was generally supported in the consultation, but less so from the interviews, focus groups and organisational responses. Some seemed to have interpreted the block as the entirety of EMS occurring at the end of the programme rather than the final part of EMS which might act as a bridge into the first job, as discussed by the GOWP. Block placements could be challenging for students in terms of time, money etc., but again this seemed to be based on a lack of recognition of how this might work in practice – as a stepping stone to the first job.

- Clinical Education (including ‘Tracking’)

This section of the consultation explored how best undergraduate clinical education could prepare graduates for the world of work, particularly with regard to general practice. The aim was to explore what is the optimal balance between general practice and specialist clinical experience within the veterinary curriculum. The consultation questions asked about the perceived effectiveness of a range of settings for clinical education (including general practice, specialist/referral hospitals, charity-led clinics, and out-of-hours facilities), and where different domains of competence are better learned. This section also asked participants whether they supported increased ‘Tracking’ within the curriculum, and the advantages/disadvantages of this.

The vast majority of the profession (95%) felt general practice was an effective place for preparing students for their future role as a vet. Fewer (67.6%) felt specialist/referral hospitals were
effective in this respect (although it was noted during the working party discussion they can still add value). Charity-led settings were also considered to be effective for training students.

Most respondents were supportive of a greater degree of tracking than currently seen in curricula. A range of advantages (positive impact on students, skills development) were reported, in addition to a range of disadvantages (reduced breadth of experience, career limiting etc.).

**Further work to consider the results of the consultation and emerging issues**

As the results of the EMS and Clinical Education sections were less clear, additional discussions were held with the GOWP subgroup. Following these discussions, a further stakeholder workshop was held to explore the issues, to which 32 key individuals were invited, representing the vet schools, GOWP members and students. The aim of these additional sessions was to identify a way forward for EMS, Clinical Education and tracking. The following points were proposed, and these were agreed by Education Committee in November 2019.

- **EMS**

  Regarding EMS policy, there was no clear consensus on where the control of the structure of EMS should lie – RCVS or the Vet Schools. It was agreed that EMS provides value to practitioners, but not when students are there to ‘tick the box’ and they’re not interested in that area of practice. Similarly, the quality of EMS placements is highly variable and not all students have an equitable experience. It was also noted that Intra-Mural Rotations (IMR), which are core teaching, need to be considered alongside any changes to EMS – the IMR concept should not change, but changes to EMS could affect how it is delivered.

  **Definition of EMS and IMR:** There was large agreement amongst the groups that the difference between IMR and EMS was that of core learning and consolidation of that learning into practice in different contexts. IMR teaches and assesses students on skills and techniques, whilst EMS gives an opportunity to students to practise these in different settings. IMR is very much core to the curriculum, with EMS being supplemental (but important). It was recognised that there may currently be confusion with the definitions and agreed that they should be redefined. It was noted that IMR should teach D1C, and EMS provides a platform to consolidate and refine these.

  **Flexibility in EMS requirements:** RCVS should be clearer in its communication and Standards for accreditation regarding flexibility being allowed. EMS and IMR should be considered together as they complement each other in teaching and developing skills. EMS should also be bespoke to each programme.

  **Outcomes-based EMS vs a specific ‘number of weeks’:** Clarity is needed regarding what would constitute ‘outcomes-based’ EMS. A more holistic approach was one option discussed by a number of other stakeholders where the ‘outcomes’ remained at the level of the D1C, and EMS was used in a bespoke manner, depending on the individual strengths and weaknesses of the student (identified through IMR assessment) to complement core teaching and focus EMS where it was needed most. One benefit of an outcomes-based approach for EMS was that the number of required weeks could potentially be lowered, which might decrease the financial burden on students, and enable more flexibility in how EMS was delivered (providing RCVS is not overly prescriptive). This may also have a positive impact on diversity and inclusion, should completing EMS become less of a challenge financially.

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4 The options to this question were not presented as exclusive, therefore need to be careful how the data is interpreted.
- **Clinical Education (and Tracking)**

  **General Practice**: the results of the consultation demonstrated that the profession feels that a *large proportion* of clinical education for veterinary students should take place in a general practice setting. However, the subgroup felt that this doesn't necessarily indicate that *all* training needed to be in this setting. A variety of settings could add value, especially Charity led clinics.

  **Flexibility** in future requirements will be key, in order to ensure that they can be achieved by schools with different models of curricula.

  It was agreed that it would be important to produce a clear communication statement and guidance, including clear definitions of *large proportion* and *general practice* in this context. Careful consideration around resource constraints, and continued dialogue with vet schools, will also be important when developing options for consideration by the GOWP.

  **Tracking**: Acknowledging that there was support from the consultation for increased Tracking, the GOWP subgroup noted that any future model needs to be adaptable - a greater degree of tracking than currently taken up by vet schools should be possible, but not in the extreme.

  Some subgroup members felt the curriculum could be stripped back elsewhere, to give space for tracking. Options should be considered, however it was noted that in the D1C section of the consultation, the majority of the profession did not appear to support the removal of any specific areas. One option put forward was to allow a bias towards a particular (tracked) area for EMS, as long as all D1C are met. A counter-argument was put forward that students need enough exposure of all areas to be able to make an informed choice.

  The RCVS should be explicit in its future accreditation processes and visitor training, that some tracking is appropriate, i.e. to give the student choices without risk to achieving all D1C.

**Next Steps: Developing proposals for future EMS, Clinical Education and Tracking**

As the results of the consultation in these areas were less clear, further work is required before a detailed and specific project plan can be proposed. Following approval of the direction of travel described above by Education Committee in November 2019, further detailed proposals and / or a range of options will now be developed for further consideration by the GOWP, around each of the agreed proposals for a way forward, i.e.

- Clinical EMS should be introduced at the earliest opportunity within the curriculum, but not in parallel with AHEMS. There was no mandate from the consultation to introduce a block placement.

- RCVS should produce a clear definition of EMS and IMR, and include this with clear expectations of the requirements in our guidance documents. Any proposals to change EMS should be considered within the context of proposal to change IMR, i.e. around a high proportion of clinical education taking place in a general practice setting, and not be overly prescriptive. Criteria should be clear, but with flexibility to allow vet schools to decide how this is achieved.

- The options for, and the risks / benefits of, moving to an outcomes-based framework for EMS, rather than (or in addition to) specifying a minimum number of weeks, will be considered.
Potential options include a minimum number of weeks / percentage of the curriculum on IMR clinical training allowing for variable EMS within an outcomes-based framework.

- Options will be explored further and presented to the GOWP, for the move to ensure that a large proportion of all clinical education for students takes place in a general practice setting, across all veterinary curricula. Clear definitions of the context will be paramount, and the expectations should ensure the quality of experience for the student, but not be overly prescriptive.

- Options for Tracking should be explored further, once the detailed proposals for EMS and Clinical Education have been agreed.

**How this work will address Vet Futures recommendations**

Table 4: How work to develop EMS and Clinical Education will address Vet Futures recommendations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Vet Futures Recommendations</th>
<th>Actions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2. Enhance moral reasoning and ethical decision-making in education, policy-making, practice-based research and everyday veterinary work</td>
<td>The move to ensure the majority of clinical education within the veterinary degree takes place in a general practice setting will enhance opportunities for clinical reasoning and decision making across a range of contexts relevant to their future role as a vet</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Promote and celebrate the wider roles of veterinary surgeons and veterinary nurses outside clinical practice within the veterinary profession and to the general public, starting with school-age children, both to help recruit future veterinary surgeons and nurses, and to develop a better informed public</td>
<td>Future RCVS guidance will allow flexibility around EMS opportunities for veterinary students, including non-clinical options E.g. opportunities for EMS at the RCVS have been taken up by two students to date</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Make a broader range of extramural studies (EMS) opportunities available to veterinary students including (non-veterinary) business, public policy and international fields</td>
<td>A sustainable structure for the veterinary degree – whilst embracing different models of curricula and promoting innovation in education – will be introduced via the revised Day One Competences, and through clear requirements for Clinical Education and EMS, which will be aligned with revised RCVS standards for accreditation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16. Explore and consult on a sustainable structure for the veterinary degree, including the viability of limited licensure, allowing veterinary students to focus their studies and specialise during the veterinary degree</td>
<td>The Day One Competences around business and finance will be retained, and a wide range of EMS opportunities will be supported</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The Vision for Graduate Outcomes

This report describes a summary of the Graduate Outcomes work carried out by RCVS to date, with the support of key stakeholders, in order to take forward the initiatives described in the Vet Futures action plan. The aim of this work and the proposals put forward is to realise the vision for veterinary education in the UK by 2030, and how this can contribute to the development of competent, resilient, adaptable and fulfilled veterinary surgeons.

Through extensive discussion, research and development, we were able to develop a range of options for future changes to undergraduate and postgraduate education, training and support, which could ensure our ambitions are achieved. These options were presented to the UK veterinary profession through an extensive consultation process, and the results alongside RCVS’ proposals for further work to realise our vision, are presented for consideration by RCVS Council.
Annex 1  Guiding Principles for the Graduate Outcomes project, as agreed by the Graduate Outcomes Working Party (approved by Council, June 2018)

The set of principles set out below has been developed to act as a ‘touchstone’ throughout the life of the project against which each recommendation/decision can be checked. The principles are intended to guide emerging policy and also to help to identify commonalities and shared objectives across partners who may hold very different views about some of the issues under consideration.

The Working Group agreed that it wished to clearly state its intention to take a collaborative approach to the work and that consultation with the profession would be important at key stages of the project.

Principles

Principle: The UK continues to play a leading role in veterinary education

We can achieve this by:

1. Ensuring that decisions are informed by the latest research and evidence
2. Placing the focus of accreditation standards on outcomes that allow continued innovation in programme design
3. The veterinary degree continues to meet international standards in order that UK-qualified veterinary surgeons will be eligible to apply for registration overseas
4. The regulatory burden on veterinary schools does not increase

Principle: Veterinary education prepares students to join the veterinary profession

We can achieve this by:

5. Ensuring a major focus of veterinary education is on preparation for general practice, and that graduates understand the function of and are equipped to work as part of the veterinary team, have the confidence to deal with complexity and uncertainty and to apply their skills and knowledge in whichever veterinary role(s) they choose to pursue
6. Ensuring that veterinary education equips graduates to embrace future innovation and change and to become future leaders and innovators
7. Making non-technical professional skills a central part of the veterinary curriculum
8. Better managing the transition from student to practitioner, by considering content, methods, sequencing and situatedness of professional learning to ensure that new graduates thrive
9. Engaging with employers, recent graduates, students and veterinary schools in order to ensure that:
   a. all viewpoints are fully understood
   b. the whole profession has input to and takes ownership of its future professional learning
   c. all stakeholders have an understanding of what can be expected of new graduates
   d. all stakeholders have an understanding of the role that they play in ongoing professional development
Principle: **Veterinary careers and pathways remain attractive and veterinary degrees are valued**

We can achieve this by ensuring that:

10. Potential career choices and pathways are made clear to potential students, students and veterinary surgeons in order to allow them to make informed choices
11. Future registration/licensing arrangements do not include unnecessary barriers to changing career direction once qualified
12. Costs to students do not increase significantly
13. Costs to vet schools do not increase significantly

There is recognition of the wider higher education context in which universities have to operate, for example, issues of funding, the impact of the National Student Survey and the Teaching Excellence Framework and the increasing emphasis on the student as a partner.
RCVS Graduate Outcomes Consultation – Executive Summary

In November 2018, the RCVS launched a consultation, which sought the views of the profession on the action that should be taken in order to engender both confidence and capability at graduation, and within the early years of a new veterinary graduate’s career. The consultation focussed on four interlinked areas; **Day One Competences / Graduate Outcomes, Clinical Education, Extra-Mural Studies and the Professional Development Phase**. 3,686 individuals responded to the consultation survey, with additional in-depth responses received through follow-up telephone interviews and focus-groups. Contributions were also received from several key organisations consulted across the profession (including the British Veterinary Association, the Veterinary Schools Council and individual Veterinary Schools).

The consultation sought to explore views within the profession regarding the knowledge, skills and attributes required of a veterinary graduate, i.e. the **Day One Competences**. A new draft model (which proposed the knowledge, skills and attributes required of a Day One graduate) was presented by the RCVS for consideration, and the majority of those consulted agreed this captured the skills and attributes of a well-rounded veterinary graduate. A greater focus on non-clinical competences within the model was particularly well received. The representative nature of the model was considered beneficial for enhancing the consistency of veterinary training across providers, and a more holistic illustration of the graduate profile was welcomed.

As well as support for the overall model as a concept, **all new or revised domains of competence presented within the draft model were well endorsed by the profession**. Members of the profession were also keen to emphasise the need to review these additional components in the context of what is realistic for graduates to achieve on Day One. Although there was overall support for the draft model and these revisions, the consultation revealed some reservations regarding the specific language utilised in the model. Feedback was consistent that some of the language was complex, and that reviewing this could help improve the consistency and clarity with which it is interpreted across the profession.

Feedback was largely positive regarding the **inclusion of all new clinical and non-clinical competences**, with the existing competences also considered to still be of relevance in the current context of veterinary practice and in the profession more broadly. Whilst the majority of respondents did not think that there were any competency areas missing, a smaller proportion indicated concerns primarily with the extent to which practical skills and resilience (in the context of mental well-being more broadly), were adequately represented.

Whilst the new draft model received significant support, within the qualitative feedback specifically, it was highlighted that it was important to **consider if some of the Day One Competences would be more appropriate to develop through experiences in practice, and therefore may be more suited to a Year One Competence**. In relation to ‘Leadership / Management’ and ‘Business / Finance’, in particular, many respondents felt that these should not be expected on Day One and instead would come with experience within the role.
With the proposed inclusion of a greater focus on professional competences in the model, respondents were asked to consider the processes needed to ensure veterinary students/graduates developed what is required within the role. Within the feedback there was a lack of consensus in relation to this. One of the most prevalent suggestions was that there should be a greater focus on professional competences as part of undergraduate education, ensuring more opportunity for students to demonstrate these skills through practical experience and the introduction of a mentoring system. However, it was suggested that for this to be successful there needed to be a **broader change in mind set and organisational culture across the profession in relation to professional competences**. Across the consultation, it was noted that ‘traditional approaches’ (e.g. lecture-based learning) or leaving students/graduates to develop these skills independently may no longer be appropriate, with the majority of respondents welcoming more structure to support this.

In relation to the **Clinical Education** section of the consultation, *the views of the profession were more variable*. Specifically in relation to the educational environment, *the majority of the profession considered a breadth of environments as being integral to supporting graduates’ development in all areas of competence presented in the draft model*. Specifically, feedback reinforced the university setting as providing the necessary underpinning theory, before practical hands-on experience is gained through placements.

When seeking views from members of the profession regarding the value of different settings for supporting competence development, *General Practice was most highly favoured for many competence areas*, linked with the view that universities provide a good foundation of knowledge ahead of placements. ‘Clinical Reasoning’, ‘Animal Population and Care Management’, ‘Communication’, ‘Collaboration’, ‘Individual Population’, ‘Adaptability’, ‘Leadership / Management’ and ‘Business / Finance’ all received strong support for being developed primarily in a General Practice environment. It was noted by respondents that this setting would give veterinary students the opportunity to develop these skills in realistic situations and to have the opportunity to practise them on a broad range of experiences. ‘One Health / Public Health’ and ‘Professional Identity, Self-Awareness and Self-Reflection’ were viewed as more suitable to develop in university.

Increasing the **degree of tracking as part of the veterinary degree was also consulted upon**, with this supported by the majority of the profession. However, when asked to consider both the advantages and disadvantages of this approach, more mixed views were evident. Advantages proposed included increasing student satisfaction and engagement, in addition to providing a greater level of flexibility. Restriction of career pathways and possible career limiting effects that could have an indirect impact on retention within the profession, were both prevalent themes that emerged as potential disadvantages. Furthermore, feedback from the consultation was aligned with the view that the undergraduate degree should focus on mastery of the fundamental knowledge and competences which are applied to each and every area of future practice. Whilst the idea of tracking was generally viewed favourably, *there was also a view that part of the appeal of veterinary practice is that you can be a general practitioner*, and therefore it is important to gain exposure to a wide range of areas; this was specifically reported as being beneficial for developing more well-rounded and experienced professionals.

The value of **Extra-Mural Studies (EMS)** was strongly supported throughout the consultation, with widespread recognition of the importance of workplace-based experience and ensuring exposure across multiple environments. However, there was uncertainty across the profession about how EMS
should be delivered. Many recognised that changes to the delivery of EMS were necessary to address existing challenges associated with the variation in the quality of placement experiences. However, within the qualitative feedback, respondents were uncertain about how changes to the implementation to EMS could improve the consistency in quality across placements.

The consultation sought to explore views in relation to four EMS delivery options. There was a relatively balanced level of agreement received for each of these options presented, however, respondents also consistently echoed the view that significant considerations associated with effective implementation existed for each of them. The uncertainty and mixed views can to some extent be explained by the fact that many respondents reported a desire for additional information about each of the options presented in order to offer more informed and definitive conclusions.

Of the EMS options presented for consideration, ‘Early Clinical Exposure’ received the most extensive support, with this perceived as highly relevant and beneficial to the veterinary training pathway. Considerations for the effective implementation of this option were largely concerned with the extent to which learning objectives would be identified, to ensure clarity for both students and employers.

The inclusion of an EMS ‘Block Placement’ was also presented in the consultation for consideration by the profession and received a more varied response. For some, this was not considered a viable option based on the view that it is integral for veterinary students to be exposed to ‘real life’ situations and veterinary contexts throughout their degree, rather than in isolation at the end of their academic education. This proposed limitation of a block placement showed consistency with the view that a breadth of learning environments is important to ensure students have the opportunity to develop the knowledge and skills required of them to become a well-rounded veterinary practitioner throughout the training pathway.

The remaining two EMS options that the consultation sought feedback on were ‘Externships’ and ‘Parallel Animal Husbandry & Clinical EMS’. In relation to the former, a relatively balanced view of the benefits and drawbacks of this approach was drawn out of the consultation. Regarding the latter option, this was perceived less favourably compared to all the others, with many sharing the view that it would be beneficial for these two elements to remain separate. Furthermore, there was a consistent view that these two elements within this EMS option have a focus on a different set of skills and therefore Animal Husbandry provides a useful precursor to the clinical skill development.

As previously noted, the consultation revealed a consensus view that EMS is an integral part of veterinary training in the UK, based on the value of direct workplace experience and learning. However, emphasis on the need for greater consistency in EMS experiences was also somewhat aligned with the views elicited in the consultation in relation to the quality of workplace-based learning in Clinical Education. Some respondents raised concerns about meeting future demands in relation to EMS provision, for example, accessibility of high-quality placements for an increasing veterinary graduate population. Furthermore, the breadth of placements was viewed as integral, including a visit to a range of environments and working with individuals with different roles across the veterinary team. Whilst challenges associated with the consistency of placements was highlighted, there was also uncertainty across respondents regarding where the responsibility for EMS should lie and if it should remain with the RCVS or move to the veterinary schools.

The link between the experience gained through EMS placements and the Professional Development Phase (PDP) for new graduates, was also consulted upon. Despite the inconclusive results in relation
to how EMS should be delivered, overall, there was a majority agreement that EMS could facilitate the transition into PDP. One of the benefits of aligning these two phases was that it could create an opportunity to better support graduates in an ongoing manner from education to practice. However, many respondents also reflected on the challenges that this alignment could bring, consistent with some of the comments raised in relation to EMS delivery options more broadly, including challenges with meeting demand and possible restrictions on experience.

The prospect of an improved structure for the **Professional Development Phase (PDP) overall was perceived favourably by the majority of respondents**. The value of a more formal support structure upon leaving university was highlighted, with the possibility that the profession could learn from other postgraduate training pathways (e.g. veterinary nursing, medicine), whilst acknowledging differences in the structure and funding of these alternatives. Perceptions of the current PDP as a ‘tick-box’ exercise and providing limited value to a graduate’s development, were prevalent in responses to the consultation. The benefits given of enhancing the PDP structure included supporting the transition from university to practice, increasing graduate confidence and ensuring the comprehensive development of all relevant competences. This is consistent with feedback from respondents regarding their view of the purpose of the PDP, with the consensus that it was to enable further development and embedding of both clinical and professional skills in new graduates. A significant majority of respondents further recognised the importance of ongoing professional support post-graduation and therefore emphasised the value that the PDP can have in fulfilling this. However, whilst the implementation of a more structured PDP was generally viewed positively, the consultation also revealed a shared view regarding the potential challenges, notably in relation to resources (i.e. financial and time) and changing the general attitudes and perceptions across the profession in relation to the PDP.

The role of mentorship as part of the PDP was a prominent theme that emerged throughout the consultation. Mentorship was specifically referenced as central to the PDP in order to enable the development of both clinical and profession skills, with the interrelationship between these factors reflected by the views of respondents. There was a majority view that the level of support new graduates receive in employment was critical to their ongoing development and progression. Specific benefits that were prominent were that it would increase confidence in new graduates, there would be greater consistency in individual experiences of the PDP and it would support a graduate’s development. Furthermore, many respondents noted that to support workplace-based learning more broadly, providing a designated mentor would be integral. However, the importance of ensuring that mentors are appropriately trained to ensure they are effective within the mentor role was highlighted. Overall, the majority of respondents shared the view that investing in the training of mentors would help to achieve higher standards and consistency in how these standards were achieved.

The profession was also asked for their view as to whether the PDP should be quality assured by the RCVS and accredited, with both receiving majority support from respondents. Many noted that the two are related in nature and that this additional structure would enhance the overall credibility and professionalism of the PDP and support the overall quality of the PDP experience. Whilst both options were viewed favourable, a small number of respondents considered that they would like to be provided additional detail about what each would entail. Potential challenges to consider, associated with the additional structure that both quality assurance and accreditation could involve, were also shared within the qualitative comments. These included, time and financial resources and the subsequent impact on employers’ willingness to appoint new graduates.
The full results from this consultation have been presented to the RCVS Education Committee. The RCVS is in the process of discussing and agreeing on a way forward and specific recommendations for next steps will be shared and sit alongside this Executive Summary.
Annex 3: Example of an Entrustable Professional Activity (EPA) from the CBVE Framework published by the AAVMC

# EPA 1

Gather a history, perform an examination, and create a prioritized differential diagnosis list

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>DESCRIPTION OF ACTIVITY</th>
<th>Perform a history and exam on an individual animal or herd/flock and assimilate the information collected to derive a prioritized differential diagnosis.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>COMMENTARY</td>
<td>The history and examination should be tailored to the clinical situation and specific patient encounter. This data gathering serves as the foundation for evaluation and management. Expectations include integration of the scientific foundations of medicine with clinical reasoning skills to guide information gathering.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| MOST RELEVANT DOMAINS   | 1: Clinical Reasoning & Decision-making ☑  
5: Communication ☑ |
| SECONDARY DOMAINS       | 2: Individual Animal Care & Management ☑  
6: Collaboration ☑  
8: Financial & Practice Management ☑ |
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Meeting</th>
<th>RCVS Council</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Date</td>
<td>23 January 2020</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Title</td>
<td>Statutory Membership Examination - Re-sit Policy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Classification</td>
<td>Unclassified</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Summary</td>
<td>In November 2019, following recommendations by the RCVS Statutory Membership Examination (SME) Board, Education Committee discussed potential amendments to the SME re-sit policy. Education Committee recommended that candidates who pass the written component of the SME but then fail the OSCE component be allowed to enter the SME directly at the OSCE stage in the following year for a reduced fee.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Decisions required</td>
<td>Council is asked to consider whether to allow candidates to re-sit the OSCE component of the Statutory Membership Examination, for a reduced fee, if they have passed the written component the previous year</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attachments</td>
<td>None</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| Author     | Jonathan Reid
Examinations Manager
j.reid@rcvs.org.uk
020 7965 1104 |
Statutory Membership Examination - Re-sit Policy

From 2016 to 2018, the RCVS undertook a review of the Statutory Membership Examination (SME). A number of changes were proposed, and consequently the regulations and format of the SME were updated and implemented in the 2019 diet.

Policy changes included an amendment to the policy on compensation across species (i.e. that candidates must demonstrate their competence at Day One level for each of the clinical domains ‘companion animal’, ‘production animal & veterinary public health’ and ‘equine’), in addition to the re-sit policy.

Under the new regulations, which came into effect in 2019, candidates must demonstrate a minimum standard of competence in each of these three domains to pass the SME. If they fail the SME, they are required to sit all components of the exam at their next attempt. The only re-sit option available to candidates is to re-sit the Code of Professional Conduct paper in the same examination diet. In the previous iteration, when compensation across species / domains was permitted, candidates who failed one or more domains were able to ‘bank’ the domain so that when they sit the SME in the next diet, they were only required to attempt the domains that they had previously failed.

As a result of feedback from candidates as well as a review of the 2019 SME diet carried out by the RCVS Education Department, the SME Board discussed a number of potential re-sit policy changes. The SME Board recommended to Education Committee that candidates who pass all three clinical domains of the written examination, but go on to fail the OSCE, should be given the opportunity to re-enter the SME in the following diet straight at the OSCE stage and at a reduced fee. Candidates would only be able to carry this over to the subsequent diet. Should such candidates fail the OSCE in the subsequent diet, any further attempts would need to be with the full SME.

Due to a change in the fee structure, this new policy would entail a change to the statutory instrument and thus would need to go to Privy Council.

Education Committee agreed to recommend this change to Council.

Decision Required

Council is asked to consider whether to allow candidates to re-sit the OSCE component of the Statutory Membership Examination in the following diet.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Meeting</th>
<th>Council</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Date</td>
<td>23 January 2020</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Title</td>
<td>Draft Strategic Plan 2020-2024</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Classification</td>
<td>Unclassified</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Decisions required</td>
<td>Council is requested to approve the draft plan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attachments</td>
<td>Annex one: Draft Strategic Plan 2020-2024</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| Author      | Lizzie Lockett  
CEO  
l.lockett@rcvs.org.uk |

Background

1. This paper includes (at annex one) the latest draft of the new strategic plan, for consideration by Council at its 23 January 2020 meeting. It incorporates suggested changes made by Council and VN at their November 2019 meetings.

2. The rationale behind the change in format to a five-year plan and the structure of the draft plan that was included in the Council covering paper in November has now been written into the new narrative section at the start of the plan.

3. The case studies have now also been added NB these may be subject to some editing once we get to page layout stage to ensure each keeps to a uniform style.

4. This draft plan has been circulated to some key stakeholder organisations for their views – where these are substantive, they will be flagged up at the January 2020 meeting. The plan was circulated to RCVS staff for their views, and was well received.

5. Council is invited to discuss and approve the plan. Thereafter the design process (which is underway with the draft) will be finalised and the final version approved by the Officer team, before publication.
Annex one: the draft plan
Strategic Plan 2020-2024:

Clarity, compassion, courage, conviction: the future of the RCVS
Seizing our opportunities

Organisations spend a lot of time looking at their Risk Registers – and quite rightly. But where is the Register of Opportunities? The answer lies in the Strategic Plan, which should offer an organisation a framework to be take stock of its potential and be ambitious about its future.

Our 2014-16 plan focused on the basics – enabling the RCVS to be a First-rate Regulator by improving our core functions, addressing our service agenda and strengthening our foundations. The more recent 2017-19 plan took a much broader scope and looked at the future direction of the veterinary and veterinary nursing professions, informed by the joint RCVS / British Veterinary Association Vet Futures project and the joint RCVS and British Veterinary Nursing Association VN Futures initiative. It covered issues such as learning culture, leadership, mental health, global reach and innovation, as well as continuing to be a relevant and forward-thinking regulator that strives for excellent service delivery.

Building on these two approaches, this new plan looks at the future of the RCVS as an organisation working on behalf of all its stakeholders, taking into account the future direction and needs of the professions and also the needs of the public, animal owners and, of course, animal health and welfare and public health. We address what kind of regulator and Royal College we want to be, our place in the world, and how we can continue to remain relevant and ambitious.

Successes so far

Most of the actions in the 2017-19 plan have now been completed or are ongoing, and some continue into this plan, albeit in revised form, such as some of our global ambitions (in this case we have opted for a more organic approach - to ensure that we have an international dimension to all that we do).

We have achieved a great deal over the last few years, launching and maintaining projects and initiatives that are starting to become part of the fabric of the professions, such as the Mind Matters Initiative, ViVet, RCVS Leadership and Vet Futures. In fact, our Survey of the Veterinary Profession 2019 showed that around 90% of vets are aware of those initiatives; sadly, the figure is lower for nurses, so we have some work to do there.

We have also modernised our governance structure, with a new Legislative Reform Order, which means that we now have formal membership on RCVS Council from both veterinary nurses and lay people; and we are carrying out major overhauls of both veterinary and veterinary nursing educational frameworks – which remain ongoing.

Case studies on these and other projects can be found at the back of this plan – many thanks to all of the organisations and individuals who have collaborated with us in achieving this success, and we look forward to continuing to work with you to help deliver our new plan.

In all of this we do not take our mandate for granted – we have a legal one, for sure, but we need to be supported in our work by both the public and the professions – so, over the last 12 months, we have undertaken research amongst the public, animal owners, members of the veterinary and veterinary nursing professions, including our overseas members, and stakeholders. The findings have informed this new plan.
Members of the professions and stakeholder organisations felt that our direction of travel was a positive one, with improvements noted by stakeholders in clarity of mission and purpose, around transparency, openness and collaboration, and in the nature and speed of our communications, since the last such survey, in 2013.

Meanwhile, members of the professions rated us highly on professionalism, international relationships and having processes that reflect best practice, and above the mid-point on how we live up to our stated values.

This plan is therefore not a tool for revolution but a continuation of a positive course.

You will see proposed actions arranged under four ambitions: Clarity, Compassion, Confidence and Conviction. The following sections summarise their purpose. Together, these ambitions help us to structure a roadmap to become the RCVS we want to be by 2022 – a trusted, compassionate and proactive regulator and a supportive and ambitious Royal College.

Clarity
The RCVS can be a confusing organisation, working within complex – and sometimes out-of-date laws – and regulating via a mix of Charter and legislation. This, coupled with the fact that we are the only UK regulator that is also a Royal College, means that it can sometimes be difficult to understand why we do what we do. We recognise that this can cause stress and confusion and, under this ambition of ‘Clarity,’ we will continue to work hard to simplify, unpick and modernise what we do, and ensure we remain relevant.

In simple terms, we aim to say what we do and do what we say.

Looking ahead, we will continue to review the legislative and regulatory landscape to ensure we not only keep pace with what is happening in other sectors, but stay ahead, aiming to anticipate the needs of both society and the vet-led team.

Compassion
The words ‘compassion’ and ‘regulator’ may seem unusual bedfellows, but Compassion is one of our four themes and forms part of our new vision statement.

Why is compassion so important? We recognise that being part of a regulated profession can be demanding and that there is stress and anxiety attached to the complaints process, in particular. Equally, for those members of the public who have cause to raise a concern, this is usually as a consequence of an incident that has been difficult and often emotionally upsetting, and potentially resulted in poor animal health or welfare.

There is clearly value in reducing stress for all parties through a more compassionate approach. So, while we will work, through our Clarity stream, to improve the mechanics of our processes, it is also important that all of our services are delivered with compassion. One might ask how it’s possible to run a robust regulatory framework in a compassionate fashion? This does not mean being ‘soft’ or
‘letting people off’. It means treating everyone as individuals, communicating promptly, explaining appropriately, and being fair.

In our Surveys of the Veterinary and Veterinary Nursing Professions, ‘compassion’ was the value on which we scored least well (although, as with all of our other values, we scored above the mid-point - indicating the professions’ agreement that we lived up to them). We have some work to do here, but are committed to continue on our journey towards change.

A compassionate approach also means looking much wider at how we support members of the veterinary team to help them work to the best of their abilities. This is true upstream regulation, aiming to help veterinary professionals better meet the standards set by their peers, and avoid issues that might give rise to professional misconduct.

Our Royal College role means we can do this in a way that some other regulators cannot, and it can only be in the interests of the public, animal owners, and animal health and welfare that we take a courageous and bold approach to becoming a compassionate regulator.

**Courage**

While it’s impossible to predict the future, one thing is certain – life won’t stay the same. In the face of changes in society, veterinary science and technology – the latter at an exponential rate – it’s important for the RCVS to have the courage, energy and confidence to help take the profession forwards. And as a self-regulating profession, this means helping all of our members to do the same, at the level of their agency and scope.

So, under our ‘Courage’ ambition, we consider how we can continue to develop a veterinary team that is healthy, sustainable, inclusive, innovative and respectful – and this is where our Royal Charter role will really come into its own.

**Conviction**

All of these things can only be achieved if we have the right systems, skills and capacity, including people, finance, IT and communications. Ambition is all well and good but without these vital underpinnings, we will not have the conviction – or the confidence – to succeed.

The actions aligned under our ‘Conviction’ ambition will help us continue to develop and sustain capabilities to give us expertise and edge. The current operating environment brings its challenges but we also have favourable winds: great teams, financial security, well-managed risk, modernised governance, well-respected and visible initiatives, confidence from stakeholders in RCVS and trust from public in the professions we lead (our 2019 survey said that 94% of members of the public asked ‘completely’ or ‘generally’ trusted veterinary surgeons). We must not squander this opportunity, but use these positives as a platform for continued and positive change.

These ambitions are all underpinned by our mission, vision and culture, and in the section to follow you can read more about the who, what, why, where and when of the RCVS as we see ourselves today, looking back on 175 years of proud history, and anticipating some challenging yet rewarding years ahead.
Timeframe
One thing you may notice about this plan compared with previous is that it covers a longer time-span – five years. This is to give us increased scope for flexibility within an ongoing uncertain operating environment, where the impact of factors such as EU Exit remain unclear. Within a three-year plan the temptation is to include very specific objectives that can be ticked off, but when the world changes around you rapidly those actions may soon become irrelevant or have to give way to more urgent priorities. A longer timeframe gives scope for broader objectives that can be supported by more agile operating plans. It also allows for more flexible phasing of activities, to align with any budgetary constraints or challenges. The plan will be reviewed mid-term.

Your role in our vision

When all of these ambitions have been met, our vision is that the RCVS will be recognised as a trusted, compassionate and proactive regulator, and a supportive and ambitious Royal College, underpinning confident veterinary professionals of which the UK can be proud.

The veterinary profession remains self-regulating and all UK veterinary surgeons and veterinary nurses are part of the RCVS. We also have a broad range of stakeholders that we sit amongst. If you are reading this strategy – whether you are a member of the public, a member of the veterinary team, from within an organisation, government, media, or educational establishment, or part of the RCVS team or governance structure – you have an interest in veterinary standards and animal health and welfare. So, you have a part to play. Please join us in making this strategy possible and helping us to meet our ambitions, for the benefit of animal health and welfare, and public health.
**What, why, where, when, how**

1. **What**
   Our mission, as set out in the objects of our 2015 Royal Charter, is to set, uphold and advance veterinary standards, and to promote, encourage and advance the study and practice of the art and science of veterinary surgery and medicine, in the interests of the health and welfare of animals and in the wider public interest.

   Through this, we ensure the public has high levels of confidence, because veterinary professionals are highly competent, up to date and trusted. Ultimately, we enhance society through improved animal health and welfare.

2. **Why**
   We support veterinary professionals to be the best that they can be, so that they can deliver the most appropriate outcomes for animal health and welfare and public health, and so that veterinary professionals themselves can have careers that are fulfilling and rewarding.

3. **When**
   Celebrating our 175th year in 2019, we have a proud history and respect the generations of ideas and standards that have come before us.

   We will build on these to stay relevant and transformational for the generations to come, looking forward with strength in times of uncertainty and having the confidence to tackle difficult issues ahead.

4. **How**
   While what we do is critical, it is how we do it that makes a real difference. We are proud of our values and endeavour to live up to them at all times – via our staff team, Council and committee members, examiners, assessors and other groups associated with the College.

   Our Surveys of the Veterinary and Veterinary Nursing Professions 2019 show that we do demonstrate commitment to these behaviours. This plan supports further improvement, by putting our values at the heart of what we do – not as an afterthought – and time and resources will go into helping our teams live up to our values. Where this doesn’t happen, we commit to listen to the views of others and strive to improve and change.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Value</th>
<th>Which is…</th>
<th>Which is not…</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Diverse and inclusive</td>
<td>✓ Respectful</td>
<td>✗ Only listening to certain groups</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>✓ Treating people as individuals</td>
<td>✗ Showing favouritism</td>
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<td></td>
<td>✓ Welcoming</td>
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<td>✓ Accessible</td>
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<tr>
<td>Compassionate</td>
<td>✓ Listening and understanding</td>
<td>✗ Being a pushover</td>
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<td></td>
<td>✓ Thoughtful and supportive</td>
<td>✗ Being unfair</td>
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<td></td>
<td>✓ Empathetic</td>
<td>✗ Bending the rules</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>✓ Respectful and non-judgemental</td>
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<td>Value</td>
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<tr>
<td>Forward-looking</td>
<td>✓ Innovative</td>
<td>× Change for its own sake</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>✓ Curious</td>
<td>× Rushing to the wrong answers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>✓ Embracing change</td>
<td>× Ignoring what’s good today</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>✓ Remaining relevant</td>
<td>× Diluting our purpose</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>✓ Outward-looking</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Straight-talking</td>
<td>✓ Clear and consistent</td>
<td>× Patronising</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>✓ Using plain English</td>
<td>× Rude and abrupt</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>✓ Honest and transparent</td>
<td>× Arrogant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>✓ Managing expectations</td>
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5. Where
Our statutory role is UK-focused, but we have a strong global footprint in our diaspora of members and international impact. We utilise technology to the best of our ability to ensure people can engage with the RCVS at a time and place of their choosing. We reach out to all of our stakeholders and service users, wherever they are, and build face-to-face connections where possible. We aim to work out of spaces that are fit for purpose, enable us to meet our objectives and present a positive face of the UK veterinary professions to the world.

6. Who
Our diverse team includes our employees, our Council and committee members and a range of individuals who act on our behalf, such as examiners and assessors. We aim to empower them to feel confident to deliver on the College’s purpose with compassion, imagination and clarity. In turn, we aim to provide them with a working environment that is inclusive, supportive, challenging and respectful, and develops each individual’s unique strengths.
Our strategic focus

A: Clarity

Ambition: to ensure that we have clarity of purpose and that our internal and external stakeholders and service-users understand our role in the world. We will endeavour to become a proactive regulator that remains a step ahead, even in the face of constant change and uncertainty. We will listen widely, consult meaningfully, make confident decisions, then communicate with clarity, appreciating that the final outcome may not suit everyone.

We will do the following to meet our ambition:

1. Continue, via the work of the Veterinary Legislation Working Party and other groups, to review the regulatory landscape to ensure we develop world-leading, robust standards and approaches that are grounded in evidence and risk-based, in order to safeguard animal health and welfare, and public health, and maintain trust in the veterinary professions.

2. Ensure that we are addressing what matters to our stakeholders and that we horizon-scan for issues that are beyond the scope of our immediate view. For example, regulation of new technologies, regulation of practices, review of our concerns and disciplinary process, and regulation of the wider veterinary team and the environment in which they work.

3. Review whether we can take a more proactive role around breaches of the Veterinary Surgeons Act involving unqualified individuals, or courses that purport to lead to registration but do not, both through education to end-users of veterinary services, and working more actively to support those wishing to raise concerns with the relevant authorities.

4. Work with our partners overseas to ensure that the UK remains relevant in the veterinary world post-EU exit, including sharing knowledge, marketing our standards and services, and building an engaged diaspora of members of the Royal College of Veterinary Surgeons (MsRCVS) and registered veterinary nurses (RVNs). Ensure there is a global element to all that we do, and that our international members feel engaged and included.

5. Build a closer relationship between the College, the professions and the public by continuing our outreach programme. Review how we gain input from stakeholders at all levels, including the development of an improved process for seeking input from members of the public.

6. Establish clarity around a data-sharing commitment, and ensure that our views, our data and our insights are shared regularly in an easy-to-search way, for example, easy-to-find FAQ on key issues, insights gained from concerns and complaints data, and self-service facts and figures about the professions. Make available accessible and anonymised versions of the data we hold to all stakeholders to enable them to generate value and insights for the sector.

7. Plan and implement a cycle of review and improvement for our educational standards and processes, to ensure we continue to take a leadership role with our international partners.

8. Ensure clarity of appeal across all the areas where we make decisions, modernising where appropriate; where appeal is not available, clearly justify why not.
B: Compassion

Ambition: to be a compassionate upstream regulator and a supportive Royal College by ensuring that high standards continue to be met while working in an empathetic way that respects all of our stakeholders and service-users as individuals. We will recognise that a compassionate approach involves helping members of the veterinary team build the skills and knowledge they need to meet our standards, which is ultimately in the interests of animal health and welfare.

We will do the following to meet our ambition:

1. Endeavour to ensure that the College is seen as approachable, helpful, fair and accessible to all.

2. Enable our teams to deliver compassionate regulation by providing structures, training and support to ensure they can help vets and nurses meet the standards required in a compassionate way, and take ownership and communicate clearly when things don’t go to plan.

3. Review our concerns process through the eyes of each of our stakeholder and service-user groups to ensure that it is fair, forward-thinking and compassionate, and set out a programme of quality improvement.

4. Help our regulated professionals to meet the standards expected of them by their peers, the public and society at large by launching the RCVS Academy, which will house a range of online educational tools to help veterinary surgeons, veterinary nurses and other potential associates of the College understand what is expected of them in terms of meeting standards, and to support them acquiring relevant knowledge and staying up to date in a creative, accessible and inspiring way.

5. Continue to support the mental health and wellbeing of members of the veterinary team through the Mind Matters Initiative under its workstreams of ‘prevent, protect and support’ (see www.vetmindmatters.org), and also help veterinary professionals to take account of the mental health of those with whom they come into contact.

6. Continue to foster a reflective learning culture amongst members of the veterinary team, so that they can continue to grow and develop in a supportive, no-blame environment.
**C: Courage**

**Ambition:** we will have the courage to take a leadership role within the professions, to ensure that the pervading culture is healthy, sustainable, inclusive, innovative and respectful; through this, will develop confident veterinary professionals.

We will do the following to meet our ambition:

1. Continue to seek culture change within the wider professions around help-seeking behaviour to support both mental and physical health, learning culture, leadership, innovation, sustainability and diversity.

2. Celebrate the art as well as the science of veterinary medicine and ensure that wider professional skills are properly and credibly supported.

3. Work with other stakeholders to retain skills and talent within the professions, by developing return-to-work options that build confidence in those who have had a career break, for whatever reason.

4. Ensure a pathway for career progression for vets and nurses via postgraduate/post-qualification accreditations and qualifications – to meet the needs of vets and nurses at all stages of their careers

5. Develop extra-mural studies (EMS) and work experience opportunities at the College, together with more opportunities for veterinary professionals and members of the public to become engaged with the work of the regulator at first hand and gain an understanding of its complexities.

6. Create an innovation funding pot to enable the professions to help solve regulation and professional standards issues that matter to them.

7. Continue to develop the Fellowship into a learned society that reflects the varied achievements of the veterinary profession; encourages the advancement of standards; and, develops public awareness of veterinary medicine and science, for example, via the development of a Fellow on the Public Understanding of Veterinary Science.

8. Review new ways of reaching consensus and driving change within our leadership and governance structure.

9. Work with the British Veterinary Association and the British Veterinary Nursing Association to evaluate the success of the first action plans for Vet Futures and VN Futures respectively, assess whether the ambitions remain relevant, and develop new action plans accordingly. Work with the Federation of Veterinarians of Europe and our European colleagues to support the delivery of Vet Futures Europe.
D: Conviction

Ambition: in order to deliver our Strategic Plan we must not only have the mandate that is secured by the Veterinary Surgeons Act and our Royal Charter, but also the conviction to succeed that will be brought by the right underpinning – the governance, people, finance, communications and IT structures that are crucial to our success.

We will do the following to meet our ambition:

1. Review the bedding-in of the 2018 Legislative Reform Order to ensure that our Council and committee structure is efficient, effective, and transparent, and provides the right level of strategic oversight coupled with skills-based input to allow the College to function to the best of its abilities.

2. Review the structure of all of our groups operating below committee level, to ensure the right mix of skills are available to tackle the tasks at hand and that each group has clear membership, purpose, principles, time-frame and sense of what success will look like.

3. Develop and embed a meaningful dashboard to help ensure that appetite for risk is clear, risk is managed and any early warning signs are addressed.

4. Collate and review our member and service-user feedback on an ongoing basis, against key performance indicators, and work with RCVS Knowledge to employ a quality improvement and innovation methodology to ensure we are providing services that meet the needs of our audiences and society at large.

5. Put in a place a people strategy that develops our talent, diversity, leadership and culture, across the staff team, Council and committee members, examiners, assessors and all others who work on behalf of the College.

6. Ensure our financial systems are customer-focused, fraud-resistant and efficient, and improve communication and clarity over where money is spent and its impact.

7. Develop and implement a technology strategy that puts digital first, is collaborative, and focuses on simplification and convergence.

8. Purchase a new property that aims to serve the needs of the College for the next twenty years, while not putting an undue future financial commitment on our members.

9. Put in place a communications strategy that will focus on clarifying what we are, and what we are not, and be stronger about calling out those who seek to undermine the College; own our shortcomings and be clear about where and how we will change; and be bolder about celebrating our successes and our unique contribution to animal health and welfare, and public health. Empower our wider team to become communications ambassadors for the College.

10. Develop and implement a corporate social responsibility strategy that befits an organisation that works in the public interest.
What went right?

The following pages highlight some of the positive projects and activities that were achieved from the RCVS Strategic Plan 2017-19.

Governance review – towards a more effective and efficient organisation

Under our Leadership ambition in the RCVS Strategic Plan 2017-2019 was the action: “Through completion of our governance review, ensure that we are an effective and efficient organisation, better able to lead the profession and serve the needs of the public, including the carrying out of training and the provision of coaching for RCVS Council members who take, or are considering taking, leadership roles.”

RCVS governance reform was originally considered in 2009 following the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs Committee report of 2008 which, amongst other issues, recommended the restructuring of Council. It was agreed by Council, however, that changes to its composition “should be for consideration in the longer term, when the new disciplinary machinery was in place and the implication of this for Council could be assessed”.

The issue came to the fore again after the First-rate Regulator report of 2013. This report made recommendations as to how reform, in particular to the size and structure of Council, could serve to improve the efficiency, transparency and accountability of decision-making at the RCVS.

The challenge

In subsequent discussion, RCVS Council identified the following pressing reasons for reform:

- The Royal Charter (2015) made the RCVS the regulator of veterinary nurses, but veterinary nurses did not have a formal seat at the Council table
- Lay representation was a critical part of being a regulator and permanent lay representation on Council could serve to increase public confidence in the work of the RCVS
- The impact of new veterinary schools needed to be addressed – with each new school two new positions for its appointees were created on Council
- Term limits were an important aspect of good governance
- Research demonstrated that large governing bodies were not conducive to effective decision making and smaller groups were able to communicate more effectively, reach decisions more quickly, and work as a team rather than group of individuals

Bringing about reform created two significant challenges: developing proposals that addressed the above issues but also recognised the unique role of the RCVS as a Royal College that regulates; and that the size and composition of RCVS Council is determined by the Veterinary Surgeons Act, thus change required government support and legislation.

What we did

In March 2016, following almost two years’ work including the formation of a Council Panel on Governance, the development of detailed proposals for reform and a formal Government consultation with the profession, Council gave the green-light to seek the required legislation for reform.
Whilst the proposals for reform were endorsed at every stage, they had a turbulent journey through the legislative and parliamentary process, spanning as they did the 2016 Referendum and subsequent 2017 General Election.

On 1 May 2018, a Legislative Order was signed by Defra Minister Lord Gardiner following its successful passage through Parliament. This heralded the start of a three-year transition process towards more modern, agile and efficient governance structures.

**The impact**

The reforms will lead to an overall reduction from 42 to 24 Council members by 2021, ultimately comprising:

- 13 elected veterinary surgeons to ensure an overall majority of elected members;
- six lay people, appointed by an independent panel;
- three members collectively representing UK veterinary schools;
- two veterinary nurses appointed by VN Council, ensuring nurses have a say in the governance of their regulator.

The new structures also introduced term limits and a mechanism to remove Council members on the basis of poor conduct or behaviour.

However, reform has not stopped with new Council structures and procedures. In 2018 a decision was made to increase the number of Council meetings to six per year in 2018-19 and eight in 2019-20. With more frequent Council meetings it was also possible to disband the Operational Board, further strengthening Council’s decision-making role.

In 2018, two new committees were also formed: Finance and Resources Committee (established in July 2019), which has a remit to cover budgets, IT, human resources and the College estate; and, meeting for the first time in 2018, the Advancement of the Professions Committee (APC), with responsibility for activities that advance the veterinary and veterinary nursing professions, including: Mind Matters Initiative, the RCVS Fellowship, ViVet, RCVS Leadership, VN Futures and Vet Futures.

The combination of these reform makes the RCVS more agile and better able to make strategic decisions in an open, transparent and accountable fashion.

**The future**

As we continue to move towards a smaller Council, consideration will be given as to how to widen the pool of experience and expertise available to our committees by co-opting individuals from the professions at large. We will also review the training and coaching we provide to Council and committee members to ensure they are prepared for the leadership roles they fulfil. A project will also shortly commence to look at the structure and function of the many working parties, subcommittees and groups that operate below committee level.
ViVet – stimulating innovation

The 2017-19 Strategic Plan had an ambition “to become a Royal College with leadership and innovation at its heart, and support this creatively and with determination.”

This was supported by a strategic aim to: “Develop a biennial Innovation Symposium, to showcase new technologies, educational and business models etc from within veterinary and related fields, and encourage a culture of innovation.”

Strongly related to this were two further actions focusing on our regulatory role, to:

“Review the regulatory framework surrounding new technologies, to ensure it is proportionate, enforceable and encourages innovation, while maintaining high standards of animal health and welfare” and;

“Collaborate with other competent authorities, associations, educational bodies and the commercial sector to establish a framework for the management of the impact of new technologies, such that animal health and welfare remains centre stage, regardless of from where veterinary services are being delivered into the UK and beyond.”

The challenge

Vet Futures research highlighted concerns that “vets could miss out on developments in technology…if they fail to be proactive about grasping the opportunities” and identified a pressing need for the veterinary professions to be proactive and demonstrate they “not only welcome, but are driving, innovation in animal health”.

Furthermore, it had become clear that technology was developing exponentially and new business models for the delivery of animal care were emerging. There was risk that the role of the veterinary professional could be diminished and this could have a detrimental impact on animal health and welfare. Moreover, if the RCVS did not take a proactive regulatory approach to innovation, change would occur regardless, potentially leaving consumers unprotected whilst we caught up.

What we did

To take the first step in addressing the aim to “review the regulatory framework surrounding new technologies”, in early 2017 the RCVS Standards Committee launched a “Review of Telemedicine within veterinary practice”, asking for the views of the veterinary professions, animal owners, and stakeholders on the use of telemedicine in veterinary clinical practice. After detailed exploration of the implications of new technologies, including telemedicine, for both animal health and welfare and veterinary regulation, in 2019 the RCVS announced it would be conduct a wide-ranging review of its guidance on ‘under care’ and out-of-hours emergency cover. This remains ongoing.

Meanwhile, it became clear that achieving the other aims and seizing the wider opportunities innovation presented could not be achieved through a biennial symposium alone and that a more joined-up strategic initiative was required. For this reason at the first symposium in October 2017, the RCVS launched ViVet, an ambitious and wide-ranging programme to support and foster innovation in
the veterinary sector. ViVet is driven by the mission of “enabling creative veterinary solutions for the good of animal health and welfare”.

The programme has four strategic aims, to:

1. Foster innovation in the sector and encourage innovators to think about the veterinary profession, so as to put vets and vet nurses at the centre of innovations in animal health
2. Help incumbents and new-entrants navigate the regulatory landscape, ensuring that high standards of animal health and welfare continue to be maintained
3. Showcase innovative products and business models to the professions, thus helping the professions to better serve existing clients and access new ones.
4. Provide market intelligence and prepare the professions for the impact of innovation, whilst at the same time allowing the College to reflect on the future relevance of its regulations

The impact
Building on the inaugural Symposium, in the first year ViVet focused on showcasing innovation to help veterinary professionals to horizon-scan, and understand the impact of innovation, how the market is evolving and the opportunities innovation could provide.

The second year saw ViVet start to provide practical support to help veterinary professionals drive innovation. This features online resources and in-person events, including a series of innovation workshops hosted in Cambridge and an innovation evening at the University of Edinburgh’s Easter Bush Campus. The year concluded with the second Innovation Symposium, this time focusing on Precision Veterinary Medicine and the move to a new age of data-driven practice.

Since its launch, ViVet has published over 20 expert blogs and case studies from thought-leaders, been invited to contribute to numerous national and international conferences and publications, grown a significant following and influence on social media, and met with innovators from within and outwith the profession, seeking guidance on how to develop their ideas, maximise their impact, and comply with regulation.

The forward-thinking programme has been applauded by veterinary regulators globally and has expanded our reach and influence, leading to wider conversations about how regulators could manage innovation on a global level. The programme has also led to engagement beyond the veterinary profession, including with NHS Innovation.

ViVet has had more tangible benefits too, helping veterinary professionals to launch new businesses and those outside to engage with the profession to refine the products and services they are developing, so as to better serve the needs of the profession and animal health.

The future
We will conclude our under care and out-of-hours emergency cover review, seeking, if required, to publish new future-proof Guidance by the end of 2020.

Meanwhile, the ViVet programme will continue to support the veterinary professions to maximise opportunities to improve animal health and welfare as the sector goes through a period of profound technological change. ViVet will also expand into new areas offering support to the delivery of new strategic aims around sustainability and quality improvement.
Everyday leadership – the Edward Jenner Leadership Programme

An ambition included in the RCVS Strategic Plan 2017-2019 was ‘to become a Royal College with leadership and innovation at its heart, and support this creatively and with determination.’

This vision was distilled down into a leadership strategy with three distinctive aims – the first being Leadership for Everyone, which sought to:

Promote the importance of self-reflection and the development of leadership skills as key aspects of veterinary professionals’ continuing education and to provide the resources to help support such development.

The challenge

A key message from Vet Futures was that the veterinary professions had given leadership insufficient focus. Specifically, the report highlighted a shortage of vets and veterinary nurses stepping forward into leadership roles, raising the concern that the professions did not have sufficient leadership capacity, and neither was there strong enough evidence that such a capability was being developed for the future.

The damaging consequences of not having well-developed leaders are numerous, but it is at the everyday level that its effects can be most keenly felt. Veterinary professionals make difficult clinical judgements based on imperfect information and face emotive issues with clients and colleagues. If insufficient focus is given to the development of their interpersonal skills, which can offer protection against the uncertainty and messy realities of daily life in practice, feelings of failure can grow and, if left unchecked, this can lead to a sense of disillusionment with the profession.

When seeking to engage people on this topic other, more hidden, challenges arise too, such as the emphasis the profession places on technical and clinical skills development at the expense of non-technical skills such as those associated with leadership.

What we did

Leadership is a combination of skills, attitudes and behaviours. It is not possible to give people leadership skills; they need to develop them by applying learning theory in practice.

Accordingly, in 2017 the RCVS approached the NHS Leadership Academy to explore the potential for adapting one part of its training offer – the Edward Jenner programme – to make it appropriate for those working in a veterinary setting. After several months of development, a fully tailored veterinary leadership programme was created, and piloted in the summer of 2018.

The Edward Jenner Veterinary Professionals programme combines the tried and tested with a unique approach. To the former it used the highly successful Edward Jenner programme and award-winning FutureLearn platform. To the latter, it introduced highly innovative and tailored content such as the audio drama Glenvern to engage learners.
The programme comprises two MOOCs (massive open online courses) and a final assessment. Both courses comprise articles, videos, discussion sections and an audio drama series. The first course introduces the concept of leadership, elaborating on why it matters and the types of issues faced by leaders, as well as exploring the leadership skills we may already possess – sometimes without knowing. This goes to the heart of the view that all veterinary professionals are leaders.

The second of the two courses helps learners develop the foundations of their leadership practice through understanding more about themselves and the impact they have on others.

After completing the two courses, learners are able to progress to the last stage of the programme: a final assessment. This sees learners create a portfolio consisting of four reflective blogs designed to evidence understanding of leadership through the impact they can demonstrate in practice. Completion of this stage of the course leads to professional accreditation in the form of an NHS Leadership Academy Award in Leadership Foundations.

The MOOC format allows participants to fit learning around their busy lives, meaning learning can be done in bite-size segments, on the go and at a pace that suits the learner.

**The impact**

In addition to the initial pilot, two runs of the programme have been successfully held. In total there have been over 7,000 enrolments across the programme’s modules, with participants drawn from 130 different countries. A survey of those who have completed the programme has found that: 80 per cent of responders perceived the programme to have given them new knowledge or skills; 70 per cent felt they were applying their new learning; whilst over 60 per cent had shared their learning with colleagues.

Describing their experience of the programme and the impact it had had on them, one participant wrote: “I do have the ability to lead and I have been leading for some time but now I have the confidence and new skills to make a bigger difference.”

**The future**

There is an ambition for the Jenner programme to be a starting point for veterinary professionals’ lifelong leadership development. It should fit within a wider framework of learning opportunities that allow for the development of appropriate skills, attitudes and behaviours wherever the individual is on their career pathway.
A Reflective approach to CPD

To “Consult upon, and implement as appropriate, an outcomes-based approach to continuing professional development” was one of the actions within the RCVS Strategic Plan 2017-2019, under Ambition A: Learning Culture.

The challenge
There is strong evidence that adopting an outcomes-based approach to continuing professional development (CPD) is more likely to result in a positive impact on an individual’s learning, professional development and professional practice. The main features of an outcomes-based approach are represented by the cycle of “Plan”, “Do”, “Record” and “Reflect”. CPD activities are planned based on an identified learning / development need, ensuring relevance and increasing engagement with the activity, and after the CPD activity has taken place the individual should reflect on the outcomes, i.e. what has been learned, whether further gaps in knowledge / skills need to be addressed, and how their future practice may change as a result (if required). A reflection that further learning is needed following a CPD activity would see the outcomes-based cycle returning to “plan”.

There is a common misconception that reflection is time consuming, and unnecessary. However, the benefits are proven, and reflection does not have to be onerous. Although a detailed reflective account may be useful, reflection can take the form of concise bullet points, a recorded discussion, or short note detailing the outcomes and / or impact. This misconception is widespread and not limited to the veterinary profession, therefore effective communication and guidance around the outcomes-based CPD approach, in addition to making the recording of CPD and reflections as easy as possible for veterinary professionals, was identified as a priority.

A further misconception – which potentially adds to concerns around this being an additional burden to members – is that only ‘formal’ CPD such as attending conferences, lectures or reading journals is relevant. As such, we are actively promoting other types of CPD, such as discussing significant events with the practice team, or running a clinical audit.

What we did
The outcomes-based approach was piloted with a number of volunteers from the profession, which provided us with important feedback, including the need for a more effective online platform to record CPD. Consequently, the pilot was extended to a wider range of members, to ensure that we could consider the feedback in the final approach proposed. The evaluation of these pilots demonstrated that there was support for the outcomes-based CPD model, and the feedback allowed us to develop an implementation plan which focused on clear policy, flexibility, a clear communications plan and the development of a bespoke, new online platform that could be used easily by members to plan, record and reflect on CPD activities.

RCVS Council agreed the proposals, and that the new approach should be implemented for all members on a voluntary basis from January 2020, becoming mandatory in January 2022.
Work began on the development of the 1CPD app, the development of detailed guidance, and a detailed communications plan including case studies and filmed interviews addressing FAQs, such as ‘how to reflect’.

The impact
More than 200 individuals (vets and vet nurses) responded to an open call for volunteers to pilot the 1CPD app as part of its development, and feedback was highly positive. Development of the 1CPD platform continues, with more useful features being added.

Quotes from volunteers piloting the 1CPD platform:

“I find filling out my CPD really easy and is now a joy to do rather than feeling like a chore. I really like that I can record future CPD events in the app. I quite like the reflection section so I can discuss things that were highlighted to me and to think of ways I can bring that back into practice”. (VN working in practice)

“I love this app - it has made recording my CPD in a day to day manner so easy!” (academic vet working in a vet school)

“So far I have found the app to be logically designed and easy to use with useful prompts in the "reflect" section to help me understand how to organise my thought processes.” (veterinary surgeon working in practice)

The future
The new policy and app will be launched in January 2020, and feedback will continue to be reviewed so that it can be developed and improved.
Graduate Outcomes – developing vets for tomorrow

To “Review outcomes for graduates, with consideration of the likely requirements from the profession and the public of the vets of tomorrow” was identified as a major initiative within the Vet Futures Action Plan, and consequently this became a key area within the RCVS Strategic Plan 2017-2019, under Ambition C: Continuing to be a First-rate Regulator.

The challenge
The review needed to ensure that new veterinary graduates were fully prepared for their roles as a veterinary surgeons, with the right knowledge and skills, and felt supported during their transition into work. Consequently, this ambitious project included a review of the RCVS Day One Competences (D1C), undergraduate clinical education and extra-mural studies (EMS), and the Professional Development Phase (PDP) for new graduates.

What we did
RCVS Day One Competences
RCVS accreditation of undergraduate veterinary programmes requires demonstration that all of the RCVS D1C are met upon graduation. Therefore, in order to ensure that new graduates are prepared for their future role, these were reviewed to identify any gaps, and / or emerging priorities.

In addition to identifying new relevant competences, such as the development of resilience, we also developed a new conceptual model (see right) for the D1C to demonstrate how the different domains of competence contribute to becoming a well-rounded, confident and competent veterinary professional.

The new proposals were put to the profession for consideration as part of the Graduate Outcomes consultation exercise. There was support for the additional competences, and for the conceptual model.

Undergraduate Clinical Education, EMS and ‘Tracking’
These aspects of undergraduate veterinary education were considered together, recognising the complexities and potential co-dependencies involved. With regard to clinical education, previous research indicated that graduates didn’t always feel prepared for their role in terms of their clinical skills, and lacked confidence, and consequently there were concerns that this could be contributing to high attrition rates within the profession. Most of the long-established vet schools in the UK had a curriculum reflecting the presence of a veterinary hospital / referral centre on-campus. Such facilities present opportunities for students to see the more unusual and challenging cases. However, a significant majority of new graduates enter the profession in general practice, and there were
concerns about the balance of clinical education for students in this area being appropriate to adequately prepare them for their role. The Graduate Outcomes consultation explored which areas of the veterinary curriculum were considered to be taught most effectively in a range of settings, including general practice, charity clinics and university settings.

‘Tracking’ within the veterinary curriculum, i.e. the ability for students to elect clinical placements within a particular area of practice such as companion animals, farm animals or equine, is already permitted within the RCVS Standards of Accreditation as long as all students achieve the D1C. However, in reality, very few veterinary schools choose to provide tracking options to the extent that is permitted. The Graduate Outcomes Working Party debated allowing a larger degree of Tracking, leading to limited licensure, but this was considered not to be viable at this time. However, it was agreed that increased ‘Tracking’ options could be advantageous, presenting more options for students. The Graduate Outcomes consultation explored the advantages / disadvantages associated with increased ‘Tracking’ within veterinary programmes, and whether they were supportive of this.

EMS is a requirement of undergraduate veterinary education that involves students spending a minimum number of weeks on work experience, with the aim of consolidating the skills they have been taught within the curriculum, and practising them within the workplace context. Concerns have existed about EMS for a number of years, primarily due to the highly variable quality of experiences encountered by students, and the increasing challenges encountered by students in accessing and financing EMS placements.

We developed a number of options to present to the profession within the consultation, including parallel Animal Husbandry EMS and Clinical EMS, a block placement at the end of the veterinary programme (which could transition into a redeveloped PDP), early clinical exposure and formalisation into externships. The consultation explored how effective the profession felt each option would be, and invited further options for consideration.

The results of the consultation were less clear in the above areas. There was a clear mandate for the majority of clinical education to take place in a general practice setting, but recognition that other settings can also be useful. There was support for EMS as a concept, and the need for RCVS to be clear about requirements, but no clear steer as to what the future model should look like. Similarly, opinions around ‘Tracking’ were varied.

Postgraduate Development Phase (PDP)
The aim of the PDP is to support new graduates in their transition into work. However, previous research commissioned by the RCVS confirmed members’ feedback that although there was a great deal of support for the concept of the PDP, the current format was not achieving this aim and was considered to be a ‘tick-box exercise’. The PDP needed to be structured differently, and to provide genuine support to new graduates as they move beyond D1C into being capable, independent practitioners.

The consultation explored how this could be achieved, and the types of initiatives the profession felt would result in the aims being met, with graduates feeling empowered and supported. The profession supported the development of a new programme with less of a tick-box approach, and the
introduction of personal mentors that could provide feedback to graduates on their progress, and support them through their journey. There was also agreement that the RCVS should accredit and quality assure practices taking on new graduates within the new programme.

**The impact**
As a result of the consultation, which, with 1,963 full responses and 3,825 partial responses, received the largest number of responses to any RCVS consultation, clear plans are in place for the revision of the RCVS D1C, including the conceptual model. In addition, detailed proposals have been agreed for the development of a new programme for graduates to replace the current PDP. In this respect the profession supported radical change, and we are excited about developing a supportive programme that helps graduates develop into capable, independent practitioners.

**The future**
It was clear following the consultation that the future of undergraduate clinical education, ‘Tracking’ and EMS need further consideration and we have already started this through workshops with key stakeholders. There is agreement that future plans need to address the concerns and problems identified, whilst retaining flexibility such that all vet schools – whatever their particular curriculum model – can implement the approach and that quality improvement / innovation is not compromised.
RCVS Certificate in Advanced Veterinary Nursing

Action 7 of the joint RCVS/British Veterinary Nursing Association VN Futures project, was to “Establish a working party through the RCVS to further canvas opinion on the scope, level and delivery of post-qualification awards for veterinary nurses”, and action 8 aimed to “Develop advanced practitioner qualifications and/or status”. Both of these fell under the VN Futures ambition to develop structured and rewarding career paths for veterinary nurses, and the 2017-2019 RCVS Strategic Plan committed to support the delivery of VN Futures, working collaboratively where appropriate.

The challenge
Until now, the RCVS Diploma in Advanced Veterinary Nursing (Dip AVN) has been the only post-qualification veterinary nursing professional award made by the RCVS under our Royal Charter.

The award, which has been running for thirteen years, was set within the Framework for higher education qualifications in England, Wales and Northern Ireland (FHEQ) at Level 5 and required achievement of a minimum of 120 credits (each credit equating to a notional 10 hours of learning) delivered and assessed by a Higher Education Institution (HEI). In addition, a final integrative assessment, which has traditionally been assessed by the HEI, also needed to be achieved.

The Dip AVN was modular in style, incorporating both core and optional modules, accredited by the RCVS, and could be studied both independently or as a whole qualification (Diploma in Advanced Veterinary Nursing Surgical and Diploma in Advanced Veterinary Nursing Medical).

There are two higher education institutions offering the Diploma in Advanced Veterinary Nursing. To date, of the 17,000 veterinary nurses on the Register, 577 have achieved the Dip AVN, with a further 41 enrolled on to a Dip AVN programme. Of the 577 Dip AVN holders, 26 qualified via the vocational route.

There were many challenges that came with Dip AVN:
- Registered Veterinary Nurses (RVNs) were required to have been on the Register a minimum of 12 months prior to enrolling
- Only two institutions were accredited to deliver Dip AVN programmes therefore, offering limited recruitment opportunities
- The RCVS accredited modules with set learning outcomes and assessment criteria
- Only broad subject areas were available (surgical and medical)
- 120 credits took approximately five years to complete on a part-time basis
- It was a Level 5 qualification

Throughout a series VN Futures roadshow meetings, the appetite for further post-registration qualifications that were accessible (regardless of the route to registration), flexible and cost-effective was strongly expressed. In addition to specialist clinical pathways, other areas for post-registration awards, such as leadership and management, advanced first opinion and advanced practitioner nursing, were also identified as necessary to provide career progression for all veterinary nurses, regardless of their training route.
What we did
The VN Futures Post-Registration Group canvassed opinion on the scope, level and delivery of the Diploma in Advanced Veterinary Nursing, reviewed the Certificate in Advanced Practitioner that RCVS awards to veterinary surgeons and considered post-registration qualification frameworks offered by other healthcare providers.

The resultant new Certificate in Advanced Veterinary Nursing (Cert AVN) framework is more accessible, flexible and affordable thus appealing to both students and providers. It incorporates the requirements set out by the Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education (QAA) and permits the RCVS to maintain a level of post-registration professional standards.

Universities are free to set their credit value and levels, learning outcomes and assessment criteria in line with market demands. To achieve the RCVS Cert AVN, candidates must achieve a minimum of 60 credits, 40 of which must be at FHEQ level 6 or Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework (SCQF) Level 9. The focused field of study within these qualifications must amount to a minimum of 40 credits of subject specific content at level 6.

The main components of the new framework are:
- Open to all RVNs regardless of time spent on the Register, or their route to qualification
- 60 credits; 40 of which must be a minimum of Level 6 and specific to the field of focus
- No prescribed learning outcomes and/or assessment criteria
- Offered at both Level 6 and Level 7, encouraging progression for all
- No final integrative assessment

The impact
Since approval by VN Council in May 2019, RCVS has accredited eight programmes with one university, scheduled three university accreditation events and is in discussion with a further three organisations wishing to deliver the Cert AVN. There are eighteen students enrolled on the Cert AVN in anaesthesia and three students on the Cert AVN in oncology.

With nurses better utilised in practice within their developed ‘niche’ areas we hope to see increased retention within the veterinary nursing profession.

The future
The long-term vision is to create a clear career development path to motivate RVNs into studying their desired field of focus, encouraging and increasing sources of evidence-based veterinary nursing medicine and providing ambassadors to inspire the next generation.

It is envisaged that these new pathways could be used to promote recognition of knowledge, skills, competency and experience in a specialised field in the form of an ‘Advanced Practitioner’ status, with currency being ensured through compulsory revalidation.

We now need to look at widening participation and offering these qualifications to our overseas colleagues.
**Veterinary Client Mediation Service: an alternative approach to complaint-handling**

Under the ambition of developing a learning culture, while reducing a blame culture, the 2017-2019 plan set out an action to introduce an Alternative Dispute Resolution Service, if that was seen as appropriate following the completion of trials. This was also picked up under our ambition of Continuing to be a First-rate Regulator, which included a review of our concerns-handling and disciplinary processes.

**The challenge**

In terms of legislation, the powers of the RCVS are limited by reference to ‘serious professional misconduct’. This is a high threshold. Historically, it meant that there were situations, commonly around poor service / consumer disputes, that were not resolved through practices’ internal practice complaints processes, but where clients had valid issues; however, as these could never reach the high threshold required, we had no jurisdiction to deal with such matters. Inevitably, as the RCVS was not able to do anything in relation to these cases, there was dissatisfaction from the public.

This did not, however, stop these cases coming to the RCVS as formal complaints, since for all practical purposes they, quite simply, had nowhere else to go. (The costs involved to take court proceedings would have been prohibitive in the vast majority of cases.) With more complaints also came an increase in ‘fear’ within the professions, where contact with the regulator in any complaint situation can be stressful.

This, then, was the picture in 2015/2016, with increasing consumer awareness and expectations boosting the number of complaints received year on year, which reached a ‘high’ of just shy of 1,000 in 2016.

**What we did**

There had been a desire for some time within the RCVS to find an alternative route to resolve low level disputes and a voluntary scheme trialled via Ombudsman Services was started in autumn 2014. This was not however, a true alternative, as complaints had firstly to have gone through the RCVS complaints process; it was a paper-based adjudication system and while it was free for those participating it was perceived as slow, uptake was low and dissatisfaction high. While lessons were learned it was not seen as a workable solution.

The focus then shifted to a telephone mediation service operating as a true alternative to, and independent from, the RCVS complaints process. Participation was voluntary and by direct access; it was at no cost to those taking part with a ‘triaging’ system of ‘Enquiries’ put in place at the RCVS to signpost complainants to the most appropriate route. The new Veterinary Client Mediation Service (VCMS) was born and operated in the first instance as a trial.

**The impact**

The impact of these measures was a significant reduction in the numbers of formal complaints registered with the RCVS - now in the region of 600 per year. Fewer cases has meant less stress for veterinary professionals but, importantly, benefits for consumers, able to access a meaningful route
for redress. At the same time, we are able to concentrate on the cases that we need to consider more seriously. Fears within the profession that the scheme would amount to ‘no fault compensation’ by the back door have not materialised and feedback from both the public and the profession has been very positive, and participation high.

**The future**
Since the early days of the trial the number of enquiries / cases going through the VCMS has increased dramatically, perhaps not surprisingly as awareness of its existence has increased to the point where it is well known and indeed promoted by practices themselves. Numbers appear to be stabilising but it provides a hugely important service and is accepted as an integral part of the overall concerns process, operating to the benefit of all concerned. We will maintain the service under review to ensure it continues to meet the needs of both the public and the profession.
Mind Matters Initiative – supporting the mental health and wellbeing of the veterinary team

The 2017-19 Strategic Plan committed to support our Mind Matters Initiative, launched in 2015.

The challenge
For some time it has been recognised that veterinary surgeons in the UK are three to four times more likely to die by suicide than members of the general public. There are high levels of stress, anxiety and depression within the veterinary team (including veterinary nurses and practice managers), and also issues around help-seeking behaviour and stigma.

Although there are good sources of help and support, such as Vetlife Helpline and Vetlife Health Support, either members of the veterinary team didn’t know about the help, or didn’t recognise they needed it, or the stigma was such that they didn’t feel able to seek help (or seek help early enough).

What we did
So, in early 2015 we launched the Mind Matters Initiative (MMI), a five-year, £1M project to address issues of mental health and wellbeing of all those in the veterinary team. Although it is funded and run by the RCVS, collaboration has been key in the success of the project so far, and a taskforce, that comprises individuals from various representative bodies (students, nurses, managers, practice owners, vet schools etc), has been instrumental in driving results.

We offer mental health awareness training and try to break down the stigma associated with mental ill-health. We also develop and support resources and courses to help students, vets, nurses and practice managers to flourish, and, when needed, to get back on form.

Our programme is divided into three streams of activity:

Prevent – proactively looking at systemic issues within the veterinary profession to help minimise the chance of people becoming unwell in the first place. Our anti-stigma campaign, &Me, which we run with the Doctors’ Support Network, also falls under this stream of activity.

Protect – a programme of communications and training designed to equip individuals with the skills and knowledge they need to stay well, even when working under challenging conditions.

Support – financial and other support for existing independent services, such as Vet Support NI, Vetlife Helpline and Vetlife Health Support, together with an investigation into what more may be required to support those in need, and catalysing the development of those services.

The impact
During our first five years, some of the activities undertaken include:

- Running around 60 mental health awareness courses, many with the British Small Animal Veterinary Association (BSAVA)
- Online courses with the Webinar Vet, including two mindfulness courses, the second reaching nearly 2,500 delegates across five countries, and an online sleep series with nearly 500 delegates in 13 countries
• A pilot of the Schwartz Rounds reflective process with seven practices
• A pilot of four resilience courses, which have led to a year-long series of events with BSAVA
• Distribution of mental health awareness resources, including publishing ‘A guide to enhancing wellbeing and managing work’
• Funding the set up of Vet Support NI, a peer-support service
• ‘Medical Mind Matters’ conference with members of the veterinary, pharmaceutical, dental and human medical professions
• Support of Vetlife (providing over £110k per year in financial support) - calls to Vetlife Helpline have gone up 500% in the last five years and we have heard many positive stories around help-seeking
• Four years of the Vet Wellbeing Awards, run in partnership with the Society of Practising Veterinary Surgeons (SPVS)
• A series of wellbeing in practice roadshows, run in partnership with the Veterinary Management Group (VMG) and SPVS; and a series of mental health for managers courses, also with VMG
• Support for a range of student-led activities, including the Association of Veterinary Students (AVS) Vetkind Online Wellbeing day, and a Veterinary Student Mental Health and Wellbeing Roundtable
• RCVS signing the Time to Change mental health pledge

The future
In September 2018, RCVS Council committed to support Mind Matters beyond its initial five-year term, on a rolling three-year basis. We will continue to address the mental health and wellbeing of the veterinary team under our core workstreams, working to principles of being innovative, accessible, evidence-based, collaborative, destigmatising and outward-looking.

We are currently adding mental health standards to the Practice Standards Scheme, which covers nearly 70% of practices in the UK.

Meanwhile, mental health issues affect the veterinary team across the world, it’s not just a UK situation. In recognition of the importance of supporting the veterinary family wherever it may be, we are starting to work internationally, and were delighted to sign a memorandum of understanding with the American Veterinary Medical Association in 2018. We will continue to support veterinary individuals and organisations both at home and internationally in making the veterinary profession rewarding, safe and sustainable.
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<td>Date</td>
<td>23 January 2020</td>
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<tr>
<td>Title</td>
<td>Advancement of the Professions Committee Report</td>
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<tr>
<td>Classification</td>
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<td>Summary</td>
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<td>Decisions required</td>
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Minutes of the Advancement of the Professions Committee held on Tuesday, 12 November 2019 at 2pm at Belgravia House, 62-64 Horseferry Road, London SW1P 2AF.

Members:

Dr C J Allen*  Council Member
Professor D Argyle (Chair)  Council Member
Professor John Innes  Chair, RCVS Fellowship Board
Ms A Boag*  Senior Vice-President and Leadership lead
Dr N Connell  President, and Chair, Diversity and Inclusion Group
Professor S Dawson  Chair, Mind Matters Initiative
Ms L Lockett  Chief Executive
Miss R Marshall  Chair, Veterinary Nurses Council
Mrs J Molyneux  Chair, Board of Trustees for RCVS Knowledge
Dr C Tufnell  Innovation and Global lead
Mr T Walker  Lay Council Member

In attendance:  Mr A Roberts  Director of Leadership and Innovation
Mr B Myring  Policy and Public Affairs Manager
Mr I Holloway  Director of Communications
Mr O Glackin  Leadership Initiatives Manager
Miss C Chick  Leadership Initiatives Officer
Miss R Pascoe  Mind Matters Initiative Officer
Dr G Wild  Policy and Public Affairs Officer

*absent
Welcome and apologies for absence

1. The Chair welcomed all present to the meeting of the APC. He noted that he would be focusing on discussing the Committee’s remit later in the meeting.

2. Apologies were received from:
   - Ms A Boag
   - Dr C Allan

Declarations of Interest

3. There were no declarations of interest.

Minutes of the last meeting, held on 10 September 2019

4. The minutes were approved as an accurate record of the meeting.

Updates from APC workstreams

5. The responsible Committee members or the relevant staff lead provided an update on each of the eight workstreams that come within scope of the APC; this reflected the contents of the paper (APC Nov AI01).

6. The Committee considered these updates as well as specific matters raised, brought to it for discussion and in some cases decision. These are highlighted below in addition to the main questions and comments each area prompted.

Diversity and Inclusion Working Group

7. It was noted that work is ongoing, with an article published which outlines and raises the profile of the work of DIG. It was noted that this article had been well received.

8. The Chair noted the importance of diversity and inclusion training and the real benefits that staff often got from it. He went on to ask whether there might be merit for all Council members to undertake such training. It was noted that this was something that was being explored as part of the wider Council member training package.
Fellowship

9. It was noted that Fellowship Day 2019 was a success, with 130 people attending. Positive feedback was received about the event.

10. It was reported that the Fellowship workstream is liaising with the RCVS Events team to explore the viability of alternative venues to hold future Fellowship Days, with an eye to reducing cost and increasing accessibility.

11. It was discussed how there was a greater need to communicate about the Fellowship and its activities. Doing so would seek to achieve a number of aims, including encouraging applications for Fellowship from a wider pool of vets, raising awareness of the Fellowship’s role and purpose and to engage and energise Fellows to play an active role in the life of the Fellowship. The Committee heard about the range of activities that was planned including growing the mentoring scheme and revitalising the Fellows on Tour initiative.

12. Concern was raised about the gender split of new Fellows and the need to undertake further work to encourage women to apply. It was noted that there is an increasing trajectory for women applying for Fellowship, however around two thirds of Fellows are men. The Committee expressed its support for the importance of increasing diversity in Fellowship applications.

13. The Fellowship workstream was encouraged to send thank you letters to those who made a donation to Fellowship Day, and to those who brought a guest to the event.

    Action: Fellowship

14. It was discussed whether the guideline of 15 years post-graduation is a reasonable aim, or whether professionals could achieve Fellowship sooner. It was noted that this guidance is only given for those considering applying via the Meritorious Contributions to Knowledge route. The Committee expressed concern that this rule might be being misapplied to the other routes with the consequence that potential applicants are being discouraged from applying. It was agreed that the guidance should be reviewed.

    Action: Fellowship

15. It was noted that the deadline for 2020 Fellowship applications has been confirmed as 3 February 2020.

Global

16. Prior to a substantive paper coming to the Committee at its next meeting, the Committee was provided with a brief update on discussions that took place at an earlier Education Committee.
This related to feedback that it was unlikely that RCVS Specialist status would prove an attractive proposition in the overseas market. However, the RCVS Advanced Practitioner status was thought to offer more promise.

17. It was noted that a summary of the results from the ‘Survey of MsRCVS Practising outside the UK’ was included in the meeting pack, and was due to be published. It was highlighted that a strong message coming out of the survey was that people who graduate from UK vet schools and work overseas were proud of their continued association with the RCVS. A paper discussing the results in more detail and proposals based on them will come to a future meeting.

Action: Global team

Innovation

18. It was noted that the biennial RCVS ViVet Innovation symposium was successful. The workstream is in discussion about how to widen participation for the symposium’s Vet Futures competition, to include students and members of the veterinary profession.

19. The Chair queried the level of uptake of innovation within the profession. To ensure that all opportunities are being exploited. It was noted that the priorities for the RCVS Innovation three-year plan would be reviewed as it enters its third and final year.

20. The Committee heard that ViVet would be making even greater efforts to define its role. This was particularly important as in some instances a point had been reached where it may be more appropriate for others from the commercial sector to take the lead. ViVet should reinforce its status as encouraging the professions engage with the benefits of embracing innovation in their work, rather than promoting specific innovations.

Leadership

21. It was noted that the next round of the Edward Jenner Online Veterinary Leadership Programme was set to begin on Monday 18 November.

22. It was reported that the workstream had begun an evaluation of the programme. It was proposed that this analysis would be brought to the next Committee meeting.

23. The Committee heard that one way of addressing the lack of signposting of appropriate leadership training programmes in the professions could be helped by creating a leadership standard and training framework. This would provide a means of linking training to career
development pathways. The Committee supported the working up of a substantive paper along these lines.

24. The Committee discussed the idea of a Leadership Bursary. This would require strong criteria with the focus on how such bursaries would benefit not only the individual but also the profession more broadly. The concept could be broadened for other workstreams coming under the purview of the APC.

Mind Matters Initiative

25. The Committee was updated on staffing of the Mind Matters Initiative, including the addition of a new member of staff to support the delivery of its work.

26. In response to questions about how the success of the Mind Matters Initiative was evaluated the Committee heard how judging its impact could be challenging due to the innate difficulty of knowing when interventions have had the desired effect. However, there were a number of measures, as well as anecdotal feedback, being used which pointed strongly to its positive influence. A question was asked about the possibility of using aggregated data, handled by a trusted third party, to better understand the current situation in the profession.

27. It was confirmed that a response to the review of the RCVS’s disciplinary practices would be published as soon as it was practicable to do so.

RCVS Knowledge

28. It was reported that RCVS Knowledge was producing a document around ‘Evidence Based Veterinary Medicine’, and its impact across specialisms.

29. It was reported that there would be a major upgrade on RCVS Veterinary Evidence.

30. It was reported that there was an ongoing project to digitise key historical veterinary texts, which had attracted significant support from the Alborada Trust.

VN Futures - Update

31. The Chair of the Veterinary Nurses Council provided an update including details of the successful work groups it had hosted at BVNA Congress in October.
Update to APC Remit – Professor David Argyle

32. The Chair gave a detailed presentation setting out how the Advancement of the Professions Committee might be able to adopt a more systematic approach that further leverages the knowledge and expertise held in its workstreams to deliver the RCVS’s strategic goals.

33. It was noted that the original purpose of the Committee was to advance standards in the interests of the public and animals welfare. It was highlighted how another purpose of the Committee was to support the professions by helping them prepare for the evolving professional environment - including changes in working practices, animal owner expectations, the advent of new technologies and the big data revolution. To do this, the Committee needed to be forward looking, and able to identify and learn from developments in the wider healthcare ecosystem.

34. Focusing on how this might be achieved, it was proposed that a means of unifying workstreams could be developing a biennial theme to focus activities, with each workstream contributing. The suggestion for an initial theme was advancing the professions through primary care practice. Specifically, it was suggested that this would be a two-year programme. The first year would enable data gathering and planning followed by a second year of implementation.

35. It was agreed that the next meeting of the Committee would discuss in more detail how each workstream could support this aim with particular emphasis given to opportunities for cross-cutting activities. The Committee secretariat was invited to coordinate the necessary meetings to set the ball rolling.

Action: APC Secretariat

Date of the next meeting

36. The date of the next meeting was confirmed as the afternoon of 11 February 2020.
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| Author | Britta Crawford  
EC Committee Secretary  
020 7202 0777  
b.crawford@rcvs.org.uk |
Education Committee
Minutes of the meeting held on 12 November 2019

Present:  
Professor Ewan Cameron
*Mr Danny Chambers  Also Adv Practitioner Panel Chair
Ms Linda Ford
Professor Richard Hammond
Mrs Susan Howarth
Dr Susan (Sue) Paterson  Chair
Dr Cheryl Scudamore
Professor Kenneth Smith
Professor James Wood
Ms Katie Fox  Student representative
Mr Tobias Hunter  Student representative

By invitation:  
Professor Susan Dawson  PQSC Chairman
*Professor Jill Maddison  CertAVP Sub-Committee Chair
*Mr John Fishwick  Chair of Specialist Sub-Committee
Dr Joanne Dyer  EMS Co ordinators Liaison Group
Professor Stephen May  Graduate Outcomes Working Group

In attendance:  
Mr Duncan Ash  Senior Education Officer
Mrs Britta Crawford  Committee Secretary
Mr Jordan Nichols  Senior Education Officer
Dr Linda Prescott-Clements  Director of Education
Mr Jonathan Reid  Examinations Manager
Ms Jenny Soreskog-Turp  Senior Education Officer
Ms Joanne Stetzel  Marketing Communications Manager
Mr Felix Michaux  Lead Software Developer
Ms Joanne Stetzel  Marketing Communications Manager

Officer Team  
Observer:  
Ms Amanda Boag  

* Absent

Apologies for absence and welcome

1. Apologies were received from Jill Maddison, Danny Chambers and John Fishwick
Declarations of interest

2. There were no updated declarations of interest.

Minutes

3. The minutes of the meeting held on 10 September 2019 were approved.

Matters arising

4. The committee noted that a proposal for how to charge for franchise degrees had been put to Council, as actioned in the Education Committee (EC) minutes, and had been approved. Council had also approved the further recommendations from EC including the approval of accreditation for Surrey and the Mutual Recognition Agreement (MRA) with the Veterinary Council of Ireland (VCI).

5. The Committee also heard that a visitation had been arranged with CityU in Hong Kong for 2022.

6. The Committee asked about the further developments regarding assistance for refugees in taking the Statutory Membership Examination. They were informed that this had been discussed at senior team; the principles of a scheme to support refugees had been agreed and the mechanics of administration were being finalised. There had been an application from a refugee recently via Vet Life.

Education Department update

7. The Director of Education, Dr Linda Prescott-Clements, gave an oral update on the work of the Education Department. The Committee heard that the RCVS will be hosting the International Accreditors Working Group (IAWG) in 2020 for three days at the beginning of June. The third day is reserved for a meeting with the World Veterinary Association (WVA), Veterinary Education Working Group (VEWG) to discuss how IAWG members can work with them to provide workshops to promote effective quality assurance of veterinary education worldwide.

8. The Committee heard that the MRA with the VCI was signed on the 31st October at the RCVS with the President and Registrar of the VCI attending.

9. Dr Prescott-Clements had attended the European Board of Medical Assessors conference, chairing a session on ‘Professionalism, Postgraduate & Diversity’ and attended the special interest group on programmatic assessment. Some of the highlights included an update from the General Medical Council on the development of their Medical Licencing Assessment and reports on professionalism-focused OSCE’s. There were a number of reports on the usefulness of programmatic assessment, which includes informal, low stakes, assessment points over the period of training, to build a valid and reliable picture of progress and achievement to inform high stakes decisions around competence.
10. The Committee was informed that Professor Chris Proudman had accepted an invitation to join the CertAVP sub-committee. The next CertAVP sub-committee meeting will be discussing the scope of the review of CertAVP, to run in parallel with the Advanced Practitioner (AP) status review. A paper will come to EC once the scope of the work has been agreed.

**Update from the CPD Referral Group**

11. The Committee received and noted the minutes from the CPD Referral Group’s last meeting on the 2 October 2019.

12. The chair of the CPD Referral Group, Ms Linda Ford, explained to the committee that the group had discussed details of the new CPD policy and especially the process for pausing CPD and applying for exceptional circumstances. The group had received feedback that parental leave should not be classified as an exceptional circumstance and therefore the group decided to revise the wording of the policy so that veterinary surgeons can pause their CPD for both exceptional circumstances and planned periods away from work. The process will be the same for both paths.

**Update from the CPD Working Party**

13. Professor Stephen May gave an update from the CPD Working Party. After piloting the outcomes-based model for the last few years, and following a decision by Council, the RCVS is rolling out the approach with members on a voluntary basis from January 2020 (which will become mandatory January 2022). It is very important to communicate the benefits of outcomes-based CPD to members, and therefore we have been working closely with the Communications team to have a strategy in place.

14. Ms Joanne Stetzel, RCVS Marketing Manager, updated the committee about the communications strategy. There is a new page on the website for the new CPD policy and the communications team have been filming council members to answer questions about CPD and reflection. The plan is to provide clear answers from members of the profession to key questions members may have about the changes, through the use of videos as well as case studies from CPD pilot volunteers.

**Demonstration of the CPD App**

15. Mr Felix Michaux, RCVS lead developer, demonstrated the main features of the new CPD app – 1CPD - that would support the outcomes-based model of “plan, do, record and reflect”. The Committee was impressed with the app and thought that it would make recording and reflecting on CPD much easier. The app will also be available offline and then synchronise an individual’s CPD record once they have a Wi-Fi connection again.

16. The development team are still working on the web portal but it should be ready by the 18th November and the trial users will then be able to start using it. Mr Michaux reassured the committee that there would not be any problems with the servers following the launch in January 2020 as the RCVS is using Amazon cloud, which supports millions of users worldwide.
Graduate Outcomes

PDP Project Plan

17. Professor May introduced the Graduate Outcomes papers, acknowledging the hard work of all those involved. The consultation results for the PDP section were clearer than some other areas of the Graduate Outcomes consultation and the committee was presented with a project plan setting out the aims, objectives, scope and delivery of work to establish an effective period of support for veterinary graduates in the early years of their career. Four phases of the project were described:

- Phase 1: Defining the purpose, structure and content of the graduate transition phase
- Phase 2: E-portfolio design and e-learning content development
- Phase 3: Accreditation, Recognition and Quality Assurance
- Phase 4: Design a pilot and recruit participants

18. The phases would involve three “Task and Finish” (TF) groups:
   - TF1: Entrustable Professional Activity (EPA) Development Group
   - TF2: Mentorship Development Group
   - TF3: Accreditation and QA Development Group

19. The committee asked about the governance considerations as there was a heavy reliance on the time and goodwill of the members of the task and finish groups to engage with the project and keep to the timetable. The committee was assured that the time commitment would be made clear to members at the start of the project and that the governance lay with the Education Department, who would address matters where necessary and discuss adjustments of the timetable with EC where appropriate.

20. The committee highlighted that the project needed significant buy-in from the profession and that a detailed communication strategy would be vital. The Education team agreed that this was the case and would review the involvement of the communications team in the timeline and bring it forward within the project.

21. The committee asked and were reassured that the project would look at the needs and constraints of all types of practices and that the rules for compliance would be clearly stated. They were also reassured that the plan is intended to be truly supportive for graduates. The education team acknowledged that the project plan stated the aims and objectives and not the final outcomes of the project but that this needed to be determined with the input of stakeholders in the task and finish groups.

22. The committee heard that an executive summary of the consultation findings is being prepared by the group who carried out the research. This would be circulated via email and would hopefully assist with clarity of the bigger picture for the Graduate Outcomes project as a whole.
23. The committee agreed that the task and finish groups should be established in consultation with this committee and would then take on the working responsibility for their sections. The committee approved the project plan and looked forward to receiving updates at further EC meetings.

**ACTION:** Executive Summary to be circulated by email

**ACTION BC and LPC to draw up task and finish groups for approval of this committee**

**Extra-Mural Studies (EMS) / Clinical Education**

24. The committee received and noted a paper that summarised the outcomes of a recent workshop attended by members of the Graduate Outcomes Working Party, VSC and veterinary students, to discuss the results and a potential way forward with the EMS and Clinical Education sections of the GO Consultation, as agreed by Education Committee at their meeting in September.

25. Professor May explained that the workshop had helped to give a clearer steer on progressing work on these areas, and it was proposed that it should be split into three strands;

   a. redefining IMR/EMS, and communicating their purpose more clearly, whilst also investigating the possibilities of a move to outcomes-based EMS;
   b. defining what “general practice” is in terms of clinical education and looking into the amount of clinical education that should take place in general practice as opposed to “other” forms; and
   c. also to explore further options around tracking of clinical rotations as well as EMS.

26. There were a number of discussions about the feedback from the workshop, and it was agreed that the following points would be taken into account when work began on the next stages:
   - All aspects of “general practice” need to be considered in the definition, i.e. farm animal, small animal, equine, etc. as well as different settings including charity led clinics
   - Although some participants in the workshop agreed a percentage of time that could represent the “majority” of clinical education in general practice, different options for defining this should be presented in the next stages and being overly prescriptive should be avoided.
   - It is important for new graduates to understand the differing nature between general/primary care and specialist practice.
   - Any move to outcomes-based EMS will also still need to consider the availability of placements.
   - Flexibility should be allowed for in any changes so that individual circumstances can be considered.
   - More guidance and explanation from the RCVS on EMS and IMR would be welcomed by both students and teachers.

27. The committee approved the proposals for the next stages, and it was agreed that a more detailed proposal with options for each area would be put to the committee at its next meeting in February.

**ACTION:** Project plan to be brought to the Committee in February
Statutory Membership Exam Update

28. The committee received and discussed a report of the review of the 2019 diet of the Statutory Membership Examination (SME), in addition to the minutes from the SME Board meeting. An update on the final pass list of the 2019 diet was also presented. Sixteen candidates entered the SME with six passed the written component proceeding to the OSCE. Of these six, three passed and were admitted to the register at the beginning of September, and the three candidates who had failed the OSCE component lodged appeals against their results. These three appellants were successful and have been invited to register.

29. As a result of the successful appeals, the SME Board had recommended a number of changes to the SME guidance. These were approved by the Committee.

30. The SME Board also recommended that candidates who fail the OSCE should be given the opportunity to re-enter the SME in the following diet directly at the OSCE stage at a reduced fee. This would entail a change to the Statutory Instrument and thus would need to go to Privy Council. EC agreed to this policy change and the recommendation would be put forward at the next meeting of the RCVS Council.

**ACTION:** Recommendation to be taken to Council.

Accreditation Review

31. Dr Prescott-Clements gave an update to the Committee about progress with the review of RCVS accreditation standards and processes. It was noted that the working party that was overseeing the work now had a chair, Professor Nigel Gibbens, and that he had already been involved in helping members of the Education Department to interview companies bidding to undertake a literature review that was being commissioned.

32. Five high quality tenders for the literature review had been received, and three were chosen to go forward to interview. It was decided to go with the Australian Centre for Educational Research (ACER) who demonstrated the clearest understanding of RCVS' aims and objectives for the literature review.

33. The next meeting of the working party was scheduled for the 10th January 2020 and an update will be brought to the next Education Committee meeting in February.

**ACTION:** Update Education Committee in February

Advanced Practitioner Status: List of approved practitioners

34. The list of Advanced Practitioners approved by the panel in September 2019 was noted and approved.
PDP Statistics

35. The Committee noted the statistics with interest.

Diplomas

36. The Committee received and noted an update of the final round of Diploma examinations. 6 candidates had entered; with 2 candidates passing overall; 3 candidates being unsuccessful; and one examination still on-going.

Fellowship Sub-Committee

37. The minutes of the Fellowship Sub-Committee meeting held on 5 September were received and noted.

38. The Fellowship Sub-Committee had also put forward a recommendation to award the Diploma of Fellowship by Thesis to candidate T/761, following the examiners' initial recommendation. Education Committee agreed to recommend the award to Council for final ratification.

**ACTION: EC Chair to seek recommendation at the next Council meeting**

Global Reach: Advanced Practitioner (AP) and Specialist Status

39. Linda Prescott-Clements spoke about the Global Reach agenda within the RCVS strategy. This included proposals to explore the internationalisation of the AP and Specialist Status. It had previously been felt that there was potential to explore the marketing of AP status in particular and that should be explored.

40. The Committee felt that there was an opportunity to develop recognition of expertise in General Practice, which is currently missing, but that it was not appropriate to develop specialist qualifications as these had already been devolved. The Certificate in Advanced Veterinary Practice has a good potential to be international, especially in those countries where they have a veterinary degree taught in English.

41. A Committee member felt that there was potential to line up with the “Britain is Great” campaign vehicle, providing an opportunity at government level, though DEFRA, to promote ourselves internationally without holding all the burden.

**ACTION: LPC to explore options**

Certificate in Advanced Veterinary Practice: Accreditation Agreement

42. The Committee heard that universities wishing to provide the assessment of modules for the Certificate in Advanced Veterinary Practice (CertAVP) must first sign the CertAVP Accreditation Agreement. Upon review, this accreditation agreement was found to reference the CertAVP bye-laws made in 2006. The bye-laws the College currently work from were made in 2012 in exercise of powers contained within Article 21 of the 1967 Supplemental Charter. When the new
Supplemental Charter came into force in 2015, it repealed the 1967 Charter and all earlier bye-laws including the CertAVP ones from 2012.

43. To ensure the documents are current and comply with the Supplemental Charter the CertAVP By-Laws have been to become “Rules” and the Accreditation Agreement has been updated to reflect this.

44. Education Committee recommend to Council to approve the “CertAVP Rules” and “Accreditation Agreement”.

ACTION: Update of the Certificate in Advanced Veterinary Practice “CertAVP Rules” and “Accreditation Agreement” to go Council for agreement.

Risk Register

45. The Committee noted and updated the risk register which was tabled for the meeting.

Any other business

46. There was no other business.

Date of next meeting

47. Tuesday 11 February 2019 at 10am

Britta Crawford
Committee Secretary
November 2019
b.crawford@rcvs.org.uk
Minutes of the Finance and Resources Committee held on Thursday, 14 November 2019 at Belgravia House, 62/64 Horseferry Road, London SW1P 2AF

Members:

Dr C P Sturgess Chair / RCVS Treasurer
Dr C L Scudamore Education Committee
Mr C T Barker* RCVS Council Member
Dr C W Tufnell Advancement of Professions Committee
Ms J S M Worthington Lay Member RCVS Council
Mr M L Peaty* Standards Committee
Mr M E Rendle Veterinary Nursing Council
Dr M A Donald* PIC/DC Liaison Committee
Miss R M Marshall Veterinary Nurses Council Chair
Mr T J Walker Lay Member RCVS Council

In attendance:

Ms L Lockett CEO
Ms E Ferguson Registrar / Director of Legal Services
Ms C McCann Director of Operations (DoO)
Mr A Quinn-Byrne Secretary FRC/Governance Officer

*absent

Apologies for absence

1. Apologies for absence were received from Mr Peaty, Mr Barker and Dr Donald.

Declarations of interest

2. There were no declarations of interests to note.

Budget for under care review (taken out of order)

3. The Registrar gave an update of the work undertaken since the last Council meeting, that had two key drivers:
- completing the first stage of the process - ie gathering evidence - using an external consultancy, in order that this can be independent and robust, and to make sure such evidence was useful; and,

- to do this in as timely a manner as possible.

4. The process to launch a call for evidence had taken time and the decision regarding a research partner had been decided upon. After a tendering exercise, five established research companies had been approached, three of which had discussions with the RCVS. An organisation was chosen as the RCVS research partner for this project.

5. 

6. The budget for this contract was approved and to be funded partly from the balance of the 2019 Discretionary Fund and the rest from the 2020 Discretionary Fund or, if a variation to the 2020 budget was required more broadly, this would be included in such a revision.

7. The Registrar left the meeting after this discussion had taken place.

Minutes of meeting held on 12 September 2019

8. The minutes of the last meeting held on 12 September 2019, were agreed.

Matters arising

9. As there are representatives for the various RCVS committees on the Finance and Resources Committee (FRC), it was suggested that each representative should inform FRC of current or upcoming projects/initiatives that could have a potential impact from a finance and resources perspective. It was decided that a quick report on the work of each committee in relation to such issues should be provided to the Secretary to include in the bundle before each meeting and these committee updates would now become a standing item on the FRC agenda.

10. It was stressed that the FRC focussed on matters of resources and not just finances as both were the remit of the committee.

11. The Chair is to arrange a meeting with the CEO, President, and Director of Operations, Registrar and Governance Officer on the FRC’s role within the wider RCVS governance framework, with a view to having a wider discussion on RCVS governance.

12. Enquiries had been made to the RCVS internal secure data sharing software Boardpacks, with the intention of gaining a central storage library for core documents for this Committee so these did not have to be circulated before every meeting. The Secretary will provide an update at the next meeting in February 2020.
13. A discussion took place as to why the Register and Registration Subcommittee sat within the remit of the FRC. It was noted that this was with the changes to Delegation in July 2019 with the disbanding of Operational Board. As a subcommittee it has to report upwards to a main committee and FRC was the most logical when looking at the ToR/Delegation scheme.

14. Veterinary Nurses Council (VNC) had raised concerns regarding the timing of making a decision on annual retention fees. Currently, the scheduling of meetings meant that VNC decided on VN fees prior to RCVS Council deciding on them.

15. Veterinary surgeon annual retention fees. The vet fees were subject to a process that required approval by the Privy Council Office (upon advice from Defra) which took time to complete, whereas VN fees were not subject to the same process. Regardless, both sets of fees had an effect on the annual budget. – Action list look at timing of approval VN Council

Actions:

Report on the work of each committee should be provided to the Secretary as it relates to finance and resources issues.

Chair is to arrange a meeting with the CEO, President, and Director of Operations, Registrar and Governance Officer on the FRC’s role within the wider RCVS governance framework.

Secretary to highlight methods of communication for the Committee via Boardpacks or other methods.

Standing Items

Update from Director of Operations (DoO)

a) Status of Audit

The annual audit planning report was discussed. This report had been prepared by RCVS appointed external Auditors, Crowe. Key discussion points in relation to the report were:

i. this was the third year in which Crowe conducted the Audit. It was noted that in the interests of good governance, a review of the Auditors may take place in 2020, to take effect in 2021.

ii. it was confirmed the current Auditors also provided support for the new risk system and help with corporate tax queries.

iii. it was confirmed there were no surprises in the Audit Planning Report.

iv. the materiality limit for audit purposes was discussed.

b) Budget 2020
c) Expenses and remuneration group update

The work of the expenses remuneration review was ongoing. Preliminary Investigation Committee members (PIC) and Disciplinary Committee (DC) members were being consulted on rates and corresponding issues.

d) Fraud and Data Protection

Issues of fraud had been identified on the RCVS Risk Register to ensure any gaps were being dealt with. One item was noted that occurred in late October 2019 concerning a payment for booking a venue which went to fraudulent vendor.

All teams had been given refresher training on General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR) and Data Protection.

e) Recruitment

It was confirmed the College had recruited four new posts during 2019, the number of staff is now 111 people (excluding PSS assessors).

16. The area of internal audit was also discussed. It was confirmed that the RCVS did not have an internal auditor, however the RCVS had a corporate Risk Register and Audit and Risk Committee, as well as the Treasurer having oversight of the budget and accounts. Instead, where necessary, external advisors carried out in-depth reviews of activities and the external auditors carried out extended audit work on specific areas as required. Examples include: reviews carried out by external lawyers, an external Audit of the IT team was also on the radar, and discussions are taking place around the implementation of this.

17. The Committee recommended seeing the development of a matrix of work being undertaken across the departments so they had a wide-ranging view of current projects and those proposed for the future.

Action:

Committee to see Matrix of work being undertaken across College Departments that concern FRC.

Management accounts

18. The DoO took questions from the Committee on the management accounts.

19. These included: items within the accounts that included income for examination fees, which can only be paid at certain times of the year and were shown when received, whereas annual fees were apportioned over the year.
20. It was confirmed that risk appetite for the portfolio was reduced from high to medium, as the RCVS would need funds to move to a new building. In terms of the assurance on Investec, Crowe consider RCVS investments as part of the annual audit, including a check on the values of the investments, to ensure the valuations given were fair market rate.

21. The ethics surrounding the investment portfolio was discussed. The Committee believed this was an important element to look at, particularly around areas such as investment in oil and gas, and ensuring what the College invested in was compliant with various pieces of legislation, for example, modern slavery legislative requirements.

22. It was noted that as this was an area for further discussion a representative from Investec would attend the February 2020 meeting to discuss investments. Committee members were encouraged to send their questions to the Secretary prior to the next meeting.

23. It was further suggested that a full review of the investment portfolio may be an area the Committee could consider when the selling of the building took place as it would be clearer at that time as to the level of funds the RCVS had to invest.

**Actions:**

Secretary to confirm with Investec that a representative will discuss investment with the Committee.

Committee to provide questions

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**Estates Strategy**

25. A few buildings had been viewed with a view to assessing what was available for the RCVS to buy and help clarify what type of building/location would meet the College’s needs.

26. The next meeting of the Estate Strategy Board will be held on 19 December 2019.

27. ADS Real Estate had been appointed as advisors, and currently a lease was being drafted to lease back Belgravia House once it had been sold.

28. The DoO would provide an update at the February 2020 meeting.

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**Register and Registration Subcommittee / Appeals**
29. The Secretary provided the Committee with two reports from the Register and Registration Subcommittee and also confirmed there was no appeals pending. This was noted.

30. The Committee did question whether this area needed should be under FRC remit. The CEO confirmed that a review of where registration sat would take place.

Risk Register Update

31. The Secretary of the Committee / RCVS Governance Officer, provided an update on the implementation of the new online Risk Register. He was working with Crowe to set up the new program, which was titled Charity Magique. This would give a clear overview of risks present throughout each department.

32. A staff framework for monitoring risk across the organisation had been created and ‘Risk Managers’ and ‘Risk Owners’ had been appointed for each department. The chosen departmental Risk Owners would now take control of their departmental risk register and report to the Governance Officer on a monthly basis.

33. Crowe had uploaded all registers to the online system and training had taken place for designated staff members. An update on the system implementation would be brought forward to the next meeting.

34. The Committee praised the work of the RCVS around using risk as a governance tool and requested a review of top ten risks be delivered by the Governance Officer at the next meeting.

35. The Governance Officer is to meet with the Chair to discuss ways of presenting the register as the Committee found the larger report more helpful than the dashboard.

   Governance Officer to meet with the Chair to discuss ways of presenting the register.

Strategy for managing requests for funding to the RCVS

36. There was discussion regarding developing a strategy for managing requests for funding to the RCVS.

37. The CEO, Treasurer and Director of Operations were to discuss the implementation of a process and update the Committee. It was noted that a process should not hamper projects that required a small amount of funding that would go on to have a large impact. It was noted that more accountability, or information, may be a requirement for those who benefitted from RCVS funding, an example could be they provide case studies or progress reports on the work they were undertaking.

   Actions:
The CEO, Treasurer and Director of Operations are to discuss implementation of a process for managing request for funding to the RCVS.

Discussion on the crossover of Finance and Resources Committee (FRC) with Audit and Risk Committee (ARC)

38. The delegation of work between the FRC and ARC was discussed.

39. It was noted that the Chairs of both Committees had a detailed discussion prior to this meeting. In order to avoid duplication of work from both Committees, a draft joint document had been compiled and circulated to both Committees through the Secretary of the Committees.

40. Work was differentiated between the Committees by the type of topics each focused on. It was noted that FRC should be focused on resources within the budget and financial expenditure; whilst ARC should focus on risk and assurance. It was acknowledged there may be overlap between both Committees, however the joint document would be discussed at the ARC meeting scheduled for February 2020.

41. A joint meeting of both Committees to review the annual accounts was proposed; this would take place on the same day to avoid duplication of work. The Secretary of the Committee would arrange this.

Actions:

Arrange joint meeting of ARC/FRC for review of annual accounts

Approval of Insurance provision for staff – death in service benefit

42. The Committee was asked to consider the implementation of a death in service benefit for staff at the RCVS as this was considered a common benefit offered by many employers and used to be part of the College’s final salary pension scheme. The item was brought to the committee although it was within the sign-off limits for senior team it was felt to be too much of a conflict of interest as they would be potential beneficiaries. They were provided with the wide ranging list of benefits currently provided to staff. However, at present, there was no provision for employees to provide cover to their families in the event of their death during the time of their employment, regardless of where and how this might happen. It was confirmed that the RCVS did provide a four times salary payment, under the travel and accident insurance policy, and this was only paid in the event of an injury at work. It was paid directly to the RCVS and not directly to an employee’s family.

43. The annual cost for a death in service benefit (providing four times salary) was discussed. This is based on a competitive price provided by RCVS employee benefit providers (Wingate). It was
confirmed that this was not a contractual benefit and therefore could be withdrawn without notice in the event that the College financial position was to change.

44. The Committee voted in favour of this benefit, however, it was noted that whilst the Committee was satisfied enough to approve the proposal and also recommended it be a contractual benefit, a change in its status would be further discussed by the College’s Senior Team.

**Actions:**

Senior Team to discuss to whether death in service benefit is contractual or non-contractual.

**Future items for the agenda**

45. The Committee was asked to consider future items for the agenda; suggestions should be passed to the Secretary.

46. The Chair, DoO, CEO, and Secretary would also discuss future agenda items, thereafter the Secretary would circulate the agreed items.

**Actions:**

Committee was asked to think about other standing items and topics and inform the secretary prior to next FRC Meeting in February 2020.

Chair Director of operations, The CEO and the Secretary are also to discuss future items for the agenda.

**Any other business**

47. The Committee appointed Mr Walker as Vice-Chair of the Committee.

48. The Committee approved the extension of the electricity supply contract, the process of which was done by email. The Chair proposed that all requests for funding by RCVS staff should go through the FRC Secretary, and thereafter discussed with the Chair. This was to avoid members of staff emailing the Committee directly and ensure an accurate record of requests kept in-house. The Secretary would email all staff accordingly.

49. The importance of the College having a robust procurement policy to ensure transparency and best practice in contract management was noted.

**Actions:**

Secretary to inform staff of FRC funding approval process.

Review of current procurement policy.

**Date of next meeting**
50. The date of the next meeting is 13 February 2019 at 2:00 pm (lunch will be available from 1:00 pm)

### Action List

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Description of Action</th>
<th>Assigned to</th>
<th>Date</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Report from each FRC Committee representative on the work of each committee in relation to finance and resources issues to be provided to the Secretary.</td>
<td>Committee</td>
<td>February 2020</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chair to arrange a meeting with the CEO, President, and DoO, Registrar and Governance Officer on FRC’s role within the wider RCVS governance framework.</td>
<td>Chair</td>
<td>February 2020</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Secretary to highlight methods of communication for the Committee via Boardpacks or other methods.</td>
<td>Secretary</td>
<td>February 2020</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Committee to see Matrix of work being undertaken across college Departments that concern FRC.</td>
<td>Secretary/ DoO</td>
<td>February 2020</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Secretary to confirm with Investec that a representative will discuss investment with the Committee.</td>
<td>Secretary</td>
<td>February 2020</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Governance Officer is to meet with the Chair to discuss ways of presenting the Risk Register.</td>
<td>Governance Officer</td>
<td>February 2020</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Discussion on the implementation of a process for managing requests for funding to the RCVS, with the view to drafting a policy.</td>
<td>CEO, Treasurer and DoO</td>
<td>February 2020</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Set date of joint meeting of ARC/ FRC for review of annual accounts.</td>
<td>Secretary</td>
<td>February 2020</td>
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<tr>
<td>Topic</td>
<td>Responsible Party</td>
<td>Date</td>
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<tr>
<td>Senior Team to discuss whether agreed death in service should be contractual or non-contractual.</td>
<td>Senior Team</td>
<td>Include in senior team agenda Jan 2020 February 2020</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Committee to consider other standing items and topics and come back to the next meeting with suggestions.</td>
<td>Committee</td>
<td>February 2020</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Secretary to inform staff of FRC funding approval process.</td>
<td>Secretary</td>
<td>December 2019</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Review of current procurement policy.</td>
<td>Governance Officer/CEO/ DoO</td>
<td>February 2020</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Discussion on how best to develop work as a College governance group and opinions to be sought from the President.</td>
<td>CEO/Chair/ Governance Officer</td>
<td>February 2020</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Discussion on Register and Registration Subcommittee (RRSC) to ascertain whether its remit sat with FRC or Council – Treasurer to email Registrar and CEO, happy to sit under FRC but to decide where else if not under that committee</td>
<td>Registrar / CEO</td>
<td>February 2020</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Minutes of the Standards Committee held on Monday, 11 November 2019 at 10 am at Belgravia House, 62-64 Horseferry Road, London SW1P 2AF

Members:  Prof D Argyle
          Mr M Castle
          Mrs L Cox
          Dr M A Donald Chair
          Mr D Leicester
          Ms C-L McLaughlan
          Mr M Peaty
          Ms Belinda Andrews-Jones
          Miss Linda Belton
          Dr Caroline Allen

In attendance:  Ms E C Ferguson Registrar
                Mrs G Kingswell Head of Standards
                Mr N Oldham Standards and Advisory Manager
                Mrs V Price Senior Standards and Advisory Officer
                Mrs Stephanie Bruce-Smith Standards and Advisory Officer
                Mr N Connell President (observer from RCVS Officer Team)
                Ms L Lockett CEO
                Ms L Lipman PSS Manager
                (Present for AI 3(a)-(c) only)
                Mr A Roberts Director of Leadership and Innovation
                (Present for AI 7(c) only)
                Mr I Holloway Director of Communications
                (Present for AI 7(c) only)

AI 1 Apologies for absence and declarations of interest

1. The Chair welcomed the President to the meeting as an observer.

2. There were no declarations of interest or apologies received.

AI 1 Minutes of last meetings held on 9 September 2019

3. The minutes from the meeting were noted and agreed as accurate.

4. In relation to Agenda Item 3(a), the Standards and Advice team advised they have spoken with BEVA and Defra and await further comment upon the supporting guidance following legislative change to equine identification in both England and Scotland. The matter will come back for the Committee’s consideration in early 2020.
5. In relation to Agenda Item 3(c), the Standards and Advice Manager confirmed that the telemedicine case studies would be published on the RCVS website.

6. In relation to Agenda Item 3(d) and 3(e), the Committee agreed that the new batches of the Informed Consent and Schedule 3 case studies could be published.

   **Action: Standards and Advice Team**

**AI 2 Standards and Advice update**

7. The Committee noted the update and there were no further comments.

8. A second RVP small group discussion took place in October 2019 to consider a draft framework to assist the profession in their understanding of ‘Recognised Veterinary Practice’. The Committee noted praise of the work undertaken thus far. A final meeting of the small group will take place on 11 December 2019 to finalise the framework before the wider RVP Working Group and the Ethics Review Panel consider the matter further and engage with those working on the borders of RVP/ASPA. The subject of RVP will return for the Committee’s consideration in 2020.

9. The Committee suggested that a disclaimer should be included in responses relating to RVP to clarify that the RVP Sub-Committee is not endorsing studies or the quality of them when stating something is RVP.

   **Action: Standards and Advice Team**

10. The Committee considered a final update on the Approved Tuberculin Tester Pilot (ATT). The matter will come back for further consideration in April 2020 after the conclusion of the pilot scheme.

11. The Committee noted the Riding Establishment Sub-Committee had successfully recruited two new members to its expanded sub-committee. The new members of the sub-committee will attend its annual meeting on 20 November 2019 and take up their roles on the newly constituted sub-committee from 2020.

12. The Standards and Advice Manager attended the first meeting of Scottish SPCA Veterinary Working Group in Edinburgh in November 2019. The group discussed a range of topics, including; key findings from the Veterinary Forensic Conference 2018 and veterinary involvement in animal cruelty investigations. The group hope to meet four times in 2020 and address subjects such as greater recognition and education around Non-Accidental Injuries.

**Matters for decision**

**AI 3(a) BCVSp PSG recommendation – Confidential**
AI 3(b) PSS Standards edits – small animal

18. The Committee were invited to consider and approve suggested edits to the Small Animal Modules of PSS arising out of a review in early 2019. The proposed edits are not a re-imagining of the scheme, but part of working group reviews undertaken by members of the Practice Standards Group. The edits were set out in two parts; a list of all PSS Small Animal edits and tracked changes to the PSS Small Animal Module and Awards document. The PSS Manager advised the farm and equine edits would be tabled for consideration in February 2020.

19. The Committee praised the work undertaken by the working groups.

20. It was queried as to whether Core standards could be made more ‘aspirational’ instead of being limited to legislative and Code obligations. It was explained that the line had to be drawn somewhere and that PSG had wanted to encourage as many practices as possible into the scheme.
21. The Committee approved the edits, however it was agreed that some members would provide comments on specific issues to the PSS Manager. The Committee also requested that practices were given ample warning regarding the updated modules.

Action: PSS Manager

22. The Committee also agreed to changing of the wording in Core Standards 11.1.9, which relates to Medical Records, from ‘advisable’ to ‘should’, in order to bolster the importance of collaborative communication for continuity of care. The Committee agreed this amendment should be reflected in paragraph 5.10 of the supporting guidance to the Code of Professional Conduct.

Action: PSS Manager/Standards and Advice Manager

AI 3(c) PSS Rules data sharing wording

23. The PSS Manager invited the Committee to approve a proposed amendment to PSS rules regarding the sharing of data (specifically, assessor reports) between individual practices belonging to corporate groups and relevant centralised head or support offices. It was explained that the purpose of the amendment is to reduce the risk of accidental data breaches and to make the way we share this data clear.

24. The Committee unanimously approved the proposed change, which states that by becoming a member of the scheme, practices accept that data relating to PSS may be shared with parent practices, or in the case of larger businesses, head office/support offices via Stanley.

Action: PSS Manager

Lily Lipman left the meeting

AI 3(d) Chapter 8 ‘euthanasia of animals’ amendments

25. The Committee unanimously approved a minor amendment to Chapter 8 of the supporting guidance to the Code of Professional Conduct in anticipation of the Animal Welfare (Licensing of Animal Exhibits) (Wales) Regulations 2020. The regulations will provide a licensing scheme for all animal exhibits, including where licence holders breed or purchase live vertebrae to be euthanised and fed to other stock and euthanasia in emergencies. These regulations follow the Animal Welfare (Licensing of Activities Involving Animals) (England) 2018, enacted in 2018, which promote the welfare of animals by licensing activities, including the training animals for exhibition. The Standards and Advice Manager advised that it is anticipated similar legislation will be enacted in Scotland.

Action: Standards and Advice Team

Matters for report

AI 4(a) DC report
26. The Committee noted the report. No comments.

AI 4(b) Riding Establishments Sub-committee Report

27. The Committee noted the report.

AI 4(c) Practice Standards Scheme Report

28. The Committee noted the report.

Confidential matters for report

AI 5(a) Certification Sub-committee Report

29. There were no comments and the report was noted.

AI 5(b) Recognised Veterinary Practice Sub-committee Report

30. There were no comments and the report was noted.

AI 5(c) Ethics Review Panel (ERP) Report

31. There were no comments and the report was noted.

AI 6 Risk and equality

32. The Committee noted concern regarding the ownership of wildlife following publication of a recent article in the veterinary press. The Registrar confirmed that it was the opinion of the RCVS that wildlife is not the property of the person(s) who find(s) it and that contrary to recent publications the RCVS had not provided advice to the contrary.

Any other business and date of next meeting

AI 7(a) Standards Vice-Chair

33. Two nominations were received for the position. Following a secret ballot, Mr Martin Peaty was elected as the new Vice-Chair of Standards Committee.

AI 7(b) Social media and online forums

34. The Chair noted there is concern regarding anonymous comments online. The Registrar stated that there is an obligation under the Code of Professional Conduct not to bring the profession in to disrepute and the supporting guidance covered topics such as social media and online networking
forums. The Committee also discussed that offensive content/hate crimes can be reported to the provider and authorities.

35. The RCVS will consider the preparation of case studies on this subject in order to reinforce that offensive comments, even if made anonymously, are not acceptable. It was noted that the GMC had some case studies/vignettes on its website that may be of assistance.

Date of next meeting

43. The date of the next meeting is Monday, 10 February 2020 at 10.30am.
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<tr>
<td>Date</td>
<td>23 January 2020</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Title</td>
<td>Veterinary Nurses Council Report to Council</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Classification</td>
<td>Unclassified</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Summary</td>
<td>Minutes of the meeting of Veterinary Nurses Council (VNC) held on 13 November 2019</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Decisions required</td>
<td>None</td>
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<td>Attachments</td>
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<tr>
<td>Author</td>
<td>Annette Amato Committee Secretary</td>
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<td>0207 202 0713</td>
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<td><a href="mailto:a.amato@rcvs.org.uk">a.amato@rcvs.org.uk</a></td>
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Veterinary Nurses Council

Minutes of the meeting held on 13 November 2019

Members:  
- Mrs Belinda Andrews-Jones
- Miss Alison Carr
- Ms Elizabeth Cox
- Miss Jane Davidson
- Mr Dominic Dyer
- Dr Joanna Dyer
- Ms Wendy Drinkwater
- Ms Lucie Goodwin
- Mrs Susan Howarth
- Mrs Andrea Jeffery
- Mrs Katherine Kissick
- Miss Racheal Marshall - Chair
- * Professor Susan Proctor
- Mr Matthew Rendle - Vice-Chair

In attendance:  
- Mrs Annette Amato - Committee Secretary
- Mr Luke Bishop - Senior Communications Officer
- Mrs Julie Dugmore - Director of Veterinary Nursing
- Ms Eleanor Ferguson - Registrar
- Mrs Victoria Hedges - Examinations Manager
- Mr Ian Holloway - Director of Communications
- Mrs Lily Lipman - Senior Practice Standards Manager
- Ms Lizzie Lockett - Chief Executive
- Mr Felix Michaux - Lead Software Developer
- Mr Joanne Stetzel - Marketing Communications Manager
- Dr Greer Wild - Policy and Public Affairs Officer

Apologies for absence

1. Apologies for absence were received from Dominic Dyer, Andrea Jeffery and Susan Proctor.

Declarations of interest

2. Katherine Kissick declared that she had been appointed as a member of the accreditation visitor panel to the University of Glasgow and the University of Portsmouth in 2020.
Obituaries

3. No written obituaries had been received. Council stood to observe a minute’s silence for all members and associates of the College who had passed away since the last meeting.

Minutes of the meeting held on 11 September 2019

4. The Minutes of the meeting held on 11 September 2019 were accepted as a correct record.

Matters arising

5. **Extra Mural Studies (EMS) placements.** The Director of Veterinary Nursing is looking into ways to incorporate EMS placements for veterinary nurse students at the RCVS, without compromising their required clinical training hours.

6. **VN Education Committee membership.** The Chair and Director of Veterinary Nursing would review the process for selecting members of the VN Education Committee, and bring forward proposals to the next meeting.

   **Action:** Chair and Director of Veterinary Nursing

Update on operational matters

7. The CEO presented her update report which had been provided to RCVS Council the previous week, outlining the progress with the actions set out in the 2017-19 Strategic Plan. Some of the objectives outlined in the plan would be incorporated into the new Strategic Plan, which would be presented later in the meeting.

8. The CEO highlighted the very successful VN Day, held at London Zoo in October, where 175 new veterinary nurses were welcomed to the profession and nine Diplomas in Advanced Veterinary Nursing were bestowed. The event in October had also included an inspirational address from Hayley Walters, a former recipient of the VN Golden Jubilee Award.

RCVS Accreditation Standards for Veterinary Nursing licence to practise qualifications

9. The Director of Veterinary Nursing presented the finalised version of the RCVS Standards Framework for veterinary nurse education and training, which incorporated all the amendments as agreed by VNC at its previous meeting. The final version still required some formatting changes which would be dealt with by the Comms department.

10. It was confirmed that following discussion on the requirement that the programme team should be led by a veterinary nurse, the term ‘Programme Lead’ had been used for this role. A definition was provided in the Glossary.

11. In response to a query regarding the provision of evidence that adequate finances are in place and are sufficient to sustain and develop the programme, it was confirmed that it is a matter for the awarding organisation or university to evidence the demand for the programme by showing
that there is a market for their provision, and the accreditation visitor panel would review the evidence provided. A number of other minor points were queried and clarified.

12. Council ratified the revised standards and thanked the Working Group, in particular Katherine Kissick and the Director of Veterinary Nursing, for all their hard work in developing the revised standards. It was confirmed that the new standards would be available from January 2020, but those awarding organisations and universities already working towards accreditation or reaccreditation based on the current standards would be able to continue. The Director of Veterinary Nursing added that a robust training package for accreditation visitors was being developed by the Qualifications Manager.

VN Education Committee (VNEC)

13. Susan Howarth, Chair of the VNEC, presented the report of the meeting held on 14 October 2019, and highlighted the following points:

14. The Committee had learned that some students have already been registered by their colleges on to the new apprenticeship standard. This may cause a potential funding problem for the colleges, as the arrangements for the End Point Assessment (EPA), which is a requirement to obtain completion funding, are not currently in place. The students will be able to complete their licence to practise qualification and on meeting the RCVS requirements will be able to register, but if they are unable to complete the EPA, this will have a potential impact on the funding to the centres and employers. It was not known how many students had already been registered on to the standard and would complete their licence to practise qualification before the EPA arrangements are in place. It was reiterated that this is not an issue in which the RCVS has any involvement.

15. The Committee had considered a number of routine monitoring reports and action plans, and had made three additional appointments to the accreditation visitor panel.

Continuing Professional Development (CPD)

16. **CPD Audit 2019.** Council noted a paper summarising the results of the 2019 audit of CPD records of veterinary nurses. The full details of the audit will be presented to Council in February. It was noted that the response rate was 95% and compliance was 79%, both of which are higher than in previous years. In the random sample the response rate was 98% and compliance was 90%. Reasons for non-compliance are similar to previous years, mainly parental leave, family commitments, illness and lack of access to CPD.

17. **CPD Referral Group.** Alison Carr presented the update from the CPD Referral Group, including the minutes from the meeting on 2 October 2019, and the updated CPD policy for 2020 with guidance notes.

18. It had been agreed that veterinary nurses could request to remain on the register but pause their CPD for a period of up to six months in certain circumstances, and that these requests would be reviewed on a case by case basis. The referral group was developing a flow chart which would
assist in making these decisions. It was commented that the wording in the guidance note on this point needed further clarification, to ensure that it did not encourage veterinary nurses to believe it was possible to apply for a number of pauses in succession. It was also agreed that it would be useful to include reference to the Period of Supervised Practice requirements in the guidance document.

Action: Refer back to CPD Officer

19. Council was asked to clarify its intentions regarding the agreement to waive the restoration fee for any veterinary nurse who had voluntarily removed their name from the register, but returned after a time period of between 6 – 18 months. It had been suggested that this should be reworded to allow the restoration fee to be waived for any veterinary nurse who had chosen to remove their name voluntarily from the register for up to 18 months. It was confirmed that this would not apply for nurses who had been removed for non-payment of the annual fee. It was also confirmed that although the restoration fee would be waived, payment of the relevant annual fee would still be required.

20. It was noted that the voluntary removal form requires a reason for the removal to be provided.

21. On a vote being taken, it was agreed by 10 votes in favour, with one against and no abstentions, that any veterinary nurse who removes their name voluntarily from the register for a time period of up to 18 months should not be required to pay a restoration fee in order to return to the register.

22. **CPD Working Party.** The Marketing Communications Manager introduced the paper setting out the communications plan for promoting the changes to the CPD policy, including the key themes and objectives. There had been 460 visits to the new webpage following the British Veterinary Nursing Association (BVNA) Congress in early October, and the first structured feedback survey would take place in the next few days. The new version of the 1CPD App is currently in the last phase of piloting ready for launch in January 2020. The full roll-out would take place in mid-January, when the current PDR (Professional Development Record) content would be migrated across. Further functionality to include the PDP (Professional Development Phase) and NPL (Nursing Progress Log) would be incorporated in the future.

23. **1CPD App.** The Lead Software Developer gave a presentation on the new 1CPD App, which was very well received.

**Reports from RCVS Committees**

Registered Veterinary Nurse Preliminary Investigation Committee (RVN PIC)

24. Council noted the report on the work of the RVN Preliminary Investigation Committee. The meetings scheduled to take place on 3 September and 15 October had been cancelled as there were no new cases referred and no decisions required on ongoing cases. The next meeting of the RVN PIC was scheduled to take place on 25 November 2019.

**Standards Committee**
25. Mrs Andrews-Jones provided a brief update on the meeting of the Standards Committee held earlier in the week, including information on edits to the Practice Standards Scheme (PSS) and amendment of the PSS rules to clarify arrangements on regarding data sharing. The Committee had also approved a recent batch of Schedule 3 case studies which had been prepared to supplement the first batch of case studies published in 2018, to assist the professions regarding delegation under Schedule 3.

VN Disciplinary Committee

26. There had been no meetings of the VN Disciplinary Committee since the previous meeting of Council, and no new cases had been referred.

Practice Standards Group (PSG)

27. The Senior Practice Standards Manager reported that the minutes of the recent meeting of the PSG had not yet been ratified. The Group had reviewed the edits to the Small Animal Standards, and the Farm Animal and Large Animal standards would be reviewed in 2020.

28. The Practice Standards Awards ceremony was held at the BVNA Congress on 11 October, and had been very well attended.

29. The Director of Communications presented the new digital campaign to raise awareness of the Practice Standards Scheme ‘Veterinary care from your kind of vets’, due to be launched in the next week. There were a number of questions and positive comments from Council members.

Period of Supervised Practice report

30. Council noted a report on the number of veterinary nurses who have undertaken a Period of Supervised Practice (PSP) and restored to the Register of Veterinary Nurses, those currently undertaking a PSP and the numbers who have been exempted from the PSP. The PSP is a requirement for veterinary nurses returning to the RCVS Register following a period of absence totalling five years or more, and for any person wishing to Register as a veterinary nurse who has achieved a veterinary nursing qualification and not registered within five years of qualification.

31. The Director of Veterinary Nursing proposed that there should be a review of the PSP system, which has now been in place for a number of years. It was agreed that a paper should be brought to the next meeting.

Action: VN Department

Communications report

32. The Senior Communications Officer reported on recent relevant activities.

33. The development of the VN Futures website is now well under way, with the objective being to finalise the content and launch the site within the next few months. There would be a training
meeting the following week for the VN Futures Ambassadors Pilot, followed by a press release.

34. There was continuing publicity and promotion around the CPD policy changes, including videos, a webinar and podcasts. Further development work was taking place to provide guidance on the reflection aspects of the new CPD system.

35. The promotional information for the 2020 VN Council election was being prepared and should be available by the end of the following week. The deadline date for nominations is 31 January 2020. There would be additional publicity in VN Times and Miss Davidson was preparing a blog. Any other VN Council members who wished to be involved in video pieces were asked to contact the Comms department.

36. The ‘SUPERB’ checklist poster, developed to help with the key points veterinary surgeons need to consider when delegating work to registered and student veterinary nurses, was now available to download from the RCVS website, and would be available in hard copy in due course.

37. The next edition of VN Education would be published in early 2020, the main item being the new Accreditation Standards.

38. The RCVS had attended the Emergency and Critical Care (ECC) Congress the previous week and had received positive feedback on the CPD policy changes. The RCVS would have a stand at the London Vet Show on 14 and 15 November.

Any other business

39. The Chair drew attention to an issue which had come to light through the veterinary nursing social media, regarding concerns expressed by a very recently qualified veterinary nurses who had then received their annual fee notice for 2020 within a few weeks of initial registration.

40. It was confirmed that the initial registration fee comprises a one-off fee to cover the registration, badge and certificate, plus a proportion of the annual fee for the current year. Nurses registering in the second half of the fee year pay a lower fee than those registering in the first part of the year.

41. The Chair confirmed that she would raise this with the Registration Department and request that the communications around this be reviewed.

Action: Chair to raise with Registration Department

Date of next meeting

42. Wednesday 12 February 2020 at 10.30am
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<tr>
<td>Date</td>
<td>23 January 2020</td>
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<tr>
<td>Title</td>
<td>Preliminary Investigation Committee and Disciplinary Committee Liaison Committee Report</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Classification</td>
<td>Unclassified</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Summary</td>
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<td>Decisions required</td>
<td>None</td>
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| Author          | Hannah Alderton  
|                 | Secretary, PIC DC LC  
|                 | 020 7856 1033  
|                 | h.alderton@rcvs.org.uk                      |
Minutes of the Preliminary Investigation Committee / Disciplinary Committee Liaison Committee meeting held on Thursday, 21 November 2019

Members:
- Mr I Arundale  Chair, DC
- Ms A K Boag  Member of Council / Senior Vice-President (Chair)
- Dr M A Donald  Chair, SC
- Mrs S K Edwards*  Chair, RVN PIC
- Dr N C Smith*  Member of Council
- Dr C P Sturgess  Member of Council / Treasurer
- Dr C W Tufnell  Council Member
- Dr B P Viner  Chair, PIC
- Ms J S M Worthington  Member of Council

In attendance:
- Miss H Alderton  Secretary
- Ms E C Ferguson  Registrar / Director of Legal Services
- Ms L Lockett  CEO
- Ms G Crossley  Head of Professional Conduct
- Dr M Whiting  Vice-Chair, DC

*Denotes absent

Apologies for absence

1. Apologies were given by, Dr Smith and Mrs Edwards.

Declarations of interest

2. There were no declarations of interest.

Minutes of the meeting held on Thursday, 19 September 2019

3. It was noted that neither of the Disciplinary Committee (DC) Chairs were aware of the discussion regarding reducing the DC quorum from five to three. It was noted that this arose from a brief discussion held at a meeting of the Legislation Working Party (LWP). DC Committee would be asked their view and opinion on the matter to be reported back.

Action: DC Committee
4. It was noted that Ms Boag now held the role of Senior Vice-President.

Updates – general

‘Buddy’ System for the complaints process
5. An update was given on the proposed buddy system, where those who were going through the disciplinary process would be allocated a ‘buddy’ who would guide them through the complaints process and give them advice in order to manage expectations.

6. The Committee was informed that Vetlife did not feel that they would be able to support this process in a practical way, although they were supportive of the concept. Vet Support NI had been contacted; they had been financially supported by Mind Matters for the last two years and consisted of 12 volunteers who were trained and given ongoing supervision. They provided wellbeing support to those in the profession, and the service was offered to the Republic of Ireland and also Scotland. Vet Support NI was open to discussions on the buddy system and were very positive about being able to provide this support. Discussions were ongoing.

7. It was highlighted that the College was aware of how potentially stressful it was to go through the complaints process. The system proposed would not provide legal support but practical support; for example information on how long to expect between each decision to hopefully reduce the stress and ambiguity that the process brings. The process proposed would be confidential but not anonymous between the person being supported and the supporter.

8. In order for Vet Support NI to be able to facilitate the buddy system a brief would be produced that would provide an outline of the facilities and funding that they would need. Currently the number that would use the service was unknown, it was confirmed that it would be available to all, but more proactively promoted to those within the PIC process where it can take the longest amount of time and there was as the fear as to whether a case would progress to the Disciplinary Committee stage. It was felt that those at DC stage were well supported through the Veterinary Defence Society or other insurers.

9. The Registrar informed the Committee that a paper had not yet been published and would be done when there were more definite plans in place. They were reassured that the Veterinary Defence Society (VDS) would be made aware of what this would involve and a training package would be created for the volunteers, which would include Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) and case studies. The Mind Matters Initiative Taskforce would be consulted during the development of the programme.

10. The possibility for the system to be extended to witnesses was discussed and it was clarified that it would be a future endeavor.

Private prosecutions
11. Regarding breaches of the Veterinary Surgeons Act from non-veterinary professionals, the Committee was informed that the RCVS had the capacity to undertake private prosecutions however had not done so in the past for a variety of reasons. The maximum punishment, and the
reason that the police were not interested, was a maximum £100 fine; for the amount of work required to bring a case, this would not be a big disincentive for the perpetrator. It was emphasised that this would not be the reason to not pursue a private prosecution, it might, however, make people aware that they could just repeatedly pay the small fine as the outcome of the act to them would be worth it.

12. It was noted that the police did get involved in drug or fraud related cases, particularly in relation to impersonation of vets, and it was appropriate that they did so. The RCVS often supported the police with this and had no intention of taking over this type of case via a private prosecution.

13. It was outlined that reviewing the extent to which the RCVS could take a more proactive role in these cases, including in the advice given to those making a complaint, would be in the next RCVS Strategic Plan 2020 – 2024.

**Complaints process information**

14. The Committee was informed that currently anyone who had a complaint placed against them was given a leaflet from Vetlife. The RCVS also provided leaflets to both the complainant and the respondent when a complaint reached each stage, giving more in-depth specific detail. It was understood that very few people read the information made available to them despite trying multiple different means of communication. The content will be reviewed.

15. It was reported that a review would also be done of the language used to describe and explain the Health Protocol, but not the actual process itself. It had become apparent that there was some misunderstanding and that while it was as an alternative to DC, there was sometimes the feeling that it was a counselling /mental health service. It was stated that a simple question and answer format for this information could prove very effective. This would be run past the Committee, potentially at the next meeting. However, the final sign off will be from Standards after the PIC had commented given they were involved in practice and Communication team had their input to ensure it was coherent and succinct.

**Action: PSS/Comms/HoPC**

**ProfCon 2 system**

An update was given re the Profcon 2 system and the discussions ongoing re the system and improvements, taking into account views of the PIC users - who might also value further training

**Legal Assessor discussion**

16. On 17 October 2019, all of the College’s Legal Assessors and DC Chairs had met for a discussion with the Registrar. This included:

- Consistency of sanctions;
- A Privy Council appeal case, in which it was learnt that, in future cases with convictions abroad, expert advice would be needed to ensure the classification of the conviction in the UK. This had already been implemented and was used in a recent case;
- Unrepresented respondents.
17. Overall the discussion was very positive and would be repeated annually.

**Disciplinary DC**

18. Training including Legal Assessors had taken place on Monday 24 and Tuesday 25 October 2019.

19. The main issues which were discussed were dishonesty and integrity, consistency of outcomes and the dealing with other areas of principal importance to the profession.

20. The matter of mental health was raised at the training and it was discovered that many DC members were not aware of the level of support that was provided. It was noted that the regulatory update and case studies were very useful.

21. It was commented that some members had found the Boardpacks training more helpful than others. With particular issues in variability around the way members were accessing. All those who were struggling would be provided with ongoing support and should contact the DC Clerk with any issues.

22. To ensure all members were fully aware of all decisions (not just those on which they had sat) the DC would automatically receive all the decisions as they are published to the public on the website.

**PIC training**

23. The PIC training was a similar success and covered;

- A review of the cases which were relevant to the veterinary profession;
- The concept of Public Interest;
- Other sanctions that could be used as an alternative to referral to DC, which can be very traumatic and costly.

24. It was commented that all training was very beneficial especially as it was the only time that each respective Committee met as a whole.

**Monitoring / performance / working methods / outcomes / dashboard / KPIs**

25. The Committee was informed that both the Professional Conduct and the PIC had remained very busy since the last meeting.

26. The figures within the report were clarified as there was some discrepancy with the total amounts in the paper.
Disciplinary Committee Report

27. It was noted that since the last meeting a new Chair and a new Vice chair for DC had been appointed and the committee had met four times.

28. The Committee was informed that recruitment for two new Legal Assessors was in progress. It was noted that there would not need to be a training period as all applicants had appropriate experience and transferable skills.

Feedback to Standards Committee v.v. Liaison Committee

29. Themes arising from PIC meeting were discussed:
- Hospitalisation consent and standards of care, whether we would gain anything from being more specific with guidance especially with 24-hour care;
- Sending out key themes from Disciplinary Committee hearings to those in the profession to raise awareness;
- The issue with this was that those who were reading anything sent from the RCVS tended to be those who did not have the issues – meanwhile over-communication around disciplinary issues tended to reinforce the ‘fear factor’;
- A learning centre online which outlined each case, what could be learnt, and how to avoid problems was suggested;

Risk Register, equality and diversity

30. There were no comments to note.

Date of next meeting

31. The next meeting is scheduled for Thursday, 20 February 2020, at 10:00 am.

Hannah Alderton
Secretary, PIC / DC Liaison Committee
020 7856 1033
h.alderton@rcvs.org.uk
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<tr>
<td><strong>Date</strong></td>
<td>23 January 2020</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Title</strong></td>
<td>Preliminary Investigation Committee Chair’s Report to Council</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Classification</strong></td>
<td>Unclassified</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Summary</strong></td>
<td>This report describes the work of the Preliminary Investigation Committee since RCVS Council’s last meeting, including by reference to key stage indicators, and provides information about the nature of concerns being considered by the PIC.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Decisions required</strong></td>
<td>None</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Attachments</strong></td>
<td>None</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
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Preliminary Investigation Committee

Chair’s Report to Council 23 January 2020

Introduction

1. This report provides information about the activities of the Preliminary Investigation Committee from September 2019 to January 2020 (13 January being the date of writing the report).

Since the last Report to Council (which gave information to 20 September 2019), there have been eight Preliminary Investigation Committee (PIC) meetings: 9, 23 and 24 October, 6 and 20 November, 11 December, 6 and 8 January. Of these, two have been additional meetings to consider individual cases where the volume of information was so great that it would not have been possible for them to be considered as part of a scheduled meeting.

New cases considered by the PIC

2. The total number of new cases considered by the Committee at the eight meetings referred to above is 23. Of the 23 new cases considered,
   - 16 were concluded at first consideration by the Committee. Of these,
     - 9 cases were closed with no further action, and
     - 7 cases were closed with advice issued to the veterinary surgeon.
   - 7 were referred for further investigation, that is, further enquiries, visits and/or preliminary expert reports, and
   - None were referred to DC.

No cases have been referred to the RCVS Health or Performance Protocols in the reporting period.

Ongoing Investigations

3. The PI Committee is currently investigating 25 ongoing cases where the Committee has requested statements, visits or preliminary expert reports for example. This figure does not include cases on the Health and Performance Protocols.

Health Protocol

4. There are 3 veterinary surgeons either under assessment or currently on the RCVS Health Protocol.

Performance Protocol

5. There are no veterinary surgeons currently on the RCVS Performance Protocol.
Professional Conduct Department - Enquiries and concerns

6. Before registering a concern with the RCVS, potential complainants must make an Enquiry (either in writing or by telephone), so that Case Managers can consider with the enquirer whether they should raise a formal concern or whether the matter would be more appropriately dealt with through the Veterinary Client Mediation Service.

7. In the period 21 September 2019 to 13 January 2020,
   - the number of matters registered as Enquiries was 907, and
   - the number of formal Concerns registered in the same period was 165.

8. The table below shows the categories of matters registered as Concerns between 21 September 2019 and 13 January 2020.

Concerns registered between 21 September 2019 and 13 January 2020

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Description of Category</th>
<th>Number of Cases</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>- Advertising and publicity</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Certification</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Client confidentiality</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Clinical and client records</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Communication and consent</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Communication between professional colleagues</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Conviction/notifiable occupation notification</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- CPD Compliance</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Equine pre-purchase examinations</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Euthanasia of animals</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Giving evidence for court</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Microchips and animals without microchips</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Miscellaneous</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Practice information, fees &amp; animal insurance</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Referrals and second opinions</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Registration investigation</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Social media and online networking forums</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Treatment of animals by unqualified persons</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Use of samples, images, post-mortems and disposal</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Veterinary care</td>
<td>125</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Veterinary medicines</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Veterinary teams and leaders 2
- 24-hour emergency first aid and pain relief 2
Total 165

Data source – Profcon computer system concerns data.

Referral to Disciplinary Committee

9. In the period 21 September 2019 to 13 January 2020, the Committee referred one case to the Disciplinary Committee; this case related to an allegation of dishonesty and fraudulent representations.

Veterinary Investigators

10. The Veterinary Investigators and the College’s external solicitor carried out 2 announced visits in the period 21 Sept to 13 Jan 2020. No health-related, performance-related or review visits were undertaken in the period.

Concerns procedure

11. At Stage 1 of the process, the aim is for the Case Examiner Group to decide 90% of cases within 4 months of registration of complaint (the Stage 1 KPI). For each complete month from September to December 2019, the monthly percentage of cases achieving the KPI is 88%, 82%, 80% and 60% respectively. As Council may be aware, the department has seen some changes in staffing over this period that have led to cases being reassigned. This, coupled with holiday periods, has led to delays in concluding some cases. A new Case Manager joins the Department on 14th January, which will bring the team up to its full strength. We are monitoring the cases carefully to try to ensure that December is an exception and that compliance improves in the next few months.

12. The Stage 2 KPI is now for the PIC to reach a decision on simple cases before it within 7 months, and on complex cases within 12 months. A case is deemed to be complex where the PIC requests that witness statements and/or expert evidence be obtained.

In the period 21 September to January 2020, the PIC reached a decision (to close, hold open or refer to DC) within the relevant KPI,
- in 86% of simple cases.

The number of complex cases decided was so low as to render percentages meaningless. In accordance with normal practice, those cases will be reported and discussed in detail at the PIC/DC Liaison Committee meeting.

Operational Matters
13. Velia Soames left the College in October 2019 and Gemma Crossley, previously the Senior Case Manager, became Head of Professional Conduct. Chris Murdoch became Senior Case Manager. These changes have obviously created some upheaval in the Department, however, the full complement of Case Managers will be restored as of 14th January.

Conclusion

14. The Committee continues to consider concerns on a wide variety of topics, with veterinary care and communications failings being the main topics for consideration.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Meeting</strong></th>
<th>Council</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Date</strong></td>
<td>23 January 2020</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Title</strong></td>
<td>RVN Preliminary Investigation Committee Chair’s Report to Council</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Classification</strong></td>
<td>Unclassified</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Summary</strong></td>
<td>This report sets out the work of the Registered Veterinary Nurse (RVN) Preliminary Investigation Committee (PIC).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Decisions required</strong></td>
<td>None</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Attachments</strong></td>
<td>None</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| **Authors**      | Sandra Neary  
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Registered Veterinary Nurses Preliminary Investigation Committee

Chair’s Report to VN Council

Introduction
1. Since the last Report to Veterinary Nurses Council there have been no meetings of the RVN Preliminary Investigation Committee. The meetings scheduled to take place on 3 September and 15 October 2019 were cancelled, as there were no new cases referred and no decision required on ongoing cases. The next scheduled meeting is on 26 November 2019.

RVN Concerns received / registered
2. Between 22 August 2019 and 30 October 2019 there were four new Concerns received against RVNs. Of these four new Concerns:

- Two are currently under investigation by the Case Examiner Group (a veterinary and lay member on RVN PIC and a Case Manager);
- Two are in the process of being assessed.

RVN Preliminary Investigation Committee
3. There have been no new concerns considered by the RVN PIC between 22 August and 30 October 2019.

Ongoing Investigations
4. In the previous report to VN Council, the RVN PIC Chair reported on one case that the Committee had referred to the RVN Disciplinary Committee for a public hearing. This case related to a police caution which the RVN had accepted in relation to the theft of veterinary drugs from a practice.
Since the referral of the matter to the RVN Disciplinary Committee, the Crown Prosecution Department had the caution withdrawn to enable the police to carry out a criminal investigation. In the light of this development, the Committee decided to adjourn listing the case pending the outcome of the criminal prosecution. The outcome of the trial is still awaited.

Health Concerns
5. There are currently two RVNs being managed in the context of the RCVS Health Protocol.

Performance Concerns
6. There are currently no RVNs being managed in the context of the RCVS Performance Protocol.

Referral to Disciplinary Committee
7. Since the last report to VN Council, the RVN PIC has not referred any cases to the RVN Disciplinary Committee.

Training
The RVN PIC, PIC, Veterinary Investigators and members of the Professional Conduct team are due to take part in a day of training on 7 November 2019.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Meeting</th>
<th>Council</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Date</td>
<td>23 January 2020</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Title</td>
<td>Disciplinary Committee Report</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Classification</td>
<td>Unclassified</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Summary</td>
<td>Update of Disciplinary Committee since the Council meeting on 7 November 2019</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Decisions required</td>
<td>None</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attachments</td>
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<tr>
<td>Author</td>
<td>Yemisi Yusuph</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Clerk to the Disciplinary Committee</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Tel: 020 7202 0729</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Email: <a href="mailto:y.yusuph@rcvs.org.uk">y.yusuph@rcvs.org.uk</a></td>
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Report of Disciplinary Committee hearings since the last Council meeting on 7 November 2019

Background

1. Since the last update to Council on 7 November 2019, the Disciplinary Committee (‘the Committee’) have met for 3 hearings. The RVN Disciplinary Committee have not met.

2. The Disciplinary Committee now use BoardPacks to access documents for all Disciplinary Hearings. They no longer receive documents (password protected) via email.

Hearings

Dr Andreea Maria Bacaintan

3. On Thursday 21 November 2019, the Committee met for 1 day to hear the inquiry into Dr Bacaintan. The Inquiry was in relation to 1 charge.

4. The charge was that in October 2017 the respondent was convicted, following a guilty plea, of buying influence, contrary to article 292 paragraph 1 of the New Criminal Code of Romania. She was sentenced to a period of one year and four months; imprisonment, suspended for two years, with requirement for supervision and unpaid community service work; and were ordered to pay 350 Romanian leu by way of confiscation and 700 leu by way of costs.


6. The offence consisted of offering a bribe to a professor at the Faculty of Veterinary Medicine in Bucharest, Romania, in order to pass an examination. In June 2016, in her sixth year of studies at the university, she gave approximately £66 to another student, with a view to it being paid to a university professor via the professor’s son - who also taught at the university. The payment was in order to pass an examination in the subject, “Practical work in the slaughtering and processing units of foodstuffs”

7. The Committee found the charge proved on the basis of Dr Bacaintan’s admission, as supported by the evidence relied on by the College, namely a document relating to the conviction from the Bucharest Court.
8. The College submitted to the Committee that the nature and circumstances of the offence, which
involved an element of dishonesty and which led to the conviction, were such as to render Dr
Bacaintan unfit to practise as a Registered Veterinary Surgeon. Dr Bacaintan indicated that she
accepted that her conviction rendered her unfit to practise as a Registered Veterinary Surgeon.

9. The Committee noted that Dr Bacaintan did not dispute that the nature and circumstances of
the offence, which led to her conviction. The Committee considered the charge was aggravated
by the fact that it contained an element of dishonesty. The Committee found the following
mitigating factors associated with the conviction: this was a single, isolated incident; Miss
Bacaintan was clearly the victim of a dishonest scheme perpetrated by members of staff at the
University to extort money from students in order to allow them to pass this exam. The
Committee accepted Miss Bacaintan’s evidence, supported by the translated court documents,
that many students were victims of this scheme.

10. The conduct underlying this conviction involved Miss Bacaintan either being approached by, or
seeking out, and accepting, the help of someone she believed to have influence who could help
her to pass an exam she had previously failed. Such behaviour undermined the examination
system, the University and ultimately the Veterinary profession. The Committee considered this
to be serious conduct on the part of the respondent, a member of a profession where integrity is
most important. They viewed that the conduct was also liable to have a seriously detrimental
effect on the reputation of the profession and to undermine public confidence in the profession

11. The Committee was satisfied that this conduct fell far below the standard expected of a
Registered Veterinary Surgeon and that Miss Bacaintan’s conviction was of a nature and
seriousness that rendered her unfit to practise as a Veterinary Surgeon.

12. The Committee first considered any aggravating and mitigating factors in this case. The
Committee found the following aggravating factors, the offence contained an element of
dishonesty and that the offending behaviour was directly linked to veterinary surgery in that it
was part of Miss Bacaintan’s Veterinary degree, even if, as it appears to have transpired, it was
not a necessary element of it.

13. The Committee then considered the following mitigating factors, including but not limited to that,
she had no previous disciplinary history, she made full and frank admissions at all stages of the
process both in the UK and Romania, this was an isolated, one-off incident, and that although
an offender herself, she was clearly the victim of a corrupt scheme aimed at extorting money
from students at a time when they were under great pressure, nearing the end of their studies.
It was also made clear that she resisted the first approach by those wishing to extort money
from her and it was only when approaching the third attempt at passing the exam that she
succumbed to the pressure and decided to pay. The Committees view was that she had insight and understanding of her dishonest behaviour and how that impacted upon herself, the University and the profession as a whole, genuine and heart-felt remorse and apology with positive testimonials and the fact that she was now a valuable and valued fee-earning Veterinary Surgeon.

14. Moving to consider sanction, in light of the seriousness of the conduct, the Committee did not consider this was an appropriate case to take no further action or for judgement to be postponed.

15. In such circumstances and with the significant mitigation, the Committee decided that the appropriate and proportionate sanction was to reprimand Dr Bacaintan and to warn her about her future conduct. The Committee recognised that this was what might be considered a lenient approach in a case that involved dishonesty, but was firmly of the view that nothing would be gained by suspending Dr Bacaintan’s registration. They viewed that there is clearly a spectrum of dishonesty and given the unique circumstances of this case, and in particular the cultural difference between the UK and Romania as expressed above, the Committee was of the view that this offending came at the lowest level of dishonest behaviour. Accordingly, the Committee was satisfied that the public interest, in the unusual and exceptional circumstances of this case, would be adequately served by a reprimand and warning.


**Mr Mark Kombert**

17. On Monday 16 December 2019, the Committee met for 1 day to hear the inquiry into Mr Mark Kombert. The inquiry was in relation to 1 charge against him.

18. The charge was that Between 5 November 2018 and 17 November 2018, stole controlled drugs from the practice for whom he was working for, more particularly: Ketamine; and/or Methadone.


20. Mr Kombert did not attend the hearing nor did he send representation. The respondent was given many opportunities to attend both in person and via skype but stated that he did not wish to attend and was happy for the hearing to carry on in his absence. The charges were admitted in full and he stated that he did not require the witnesses who gave statements to give oral
testimonies. The college made their case for continuing in his absence and the Committee were satisfied to do so.


22. In considering the facts of the case, the Committee found the charge against Mr Kombert proven in its entirety.

23. The Committee then went on to consider whether the charge amounted to Disgraceful Conduct in a professional respect.

24. In considering, the Committee took into account aggravating factors and was of the view that the following were relevant at this stage: risk of harm to an animal (as drugs were self-administered whilst he was on duty), dishonesty, premeditated misconduct, breach of trust and misconduct sustained or repeated over a period of time

25. The Committee rejected the Colleges submission that “no financial gain” is a mitigating factor, because anyone who steals from a practice gains materially. The Committee considers that it is a mitigating factor in this case that the Respondent complied with the restorative justice condition of his caution.

26. The Committee concluded that the facts if the case clearly amounted to Disgraceful Conduct in a professional respect.


28. The Committee went onto make a decision on sanctions.

29. The Committee considers that one of the most serious aggravating factors was the risk of harm to an animal, as drugs were self-administered whilst he was on duty, and the Respondent admitted that he was not in a fit state to practise. The Committee considered the witness statement of Ms Dianne Norris, a probation officer employed in New York, who was responsible for supervising the Respondent as part of his probation. Ms Norris explained that the Respondent breached his probation on numerous occasions, as a result of the breaches, Ms Norris required the Respondent to increase his attendance at support groups, and later to attend an inpatient treatment program for 28 days from 13 July 2018. He failed to attend. The
Committee noted that the conduct of the Respondent in relation to obtaining controlled drugs from his employers for his own use while in the United States of America was similar to his conduct at Well Pets Animal Hospital, Clevedon, the subject of the charges.

30. The Committee considered, in particular, paragraphs 50-53 of the Disciplinary Committee Procedure Guidance. Paragraph 53 states that removal from the register may be appropriate where behaviour is fundamentally incompatible with being a veterinary surgeon. Such cases may involve serious departure from professional standards as set out in the RCVS Code of Professional Conduct for Veterinary Surgeons; causing a risk of serious harm to animals; cases where there is a breach of trust; and cases involving dishonesty. All of the factors which the Committee viewed were present in this case.

31. The Committee considers that the only sanction that is sufficient to protect the welfare of animals, maintain public confidence in the profession and declare and uphold proper standards of conduct is one of erasure. The Committee concluded, therefore, that the Respondent was unfit to practise as a Veterinary Surgeon and instructed the Registrar to remove his name from the Register of Veterinary Surgeons.

32. The full decision on Sanctions can be found here: https://www.rcvs.org.uk/document-library/kombert-mark-december-2019-decision-on-sanction/

Dr Javier Salas Navarro & Dr Roman Kristin

33. The Committee meet over a period of 11 months to hear the Inquiry into both Dr Javier Salas Navarro and Dr Roman Kristin. The Inquiry commenced on 7 January 2019 with hearings taking place in January, March, September, November and December.

34. In relation to Dr Navarro, the charges against him concerned his treatment of a kitten. The charges include:

- failing to read the anaesthesia consent form in relation to a surgical spay he performed;
- failing to read the anesthesia consent form, failing to undertake adequate assessment of Marnie’s condition; performing surgery without adequately considering her condition;
- subjecting Marnie to anesthesia without recognising the seriousness of her illness;
- failing to obtain informed consent from the owners; administering medication which was contra-indicated;
- and failure to make an adequate record of his involvement in Marnie’s care.

36. In relation to Dr Kristin, the charges against him also concerned the treatment of the same kitten. This included:

- Failure to undertake an adequate assessment of the kitten’s condition; failure to recognise and record the fact the kitten could not pass urine; failure to refer or offer her for specialist treatment; and failure to ensure Marine received care and treatment overnight;
- When admitting the kitten for surgery, he made a number of clinical mistakes including failure to gain informed consent; and failure to recognise the seriousness of her illness;
- There were a number of failings in relation to the kitten’s care, including failure to arrange adequate overnight care, failure to monitor and record her condition, and failure to gain informed consent for the overnight care;
- Failed to advise the kitten’s owners that he suspected the kitten’s uterus had been ligated during the spay, failed to advise the kitten’s owners that she required specialist veterinary treatment; and advised that the kitten undergo further surgery at the practice in spite of this meaning her having to undergo further anesthesia in a week and with poor chances of survival;


38. The Committee found that Dr Navarro was in breach of a number of aspects of the Code of Professional Conduct of Veterinary Surgeons. Of the proven charges, the Committee found his failure to read the kitten’s anesthesia consent form did not amount to disgraceful conduct in a professional respect, but the repetition of this failure 4 days later did amount to disgraceful conduct. The Committee also found that Dr Navarro’s failure to undertake adequate assessment and perform surgery without this assessment amounted to serious professional misconduct. The Committee found that subjecting the kitten to anesthesia in spite of her being unwell, failure to obtain consent and failure to keep adequate records also amount to serious professional misconduct.

39. In relation to Dr Kristin, The Committee found not proven the allegation that he had failed to respond to concerns from the kitten’ owners about her condition while she was recovering from a surgical spay and also all the allegations relating to Dr Kristin’s admission of the kitten to the practice on the basis that it was not satisfied so as to be sure that Dr Kristin had been the veterinary surgeon who admitted the kitten on that day.

40. Of the charges proved, the Committee determined that Dr Kristin’s failure to adequately assess the kitten’s health, to obtain a clinical history, to undertake blood tests and recognise that she was seriously ill, amounted to disgraceful conduct in a professional respect and led to “Marnie’s
underlying condition going undetected and undoubtedly contributed to her eventual death two days later.”

41. The Committee also found that Dr Kristin’s decision to hospitalise the kitten without adequate overnight care, place her on IV fluids without monitoring the treatment or her condition, and failure to obtain adequate informed consent - among other things - amounted to disgraceful conduct in a professional respect.

42. The Committee stated that “As a direct result of Dr Kristin’s acts and omissions, Marine was left alone overnight on fluids when those fluids had nowhere to go. Had he done his job properly he would have known that and Marine could have avoided the prolonged suffering caused by the chosen course of treatment that did not address the underlying condition. Every element of Dr Kristin’s behavior was catastrophic for Marine, and yet he took no personal responsibility for her welfare and just went home.”

43. The full decision on finding of facts and disgraceful conduct can be found here: https://www.rcvs.org.uk/document-library/kombert-mark-december-2019-decision-on-facts-and-disgraceful/

44. The Committee went on to consider sanctions - starting with Dr Navarro. The Committee considered the mitigating factors including previous good character, admissions to some of the facts of the case from the outset; genuine insight and remorse into the seriousness of his actions; his youth and inexperience; and relevant and good quality testimonials from colleagues. The Committee accepted that the testimonials were universally positive and demonstrated that Dr Navarro had reflected on his conduct, had become more mature and confident in his practice and made efforts to rectify the areas in which he had fallen below standards.

45. As such the Committee concluded that “Although the consequences for Marnie and her owners were clearly devastating, the Committee considered that Dr Navarro’s part in her demise has to be seen in the context of all the evidence. In light of the extensive mitigation including significant evidence of insight and remediation, the Committee was able to conclude that Dr Navarro did not represent a future risk to animals or the public. In such circumstances, the Committee considered that it was not necessary to restrict Dr Navarro’s registration and that a reprimand was the appropriate and proportionate sanction in his case.”

46. In relation to Dr Kristin, the Committee took into account positive character evidence from Mr Karel Daniel, a semi-retired veterinary surgeon and Vice-President of the Czech Republic Veterinary Chamber, a similar body to the RCVS in that country, as well as other testimonials on his behalf. In mitigation, the Committee considered Dr Kristin’s previously unblemished career, the fact that it was a single case involving a single animal; some development of insight
into his conduct; no evidence of repetition; expressions of remorse; the impact of a family bereavement during the course of proceedings; and his financial position.

47. The Committee also took into account aggravating factors including a lack of candour from Dr Kristin when he was giving evidence, demonstrated by a tendency to blame others rather than take responsibility, as well as his recklessness in suggesting a third operation on Marine that was not in her interests, rather than referring her into specialist care.

48. The Committee decided the appropriate sanction to impose upon Dr Kristin. Given the seriousness of the misconduct, it was satisfied that this warranted a six month suspension period. However, given the mitigating factors, the Committee decided that four months was appropriate and proportionate.

49. The full decision on sanction can be found here: https://www.rcvs.org.uk/document-library/kombert-mark-december-2019-decision-on-sanction/

Upcoming Hearings

50. There are currently two Inquiry hearings listed before the Disciplinary Committee on the following dates:

   13-22 January 2020
   17-20 February 2020