RCVS Advanced Practitioners

Information pack

2026 edition

New applications will be accepted online from 2rd March 2026

Re-applications – an email with details on your re-application window dates will be emailed to you

Closing date for all applications:

31 October 2026

Applications received in the months below will be considered in batches and we hope to inform applicants on their applications in the corresponding months below:

March – April:	July 2026
May – July:	October 2026
August – October:	March 2027

We aim to provide outcomes to applications in the months listed above, however depending on volume of applications it may take us a further number of weeks before we communicate the outcome of your application. We will be in contact via email as soon as a decision has been made.

Contents

Preface 3

Section A: Introduction 4

Section B: Criteria for eligibility 7

Section C: Designations 11

Section D: Qualifications on which eligibility may be based 13

Section E: Links to Advanced Practitioner Designations from RCVS Qualifications . 14

Section F: Accepted Qualifications 16

Section G: Fees 18

Section H: Guidance on Applying for Advanced Practitioner Status 19

Section I: Clinical Governance Statement 25

Section J: Referee's Questionnaire 31

Section K: Guidance for Advanced Practitioners on Undertaking and Recording CPD 34

Preface

Initial accreditation as an Advanced Practitioner by the RCVS is based upon the following criteria:

a. possession of an RCVS or other relevant postgraduate qualification;

b. maintaining and providing acceptable documented CPD;

c. being a current active practitioner within the selected field of designation.

The purpose of the list of Advanced Practitioners is to provide a clear indication to the profession and the public of those veterinary surgeons who have been accredited at postgraduate certificate level (Masters level 7) by the RCVS, by virtue of having demonstrated knowledge and experience in a particular area of veterinary practice beyond their initial primary veterinary degree. Inclusion on the list demonstrates that the individual holds an appropriate qualification and that they have stayed up to date in their field of practice since achieving their certificate-level qualification.

An Advanced Practitioner should demonstrate:

a. Advanced problem-solving skills

b. Advanced and current knowledge and understanding in their area of expertise

c. Advanced professional skills and commitment to the continuing improvement of personal and professional practice

d. Awareness of their own limitations in their designated area, referring to specialists where appropriate

e. Involvement with their subject/species community

Section A

Introduction

'Advanced Practitioner' status is an official recognition of a veterinary surgeon's particular knowledge and skills in a designated field of veterinary practice. Those on the list hold a postgraduate qualification in their designated area of interest, in addition to their initial veterinary degree, and have also demonstrated that they are keeping up to date with their knowledge and competence in their chosen area. RCVS Advanced Practitioners are not Specialists, but accreditation as an Advanced Practitioner provides the public with additional assurances that the individual has undertaken further study and ongoing professional development in a particular area of clinical practice.

The List of Advanced Practitioners, together with the list of Specialists, will be searchable on Find-a-Vet.

This Information Pack outlines the criteria for accreditation and describes the process by which individuals can apply to have their name included on the List.

How do I apply to be an RCVS Advanced Practitioner and have my name included on the List?

Applications for inclusion on the list of RCVS Advanced Practitioners are considered by a panel of assessors. The panel consists of Advanced Practitioners and some RCVS Certificate and Diploma holders, who cover and represent the breadth of veterinary disciplines and species areas. Applications will be assessed by members of the panel with experience appropriate to each application. The panel chairman will report to Education Committee, which will ratify additions to the list.

Before proceeding with an application, it is important that you read the following sections carefully to satisfy yourself that you meet all the requirements and that you understand the application process and the type of information that you will need to provide.

- The criteria for eligibility are given in **Section B**.
- The designations that are currently recognised are listed in **Section C**.
- The qualifications on which your eligibility may be based are given in **Section D**.
- **Section H** contains guidance notes on how to complete the application form.

All applications will need to be supported by a reference from a referee who has known you professionally for at least five years and who is familiar with your work. We can accept more than one reference if this is necessary to cover the five-year period. The process for obtaining and submitting references is described in **Section H**.

You will also need to supply evidence of your CPD over the previous **full five calendar years (i.e. 1 January 2021 to 31 December 2025)** that you have been on the practicing register. You will need to

provide your consent for the RCVS and assessment panel to view your records (excluding any reflections you have made) on the 1CPD digital recording platform by granting permission on the application form.

Applications will also need to include evidence of your involvement in clinical governance – you will be asked to provide a statement detailing two examples in which you personally have met the requirements of the Code of Professional Conduct. These examples should show the **whole clinical governance cycle**.

The RCVS levies a fee (which is reviewed annually) for the consideration of each application for Advanced Practitioner status. Current fees are set out in **Section G**, and the appropriate fee must accompany your application. Fees are not refundable in the event of an application being unsuccessful. All listed RCVS Advanced Practitioners must pay an annual administration fee, by **1 July** each year, to ensure retention of their name on the published list.

What happens if my application for accreditation as an Advanced Practitioner is approved?

You will be notified in writing by the RCVS of a successful application. Members of the public will also be able to use filters to search for Advanced Practitioners on our 'Find a Vet' website. Accreditation is given for five years in the first instance. You will need to apply for re-accreditation every five years if you wish to remain on the list. Criteria for re-accreditation, including the CPD requirements, are set out in Section B.

You will also be able to describe yourself as an 'RCVS Advanced Practitioner in [designated area]' on practice websites, stationery etc. Please note though, that this is not a formal post-nominal as the status is not a qualification. We therefore suggest that you place the description under your name, for example:

Mary Jones, BVSc, CertAVP (SAM), MRCVS

RCVS Advanced Practitioner in Small Animal Medicine

What happens if my application for accreditation as an Advanced Practitioner is rejected?

You will be notified in writing by the RCVS with an indication of the reason for the decision.

You may appeal against the decision within 28 days of receipt of notification. Appeals must be made, in writing, and submitted to the Registrar. RCVS staff members or members of the panel of assessors will not be able to enter into telephone discussions or correspondence with individuals concerning an unsuccessful application.

Appellants must state, succinctly, their grounds for appeal.

Appeals will be considered by an Appeals Panel which reports directly to the Education Committee and whose membership consists of individuals who have not previously been involved in considering the application. The Appeals Panel will not be able to consider new information that was not provided in the initial application from the applicant.

Unsuccessful applicants are welcome to re-apply at a future date, unless specified by the panel of assessors.

How do I maintain my listing as an Advanced Practitioner?

RCVS Advanced Practitioner status is granted for a period of five years. If you are accepted on to the list of Advanced Practitioners, you must apply for re-accreditation if you wish to remain on the list for a further five years. You will be required to meet the criteria for re-accreditation that are in place at the time of re-application, which may differ from those in place at the time of the initial application. If your application for re-accreditation is approved, your name will remain on the list for a further five years, subject to your continuing to pay the annual listing fee.

Advanced Practitioners will be removed from the RCVS List of APs at the end of the fifth year following the expiry of their status, if they have not reapplied within their designated reapplication window. While reminders are issued at regular intervals, it remains the applicant's responsibility to ensure their reapplication is submitted on time.

Section B

RCVS Advanced Practitioners

Criteria for eligibility

- ### Membership

Only those who are practicing Members of the Royal College of Veterinary Surgeons may apply to be accredited as Advanced Practitioners. Members who are on the Non-Practising List are not eligible to apply.

- ### Experience

You must have had a **full** five calendar years of experience in practice since graduation before initially applying and be working currently, at least in part, in the area of your designation. For those graduating from the UK from 2007 onwards, you will also need to have completed the Professional Development Phase (PDP) or Veterinary Graduate Development Programme (VetGDP).

You will need to have been seeing on average 100 cases per year in your designation area for the last five years and will be asked to self-certify that this is the case. These cases should be those where you have primary responsibility. (Should you for any reason not be able to meet this please contact the Education department).

- ### Qualifications

You must hold one of the following qualifications at the date of application:

- RCVS qualifications:
  - RCVS Certificate in Advanced Veterinary Practice with a designation
  - RCVS Certificate

or

- Qualifications which have been reviewed and approved for eligibility by the AP Qualifications Subcommittee
- Any qualifications on the eligible list from 2025 are valid as long as the qualification is gained prior to March 2027

The RCVS considers it important that those who are accredited as Advanced Practitioners present evidence of further study in the key areas of professional development such as are included in the ‘A’ module (“Foundations of Advanced Veterinary Practice”) of the CertAVP, or other equivalent modules.

Please note that for those achieving their qualification in, or after, 2017, where professional skills are <u>not included</u> in the postgraduate qualification, the 'A' module of the CertAVP must have been completed prior to application.

• CPD requirements

CPD records must be presented using the 1CPD digital recording platform. If you do not already use your 1CPD account, please log in using the information provided here (https://onecpd.rcvs.org.uk/accounts/login/?next=/).
You will be able to enter CPD records retrospectively and the system allows you to annotate your records where appropriate.

Prior to initial application and once accepted on to the list, you must undertake a minimum of 250 hours of CPD over five full calendar years (January – December) (whilst also complying with the formal RCVS requirement of 35 hours per year). Of this at least 125 hours must be in your chosen designated field. For those applying for multiple designations, you will be expected to have undertaken an extra 125 hours per additional designation in addition to the initial 250 hours.

Advanced Practitioners should be involved with their subject or species community and be undertaking a breadth of CPD. Therefore, applicants should be engaging in a variety of CPD activities outside of those related to the programme for their qualification.

Some of this CPD should contain activities which involves engagement with other practitioners in their designation. **CPD with an 'external focus' is any CPD activity in which you <u>directly engage with other practitioners in your area of interest</u> and allows you to learn from other practitioners in that community of practice.**
Therefore, at least 10 hours **<u>per year</u>** (of the 125 hours) of designation specific CPD needs to have this external focus.

Examples of activities that can be counted as 'external focus' CPD are:

- Attending national/international meetings or conferences **<u>where direct engagement has taken place</u>**
- Engaging through seeing practice with others your field outside of your normal workplace to develop your skills
- Being mentored in your field by someone outside of your practice
- Participating in discussion groups or other formal or informal learning networks
- Secondment to another workplace to develop your skills in your field
- Online discussion groups/networks where learning occurs through **<u>direct engagement and discussion of practice takes place</u>**
- Webinars involving **<u>direct engagement</u>** and discussion with facilitators and other participants (when delivered by an external body)

This list is not exhaustive and other CPD activities that fit the above definition in terms of direct engagement will also be acceptable.

Any activity you are counting has having been undertaken with an external focus will need to have **notes as to how there was engagement with other practitioners**.

If you are unable to amend your CPD activities for the previous years, please contact cpd@rcvs.org.uk

Labelling your CPD

CPD records may be rejected, or part of your CPD activities disallowed, if the record has been submitted in such a format that it is not possible to:

1. Assess how many hours of CPD have been undertaken
2. Decide which of those hours are relevant to the designation being applied for and which have an external focus or Collaborative communication
3. See clear evidence to support the hours being claimed e.g. for documented reading

It is the applicant's responsibility to ensure that the CPD record is clear and appropriately annotated. When filling in the "Topic", we would ask that you preface any CPD activities that relate to your designated area with a heading such as 'Cardiology' or 'SAM specific' or some similar marker to differentiate this CPD from more general activities.

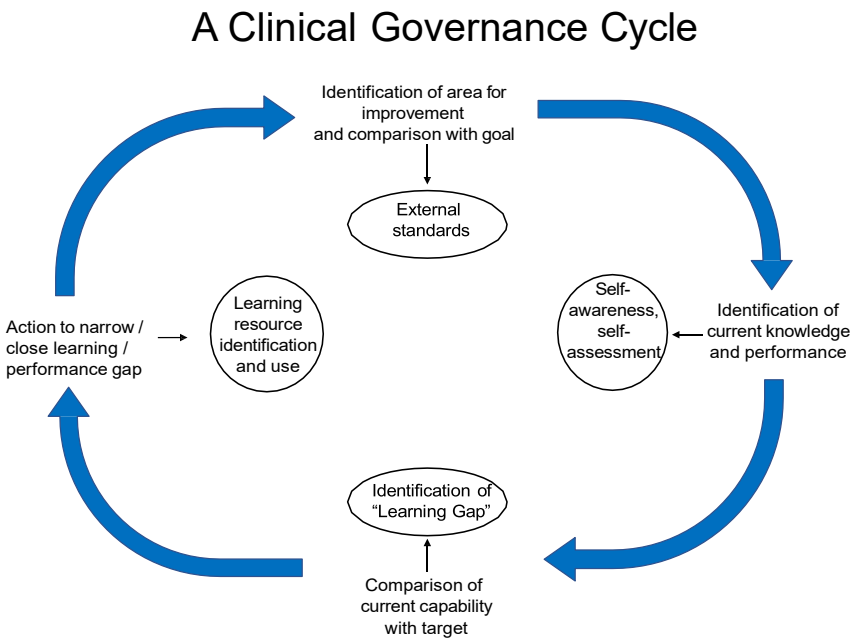
NB - With your application it is essential that you submit your completed CPD record covering the appropriate period, i.e. the last 5 calendar (January – December) years, inclusive of relevant CPD from the current year. Here, you can give permission for RCVS to access your 1CPD account.

The activities that you are listing as part of your designation-specific 10 hours a year external focus should also have 'EXT' in the topic, after your preface e.g. 'SAM EXT'. We have produced some further guidance on undertaking and recording CPD that can be found in Section K**.**

Clinical Governance

As a veterinary surgeon and as required by the Code of Conduct you will already be ensuring that clinical governance forms part of your professional activities.

As part of the application process you will be required to provide a statement describing the ways in which you have been involved with clinical governance and provide **two specific examples** of cases that you were personally involved in and explain the impact that these have had on your practice, detailing the whole clinical governance cycle. Ideally, your examples should include cases that were within your designation. You do not need to evidence every point in the Code. We have produced some further guidance on what clinical governance includes and the form to fill in that can be found in Section I.



Section C

RCVS Advanced Practitioners

Designations

This is not an exhaustive list and may be amended from time to time as required.

Animal Welfare Science, Ethics and Law
Bovine Reproduction
Camelid Practice
Cattle Health and Production
Companion Animal Behaviour
Equine Lameness
Equine Practice
Equine Surgery – Orthopaedics
Equine Surgery – Soft Tissue
Equine Internal Medicine
Equine Stud Medicine
Equine Dentistry
Emergency and Critical Care
Fish Health and Production
Laboratory Animal Medicine and Science
Pig Medicine
Poultry Health and Production
Production Animal Practice
Ruminant Nutrition
Sheep Health and Production
Small Animal Medicine
Small Animal Medicine – Canine
Small Animal Medicine – Feline
Small Animal Orthopaedics
Small Animal Practice
Small Animal Surgery
Small Animal Soft Tissue Surgery
State Veterinary Medicine
Veterinary Anaesthesia
Veterinary Cardiology
Small Animal Cardiology
Small Animal Dentistry
Veterinary Dermatology
Small Animal Dermatology
Veterinary Diagnostic Imaging
Veterinary Neurology
Veterinary Ophthalmology

Veterinary Pain Management[1]
Veterinary Public Health
Veterinary Reproduction
Zoological Medicine

The link between each designation and relevant RCVS qualifications is listed in **Section F**. If you are applying on the basis of a non-RCVS qualification, you can apply for the designation that is most appropriate to your qualification.

As mentioned above, the list is not exhaustive and you may wish to apply for a designation that is not listed, if you are able to propose a title that is appropriate to your qualification. Applications for new designations will be assessed by the panel but will need to be approved by the RCVS Education Committee before they can be confirmed. Designations are designed to cover a broad area of veterinary practice.

[1] Additional supporting information is required for applications in this designation. Contact the RCVS prior to application

Section D

RCVS Advanced Practitioners

Qualifications on which eligibility may be based

The following is a list of the acceptable qualifications on which an application for accreditation as RCVS Advanced Practitioners may be based.

- **RCVS Qualifications**

  Certificate in Advanced Veterinary Practice (CertAVP)

  If you are applying with a CertAVP, you must have a completed certificate (at least 60 credits) and have passed a synoptic examination and gained a designated certificate.

  Certificate

  If you hold a Certificate, you will be required to provide evidence of having developed your professional skills (or have achieved an equivalent qualification/module), in addition to the minimum RCVS requirements for CPD, before you apply for initial accreditation.

- **Other Qualifications**

  If you are planning to apply on the basis of a non-RCVS qualification, which is also not on our list of accepted qualifications, the qualification will need to be assessed as eligible before an application can be submitted.

  Qualifications will be approved for five years before being subject for re-review.

Section E

RCVS Advanced Practitioners

Links to Advanced Practitioner Designations from RCVS Qualifications

Holders of RCVS Certificates and designated CertAVPs can only apply for the designation to which their qualification is linked. The mapping from RCVS qualifications to Advanced Practitioner designations is as follows:

Advanced Practitioner Designation	CertAVP	Certificate
Animal Welfare Science, Ethics and Law	Animal Welfare Science, Ethics and Law	Animal Welfare Science, Ethics and Law
Bovine Reproduction		Bovine Reproduction
Camelid Practice	Camelid Practice	
Cattle Health and Production	Cattle	Cattle Health and Production
Equine Lameness	Equine Lameness	
Equine Practice	Equine Practice	Equine Practice
Equine Surgery – Orthopaedics	Equine Surgery **–** Orthopaedics	Equine Surgery (Orth) Equine Orthopaedics
Equine Surgery – Soft Tissue	Equine Surgery – Soft Tissue	Equine Surgery (Soft Tissue)
Equine Medicine	Equine Medicine	
Equine Internal Medicine		Equine Medicine (Int. Med.)
Equine Stud Medicine	Equine Stud Medicine	Equine Medicine (Stud Med.) Equine Stud Medicine
Equine Dentistry	Equine Dentistry	
Emergency and Critical Care	Emergency and Critical Care	
Fish Health and Production	Fish	Fish Health and Production
Laboratory Animal Science	Laboratory Animal Science	Laboratory Animal Science
Pig Medicine	Pigs	Pig Medicine
Poultry Health and Production	Poultry	Poultry Medicine and Production
Production Animal Practice	Production Animal Practice	
Sheep Health and Production	Sheep	Sheep Health and Production
Small Animal Medicine	Small Animal Medicine	Small Animal Medicine
Small Animal Medicine – Canine	Small Animal Medicine – Canine	

Small Animal Medicine – Feline	Small Animal Medicine – Feline	
Small Animal Practice	Small Animal Practice	
General Small Animal Surgery	General Small Animal Surgery	
Small Animal Surgery		Small Animal Surgery
Small Animal Orthopaedics		Small Animal Orthopaedics
State Veterinary Medicine		State Veterinary Medicine
Veterinary Anaesthesia	Veterinary Anaesthesia	Veterinary Anaesthesia
Veterinary Cardiology	Veterinary Cardiology	Veterinary Cardiology
Small Animal Cardiology		Small Animal Cardiology
Veterinary Dermatology	Veterinary Dermatology	Veterinary Dermatology
Small Animal Dermatology		Small Animal Dermatology
Veterinary Diagnostic Imaging	Veterinary Diagnostic Imaging	Veterinary Diagnostic Imaging Veterinary Radiology
Veterinary Ophthalmology		Veterinary Ophthalmology
Veterinary Public Health	Veterinary Public Health	Veterinary Public Health (Meat Hygiene) Veterinary Public Health (Food Hygiene)
Veterinary Reproduction		Veterinary Reproduction
Zoological Medicine	Zoological Medicine	Zoological Medicine

Section F

RCVS Advanced Practitioners

Accepted qualifications

All eligible qualifications are subject to re-review every five years. Below is a list of eligible qualifications as of 10 December 2024. If you are currently taking one of the below qualifications, you must ensure that it is completed prior to 1st March 2027 unless the qualification has been subsequentially approved by the AP Qualifications Subcommittee.

All Qualifications eligible for AP status must be approved by the AP Qualifications Subcommittee from September 2025 onwards.

If you hold a qualification that is not listed below, please contact ap@rcvs.org.uk.

Accepted with no further requirements	**Accepted for listing with demonstration of professional key skills required on application***
RCVS Certificate in Advanced Veterinary Practice, with designation	RCVS Certificate (pre-2012)
Harper Adams (in partnership with Improve International/ISVPS) Postgraduate Certificates ** in: Exotic Animal Studies Feline Veterinary Studies Small Animal Cardiology Studies Small Animal Dermatology Small Animal Diagnostic Imaging Small Animal Emergency Medicine & Surgery Small Animal Dentistry and Oral Surgery Small Animal Medicine ** Small Animal Ophthalmology Small Animal Surgery** State Veterinary Medicine***	Membership of the Australian & New Zealand College of Veterinary Scientists in: Cattle Emergency and Critical Care Medicine of Cats Medicine of Horses Sheep Small Animal Medicine Small Animal Surgery Small Animal Dentistry and Oral Surgery Veterinary Anaesthesia and Analgesia Veterinary Behaviour
Nottingham Trent University Postgraduate Certificate (PGCert) (BSAVA[2])****	University of Chester Postgraduate certificate in Professional Development in: Small Animal Surgery Small Animal Emergency Practice

[2] British Small Animal Veterinary Association

	Small Animal Dentistry Small Animal Diagnostic Imaging
University of Nottingham Masters in Advanced Clinical Practice (Veterinary)	University of Central Lancashire Postgraduate Certificate in Small Animal Soft Tissue Surgery
University of Edinburgh MVetSci in Advanced Clinical Practice	University of Edinburgh Masters in Clinical Management of Pain[3]
International School of Veterinary Postgraduate Studies (ISVPS) General Practitioner Certificate (Advanced Practitioner Route) in: Small Animal Soft Tissue Surgery	University of Edinburgh Masters in Clinical Animal Behaviour
CPD Solutions Postgraduate Certificate in Small Animal Surgery with Synoptic Pathway	

Qualifications will be added to the list as they are approved.

Qualifications eligible for RCVS Specialist applications may also be eligible for Advanced Practitioner applications.

*Those whose qualification was awarded in 2017 or later will need to have completed the 'A' module of the CertAVP before applying.

** Provided that applicants have completed the relevant professional skills module and have covered the specific technical content required for Advanced Practitioner status as detailed in the Harper Adams module specification.

*** Awarded in 2021 or later.

**** For qualifications achieved in 2017 or later. Those whose qualification was awarded in 2016 or earlier will need to provide evidence of having completed Professional skills on application.

[3] Additional supporting information is required for applications with this qualification. Contact the RCVS prior to application

Section G

RCVS Advanced Practitioners

Fees

To be on the list of RCVS Advanced Practitioners, you will need to pay an application fee and thereafter an annual fee due each July. Advanced Practitioners, who are reapplying, will be charged the annual renewal fee in July and will also be charged an application fee at the time of reapplication.

The fee is set at a level to cover the costs of running the entire accreditation system and will be reviewed periodically.

The first fee is due when you apply, and then annually thereafter.

For applications and re-applications in 2026, the fee is **£114.**
(Please note that if you are applying for more than one designation you will need to pay a further £114 for each addition designation.)

To remain on the list for the full period of accreditation, you will need to pay an annual renewal fee (which will increase in line with inflation). The first of these annual fees will become payable on 1 July in the year in which your name is published on the list.

For 2026, the annual fee will be **£1**14 for direct debit payments.

Notes:

a. Applicants who wish to be considered for listing in more than one designation (up to a maximum of three) will need to pay for each designation when they first apply. However, the annual renewal fee will be the same as those with single designations.

b. No refunds will be made if an application is turned down.

c. Re-application for continued recognition as an Advanced Practitioner is required every five years.

Section H

RCVS Advanced Practitioners

Applying for Advanced Practitioner Status

All applications will be made online. The application form will be available in the My Account area on the RCVS website – www.rcvs.org.uk/login . To access your account, you will need to have your username and password to hand. If you do not know your details, you can request an email reminder to be sent once at the login page.

Once completed and submitted, application forms will be checked by staff in the RCVS office, before being forwarded on to the relevant members of the panel of assessors.

Before you complete the application form

Prior to completing the form, you will need to have the following documents completed and to hand:

References

A reference is required for applicants to confirm that you have been working and/or have been actively involved in your area of designation. They will need to confirm that they have known your work for the previous five years and provide some examples.

A referee must be a current practising veterinary surgeon and normally should have known you professionally and have been familiar with your work during the five-year period prior to your application. Your referee can be a more 'junior' colleague, provided they meet these criteria. If it is difficult to provide one single reference for the five-year period, you may submit multiple references: there is no limit to the number of references that we can accept, but we do ask in this case that your referee states the date period in which they have known you.

It is your responsibility to collect your reference(s) and attach it to your application.

Your choice of referee should reflect the breadth of your experience and the referee should not be a relative or social partner. References should be of a professional nature; personal references are not required.

The College reserves the right to approach your referee directly and we will make random checks on references.

Your reference needs to be attached to the application form. Please make sure it is saved as a pdf or MS Word file. The Referee's Questionnaire form can be downloaded from the RCVS website and is also contained below in **Section J**.

CPD Records

CPD records from the previous **five full calendar years i.e. 2021-2025** (or the last full five years of registration with the RCVS if you have taken a career break and have not been on the practising register for a period of time e.g. maternity/paternity leave) must be submitted with applications, using the RCVS digital recording platform 1CPD.

You will be asked to provide your consent for the RCVS and assessment panel to view your records on the 1CPD digital recording platform by providing permission on the application form.

The AP panel will not review your reflections, so any relevant notes need to be included in the 'Notes' section on 1CPD.

Please make sure that you have completed CPD records for the last **FIVE** calendar years, 2021-2025.

CPD records may be rejected or part of your CPD activities disallowed if the record has been submitted in such a format that it is not possible to:

1. Assess how many hours of CPD have been undertaken
2. Decide which of those hours are relevant to the designation being applied for and which have an external focus
3. See clear evidence to support the hours being claimed e.g. for documented reading

It is the applicant's responsibility to ensure that the CPD record is clear and appropriately annotated. When filling in the "Topic", we would ask that you preface any CPD activities that relate to your designated area with a heading such as 'Cardiology' or 'SAM specific' or some similar marker to differentiate this CPD from more general activities (or a suitable code that will differentiate between designations if you are listed with more than one).

External focus CPD

The activities that you are listing as part of your **designation-specific** 10 hours a year external focus should also have 'External or EXT' in the Topic, after your preface e.g. 'SAM external'. It will enable the assessor reviewing your application, to see easily how much CPD you have completed. These activities **need to have some notes** as to how you engaged with other practitioners in your designated area.

If you are re-applying an additional drop down will appear for each activity, 'Type of CPD' where you will be able to select whether that activity is designated or externally focussed.

If you are unable to amend your CPD activities for the previous year's, please email cpd@rcvs.org.uk

Family leave and CPD

If you are on maternity/paternity leave then we would advise coming off the practising register for this period. For your application we would look at your CPD records for the last five years you have been on the practising register. Alternatively, you can apply to pause your CPD for six months through 1CPD. If granted this would reduce your CPD requirement for that year, you would still need to meet

the external focus requirement for the year the pause was granted and the overall AP CPD requirements.

We ask that you add a covering letter to your application stating the date ranges you came off the register/you were granted a CPD pause.

Applications for multiple designations

If you hold multiple qualifications, you can apply for up to three Advanced Practitioner designations. You would, however, need to submit a further reference for each designation and you would also be expected to have completed 125 hours of CPD per additional designation, on top of the initial 250 hours. Each application is considered by different panel members who have expertise in the area of designation applied for. You will therefore need to complete a separate application form for each designation and to pay the fee for each individual application.

It is feasible that each application could have a different outcome.

Document Uploads

At certain points on the form, you will be asked to attach documents. Instructions on uploading documents are as follows:

- Click on 'Add New Record'. A new window will then open.
- You will need to type in a file name, e.g., 'Reference form'.
- Then, to upload the document click on the 'browse' button. Another window should open up where you will be able to locate the file from your computer. Once you have found the file, select it and click 'open'.
- The document name will appear next to the 'browse' button. Once it appears, click on 'attach'.
- Once the document has attached, you will have the option to view or remove it.
- To add further attachments, click on 'Save and New' at the bottom of the window and repeat the process. Or, if you only need one attachment, click on 'Save'.
- You will then return to the main form. You will need to tick a box to confirm that you are ready to proceed. Once ticked, the next section of the form will load up.
- Please ensure that all documents uploaded are either PDF or word documents. Jpegs are often not clear enough to read.

Completing the application form

The questions on the form are detailed below, along with guidelines on how to answer them. Please note that you will need to answer each question before you are able to progress to the next section. You will be able to go back and amend your answers prior to submission, if needed. You can also save the form once you have begun filling it in to complete at a later date.

Initial qualifying questions

- Are you registered as a practising Member of the RCVS?
- Have you had **five full calendar years** of experience in practice since graduation?

As stated in the criteria for application, you will need to be a practising Member of the RCVS and have had at least five years' experience since you graduated, prior to application.

Name and Qualification details

- What type of qualification are you applying with?

  This will prompt a drop-down list for you to select from:

  - RCVS Certificate in Advanced Veterinary Practice
  - RCVS Certificate
  - Other 'Approved' Qualification
  - Other 'Non-approved' Qualification

RCVS Qualifications

If you are applying with an RCVS qualification, you will then need to select the Certificate you hold from a drop-down list.

Other 'Approved' Qualifications

If you are applying with another 'approved' qualification you will need to select your qualification from a drop-down list. The current list of approved qualifications can be seen in Section F. Please note that the list will only include qualifications approved prior to 10 December 2024.

Designation

- Please confirm the designation you are applying for (you will be able to select your designation from the dropdown list)

Professional Skills

All new applicants will have to provide evidence of having completed the professional skills requirement at the time of application. You will be asked whether you have completed a professional skills module and then prompted to upload your certificate of completion.

Case-based work

These questions have been included to enable us to start to collect some background data. The information you provide here will not be taken into account when assessing your application.

- Is your work primarily case based?

If your work is primarily case based, you will be prompted to answer the following questions:

- What percentage of your working time do you spend working within the area of your designation?
- Approximately how many cases per week in your designation would be primarily managed by you?
- What type of cases in your designation do you see? (e.g., primary care/referrals)

You will also be asked to self-certify that you have seen an average of 100 cases a year in your designated area for the last five years. Cases are those for which you have primary responsibility.

Continuing Professional Development

As mentioned above, you will need to provide your CPD records through the digital recording platform 1CPD.

You will be asked to enter the total number of CPD hours that you have recorded for the last five full calendar years (2021-25) and also the number of hours of CPD that you have undertaken in the area of your designation over this period.

You will be asked to confirm you give permission for the RCVS and panel assessors to view your CPD records and notes. Please note we will not be able to see any reflections you have added on any of your activities.

You will also be given the option of attaching any further documents that you wish to share as evidence of CPD.

Please note you will not be required to provide certificates of attendance at CPD courses.

Reference

Here, you will need to type in the name of your referee. You may have multiple referees, if needed, to cover the previous five years.

You will need to attach the reference form/s via a Document Upload and then confirm that you have uploaded the relevant document/s.

Clinical Governance

Here, you will need to attach your completed clinical governance statement.

You will need to attach the clinical governance statement via a Document Upload and then confirm that you have uploaded the relevant document/s.

Confirmation

You will be asked to confirm that all of the details in the application are correct.

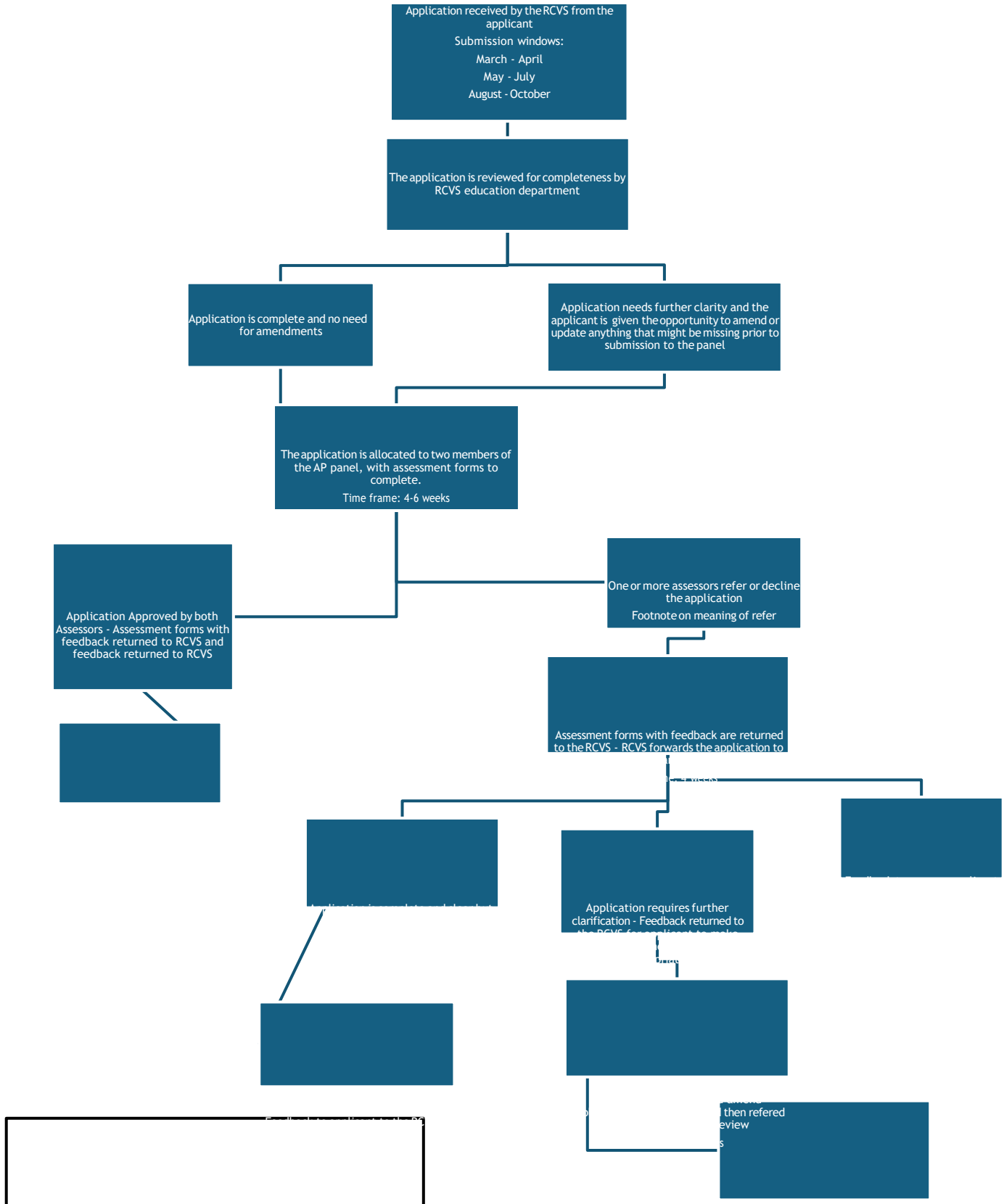
Once confirmed, you will be able to click on the ‘submit’ button that will appear at the bottom right of the page.

Please note that you will not be able to go back and make any changes after you have clicked to submit the application.

Should you realise you have made an error in your application subsequent to submission please contact us (ap@rcvs.org.uk) so the issue can be resolved.

After you have submitted the application, you will be taken to a confirmation screen with details about how to make a payment.

What happens to my Qualification once it is submitted - Application Process



NB: All applications will receive the outcome at the same time unless they have been asked for additional clarification on their application

*Refer : indicating that the assessor required clarification on a specific point before granting approval.

Section 1

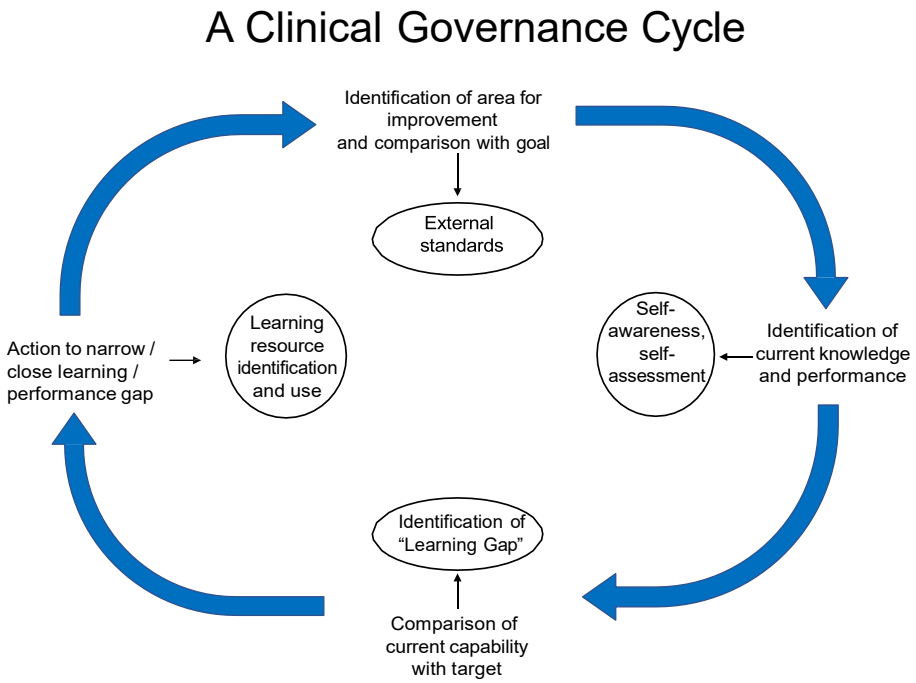
Section I

RCVS Advanced Practitioners

Clinical Governance

According to Scally and Donaldson 1998, nearly 25 years ago, "*Clinical governance is a system through which [healthcare] organisations are accountable for continuously improving the quality of their services and safeguarding high standards of care by creating an environment in which excellence in clinical care will flourish*". This will involve review and enhancement of the quality of services at individual, team and organisational levels, and requires either qualitative or quantitative comparisons to be made.

As completion of CPD on its own would not provide evidence of benefits for patients/clients, more is required if CPD is being used as a Clinical Governance example. For instance, candidates may have observed poorer outcomes than published figures for particular types of cases in the field in which they are seeking designated Advanced Practitioner status. Then they may identify and undertake relevant CPD and through reflection create a plan of action involving changes to the original treatment. Finally, they would audit the results of the revised protocol to confirm an improvement in outcomes. Similarly, reports of Morbidity and Mortality Rounds, and revision of treatment protocols, in isolation, do not guarantee changed clinician/team behaviours. Either evidence of adherence to those protocols in clinical records or improved patient outcomes, and ideally both, would be needed in addition.



Below are extracts from the Code of Conduct in relation to clinical governance. This is a guide to show you the types of activities that would be **elements of clinical governance cycles** and should aid you in writing your statement.

Code of Professional Conduct for Veterinary Surgeons

1.7 Veterinary surgeons must ensure that clinical governance forms part of their professional activities.

6.1 Clinical governance is a continuing process of reflection, analysis and improvement in professional practice for the benefit of the animal patient and the client owner. This practical guidance is intended to help all veterinary surgeons and veterinary nurses to undertake clinical governance, whether they are in clinical practice, or not. Much of the advice for individual veterinary surgeons and veterinary nurses, and the veterinary team, will be covered in other parts of the Code and its supporting guidance.

Guidance for individual veterinary surgeons and veterinary nurses

6.2 Clinical governance may include:

a. keeping up to date with continuing professional development (CPD) and new developments relevant to the area of work.
b. reflecting upon performance, preferably in the form of a learning diary, and making appropriate changes to practice.
c. reflecting upon any unexpected critical events and learning from the outcome and making appropriate changes to practice.
d. critically analysing the evidence base for procedures used and making appropriate changes to practice.
e. reflecting upon communication with other members of the work team and making appropriate changes to practice.
f. reflecting upon communication with clients and making appropriate changes to practice; and,
g. assessing professional competence in consultation with more experienced or better qualified colleagues and limiting your practice appropriately.

Guidance for the veterinary team

6.3 Clinical governance may include:

a. **Animal safety**
    i. In case of any critical event e.g. unexpected medical or surgical complications, serious complaint, accident or anaesthetic death, hold a no-blame meeting of all staff involved as soon as possible after the incident and record all the details.
    ii. At the critical event meeting consider what, if anything, could have been done to avoid this incident, and what changes can be made in procedure as a result.
    iii. Have clear protocols in place to ensure all staff are familiar with procedures for ensuring patient safety.
    iv. Communicate changes in procedure to the whole practice team.
    v. Ensure staff are aware that referral (to an appropriate veterinary surgeon in the practice or another practice) is an option to the client.

b. **Clinical effectiveness**
    i. Organise regular clinical discussion meetings for the practice team, record minutes, and review any action points at future meetings. All clinical staff should be encouraged to participate and input items onto the agenda.

ii. Follow up any clinical issues arising from clinical discussion meetings.
iii. Make appropriate changes as a result of clinical discussion meetings and monitor these changes to ensure they are effective.
iv. Organise online discussion forums to discuss clinical cases where geography or part-time working make face-to-face meetings difficult.
v. Organise practice team discussions on guidelines or protocols used in practice. Look at the evidence base for common procedures and treatments used in the practice and revise these as a result if necessary.
vi. Build up a manual that can be used as clinical guidance in the practice. Make sure that it is regularly updated and new or temporary members of staff are made familiar with its contents at the earliest opportunity.
vii. Organise clinical clubs or journal clubs, either live or online, critically discussing cases and clinical papers.
viii. Audit the results of clinical procedures of interest to the practice team and use the results to improve patient care (see www.vetaudit.co.uk for more information).
ix. Have a policy, with funding, if possible, to encourage CPD for all veterinary surgeons and veterinary nurses and clinical support staff.
x. Have a system for individuals to feedback interesting information from CPD courses to the rest of the practice team.
xi. Incorporate information learned at CPD courses into practice protocols, where appropriate.
xii. Ensure clinical staff have access to suitable up-to-date reference material.
xiii. Have systems to ensure that information on new veterinary products or new pieces of equipment is communicated to the veterinary team.
xiv. Have a performance review system in place for all clinical staff to monitor and plan development.

c. **Patient and client experience**
i. Ensure continuity of care for patients by having effective systems of case handovers between clinical staff.
ii. Have protocols to safeguard the pain relief and nursing care for all inpatients.
iii. Have an effective means of communicating with clients, e.g. newsletters, web sites etc.
iv. Monitor and take note of feedback from clients.
v. Ensure that clients can easily find out the names of staff, e.g. badges, notice boards, web site etc.
vi. Have protocols known to all relevant staff for dealing with members of the public.
vii. Have a complaints procedure.
viii. Record all complaints received and the responses to the clients.
ix. Have an effective communication system within the practice.

Guidance on Writing a Clinical Governance Statement

A clinical governance statement is a concise declaration that outlines how a clinical guideline, policy, or service aligns with the principles of clinical governance — ensuring safe, effective, accountable, and continuously improving patient care.

Purpose of the Statement

The clinical governance statement should provide assurance that:

- The guideline or protocol is evidence-based and supports safe, effective veterinary care.
- Development followed a structured, transparent process with appropriate oversight.
- Systems are in place for ongoing review, monitoring, and quality improvement.

- Clear responsibility for authorship, approval, and future updates is established.

How to Write the Statement

The statement should be brief and clear, and include the following key components:

1. **Identify an area for improvement**
   You have identified an area which is falling short on patient care or influencing clinical outcomes
2. **Purpose and Clinical Relevance**
   Describe the aim of the guideline and how it contributes to maintaining or improving clinical standards in veterinary practice.
3. **Development Process and Evidence Base**
   Outline how the document was created, including reference to relevant literature, consensus, or clinical expertise.
4. **Governance and Oversight**
   Identify the individuals or groups involved in drafting, reviewing, and approving the guideline (e.g. Clinical Governance Committee, Heads of Service, Advanced Practitioners).
5. **Monitoring and Audit**
   Include a brief note on how compliance with the guideline will be monitored, and how outcomes or audit data will inform improvements.
6. **Risk s Quality Management**
   Include how potential risks are managed and how clinical incidents or non-compliance will be addressed.
7. **Version Control s Approval**
   Ensure clarity on who approved the document and when it is due for review.

RCVS Advanced Practitioners

Clinical Governance statement

Applicant Name:	
RCVS Membership number:	

An extract from the Code of Professional Conduct for Veterinary Surgeons is provided on pages 26-27.

Please describe the ways in which you have been involved with clinical governance, in line with the Code, illustrating your statement with two specific examples.

You do not need to evidence every point in the Code, but choose two examples in which you have been personally involved and explain the impact that these have had on your practice, detailing the whole clinical governance cycle.

Ideally these examples should be from cases that were within your designation.

Section J

RCVS Advanced Practitioners

Referee's Questionnaire

For guidance on the suitability of your referee, please see Section H above.

A referee must be a current practising veterinary surgeon and normally should have known you professionally and have been familiar with your work during the five-year period prior to your application.

The following questionnaire should be completed by your referee and returned to you as the applicant. You will need to attach the reference to your online form before you will be able to submit the application. Remember that we will accept multiple references if you do not have a single referee who has known your work for a full five-year period.

It is your responsibility to attach the reference to your online application form. MS Word or pdf files are compatible.

Guidance for Referees

When providing a reference, you are being asked to sign to confirm that you know the applicant and their work, that they are working and are active in their field of designation and that you support their application for Advanced Practitioner status.

Please note that this is a formal certificate and needs to be made in line with relevant certification principles. We ask that you provide some examples of their work as it helps the assessment panel come to a decision when considering the application.

References can be typed or handwritten and scanned as they must be submitted electronically along with the application. We can accept electronic or typed signatures.

Please complete the boxes on the right-hand side. The boxes currently contain guidance in italics which can be deleted or typed over. If you have not known the applicant's work for a full five years, **please state on the form the dates and period of time** that your reference covers. The applicant will be able to submit more than one reference in these circumstances.

Please do not be constrained by the space shown on the form, the spaces will expand as required.

Once you have completed the form, please return the reference to the applicant as it will need to be attached to their online application. The application will not be able to be submitted without the reference attached.

A random selection of referees will be contacted by the RCVS, so please note that you may be contacted to confirm the reference.

RCVS Advanced Practitioners

Referee's Questionnaire

Name of referee:	
RCVS Membership number:	
Referee's qualifications	
Referee's contact address	
Referee's contact phone number	
Referee's contact email address	

Name of applicant:	
Title of designation:	
Please explain the capacity in which you know the applicant?	*The referee should not be a relative or social partner.*
For how many years have you known the applicant's work? ***Please state date ranges if less than 5 years***	*A referee must normally have known the applicant professionally for the **five-year** period prior to application/re-application that the applicant is offering as experience in their area of designation. A professional and not a personal reference is required.*
Are you content that the applicant is working in and is active in the field of their designation?	*Please verify the specific designation that your colleague is applying for, and mention this in your examples below.*

Please provide some <u>examples of their work at this level</u> to justify your answer as this provides additional information to the panel that can significantly aid the assessment of an application	

I signify **my support** for this application for inclusion on the list of RCVS Advanced Practitioners in the specified designation. I am happy to be contacted by the RCVS regarding this reference, if required.	
Signature:	
Date:	

Section K

Guidance for Advanced Practitioners on Undertaking and Recording CPD

Introduction

As you will know, once accepted on to the Advanced Practitioner list, you must undertake at least 250 hours of CPD over your five-year period of accreditation, with a minimum of 125 hours of CPD in your designated field as a requirement of re-accreditation. If you have been listed with multiple designations, you will be expected to have undertaken a minimum of an extra 125 hours per additional designation on top of the initial 250 hours.

This note provides some brief guidance on planning and recording your CPD, such that it will be easy for you to demonstrate that you have met the above requirements when you come back for re-accreditation in five years' time.

What kind of CPD should I undertake?

We would suggest that you start by thinking about and identifying your own learning and development needs. This will enable you to plan ahead so that you can make the most of development opportunities as they arise. It is worth re-stating that undertaking CPD is not just about attending courses - it's about continuing your professional learning in whatever way best helps you to maintain and develop your competence and helps you to improve the professional service you provide.

External Focus CPD

Advanced Practitioners should be involved with their subject or species community and be undertaking a breadth of CPD, some of which involves **engagement with other practitioners**. They are strongly encouraged to undertake a range of different CPD activities that will show that they are maintaining currency in their designated area and at least 10 hours **per year** of the 125 hours of designation specific CPD should have some external focus. We do not wish to be overly prescriptive about precise activities, but this can include seeing practice with others in your field, or other activities that bring you into contact with your subject or species community.

Please add the label 'EXT' to the topic field of any external activity when labelling your CPD.

CPD with an 'external focus' is any CPD activity in which you *engage* with other practitioners in your field of practice and allows you to contribute to, and learn from, other practitioners in that community.

Examples of activities that can be counted as 'external focus' CPD are:

- Attending national/international meetings and conferences where direct engagement has taken place
- Seeing practice with others in your field outside of your normal workplace

- Being mentored in your field by someone outside of your practice
- Participating in discussion groups or other formal or informal learning networks
- Secondment to another workplace to develop skills in your field
- Online discussion groups/networks apply as long as direct engagement or discussion of practice takes place
- Webinars involving direct engagement and discussion with facilitators and other participants (when delivered by an external body)

This list is not exhaustive and other CPD activities that fit the above definition will also be acceptable. All external focus activities should have notes detailing your engagement with other practitioners.

What should be recorded?

Time is considered to be the simplest way to measure the amount of CPD you undertake. It is not always easy to measure the time spent on development activities, but an estimate of time you have spent learning or revising (in whole hours) should be shown in the 'hours' column. On 1CPD you can enter your CPD activities in any order, and it will guide you to pick the types of activity from a pick list. You can then sort the columns however you wish, by activity type, by date, subject area, location, or hours spent. You can also see at a glance from your summary record if you have uploaded further files or entered notes against each activity. When filling in the "Topic", we would suggest that you preface any CPD activities that relate to your designated area with a heading such as 'Cardiology' or 'SAM specific' or some similar marker to differentiate this CPD from more general activities (or a suitable code that will differentiate between designations if you are listed with more than one). It will enable the assessor reviewing your application, to see easily how much CPD you have completed.

How much detail should I record?

When recording your activities, bear in mind that you will need to show that you have undertaken at least 125 hours of CPD in your designated area. **Please break your CPD down into smaller chunks and use the notes section of 1CPD to provide further explanation of the subject area and activities covered**. For example, if you are recording time spent at a conference, you could either enter a separate record for each lecture or seminar you attend and then add notes about what you learned or enter an overall number of hours and use the notes section to list the sessions you attended, the subject covered, what you learned and how this will be useful to you in practice. If you are undertaking reading that relates specifically to your designated area, use the notes to list the articles you have read, your observations on those articles and how this learning will be useful in your day-to-day work. If you wish, you can upload electronic records of attendance, certificates, photos, and other notes.

If you record in this way, it will enable the panel of assessors to see clearly which CPD relates to your designation(s) (and to professional skills requirements, if appropriate) and that you have met the necessary requirements.

Designation-specific CPD

When recording activities you are counting as your designation specific CPD, this should be highlighted at the beginning of the 'Topic' so the assessors can clearly see and can be sorted as such; If some activities you are listing under designation-specific do not appear at first to typically

be classed as such, we ask that you add some notes to expand on how the activity should be listed so that the assessors can clearly identify how that activity meets the requirement.

Appendix 1: Suggested reading and resource list

The following references and resources are intended to be helpful starting points for reading and thinking about professional skills. The list is certainly not exhaustive and you may wish to find and use other alternative sources. Most of these references are available via the RCVS Knowledge library.

Appleby, Michael C et al (2011) Animal welfare. 2nd ed. Wallingford: CABI

Armitage-Chan, Elizabeth A. (2014) Human factors, non-technical skills, professionalism and flight safety: their roles in improving patient outcome. *Veterinary Anaesthesia and Analgesia*, 2014

Belbin, R Meridith (1981) *Management teams – why they succeed or fail*. Oxford: Butterworth Heinemann

Belbin, R Meridith (1993) *Team roles at work*. Oxford: Butterworth Heinemann.

Buchanan, R.A. and Wooldridge, A.A. (2011) Staying current by searching the veterinary literature. *Journal of Veterinary Medical Education*, 38 (1), pp. 10-15

Cockcroft, Peter D and Holmes, Mark A (2003) *Handbook of Evidence-Based Veterinary Medicine*. Oxford: Blackwell

Cornell, Karen.K., Brandt, Jennifer.C., and Bonvicini, Kathleen.A. (2007) Special issue: effective communication in veterinary practice. *Veterinary Clinics of North America: Small Animal Practice*, 37(1) 1-199

Dean, Rachel. (2013) How to read a paper and appraise the evidence. *In Practice*, 35(5), pp. 282-285

De Brun, Caroline and Pearch-Smith, Nicola (2009) *Searching skills toolkit: finding the evidence.* Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell

Del Mar, Chris; Doust, Jenny; and Glasziou, Paul P. (2006) *Clinical thinking: evidence, communication and decision making.* Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell

Ericsson, K Anders (2009) *Development of professional expertise*. Cambridge: CUP.

Gambrill, Eileen (2012) *Critical thinking in clinical practice*. 3rd ed. New Jersey: John Wiley & Sons

Gray, Carol and Moffett, Jenny (2010) *Handbook of veterinary communication skills*. Oxford: Blackwell.

Greenhalgh, Trisha (2010) *How to read a paper: the basics of evidence-based medicine*. 4th ed. Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell

Hackett, Tim B (2012) *Veterinary emergency and critical care procedures*. 2nd ed. Oxford: Wiley Blackwell

Harvard Business Review 10 must reads on change (2007) Harvard Business School Publishing.

Harvard Business Review on 10 must reads on leadership (2011) Harvard Business School Publishing.

Harvard Business Review 10 must reads on teams (2013) Harvard Business School Publishing.

Higgs, Joy,et al (2008) (Eds) *Clinical reasoning in the health professions*. 3rd ed. Oxford: Butterworth Heinemann

Holmes, Mark A. and Cockcroft, Peter D. (2004) Evidence-based veterinary medicine 1. Why is it important and what skills are needed? *In Practice, 26* (1), pp. 28-33

Lyons, Nona (2010) *Handbook of reflection and reflective Inquiry*. New York. Springer

Maddison, Jill, Volk, Holger and Church, David (2014) *Clinical reasoning in small animal practice.* Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell (In press)

Mellanby, R.J., Rhind, S.M., Bell, C., Shaw, D.J., Gifford, J., Fennell, D.,Manser, C., Spratt, D.P., Wright, M.J.H., Zago, S. and Hudson, N.P.H. (2011) Perceptions of clients and veterinarians on what attributes constitute 'a good vet'. *Veterinary Record,* June 11, 2011

May, Stephen .A. (2013) Clinical reasoning and case-based decision making: the fundamental challenge to veterinary educators. *Journal of Veterinary Medical Education*, 40(3), pp. 200-209

May, Stephen A (2013) Veterinary ethics, professionalism and society. Chapter 4 in: *Veterinary and Animal Ethics*. Eds. Wathes, Christopher M. et al (UFAW Animal Welfare Series) Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell

Mossop, Liz H (2012) Is it time to define Veterinary Professionalism? *Journal of Veterinary Medical Education*, 39(1), pp. 93-100

Mullan, Siobhan.and Main, David (2001) Principles of ethical decision-making in veterinary practice. *In Practice*, 23(7), pp. 394-401

Powell, Lisa L (2011) *Small animal emergency and critical care: case studies in client communication, morbidity and mortality*. Oxford: Blackwell

Radford, Alan et al. (2006) Development, teaching and evaluation of a consultation structure model for use in veterinary education. *Journal of Veterinary Medical Education* 33(1) 38-44.

Roder, C., Whittlestone, K., and May, S.A. (2012) View of professionalism: a veterinary institutional perspective. *Veterinary Record,* December 8, 2012

Rollin, Bernard E (2006) *An introduction to veterinary medical ethics* 2nd ed Oxford: Blackwell

Schmidt, Peggy.L. (2007) Special issue: Evidence-based veterinary medicine. *Veterinary Clinics of North America, Small Animal Practice*, 37(3), pp. 409-616.

Silverman, Jonathan, Kurtz, Suzanne and Draper, Juliet (2005) *Skills for communicating with patients.* 2nd ed Oxford: Radcliffe Publishing

Thistlethwaite, Jill and Spencer, John (2008) *Professionalism in medicine*. Oxford: Radcliffe Publishing

Viner, B. (2010). *Success in veterinary practice: maximising clinical outcomes and personal well-being* Chichester: Wiley-Blackwell

Other resources

The ABIM “Project Professionalism” website http://www.abimfoundation.org/Professionalism/Medical-Professionalism.aspx contains a lot of resources.

http://www.royalcollege.ca/portal/page/portal/rc/canmeds/framework A further resource for the purposes of looking at what professionalism can include.