

## Council Meeting

Thursday, 17 March 2022 at 10:00 am to be held at the Royal College of Anaesthetists, Churchill House, 35 Red Lion Square, London WC1R 4SG

Agenda	Classification <sup>1</sup>	Rationale <sup>2</sup>
1. <b>President's introduction</b>	Oral report Unclassified	n/a
2. <b>Apologies for absence</b>	Oral report Unclassified	n/a
3. <b>Declarations of interests</b>	Oral report Unclassified	n/a
4. <b>Minutes of the meeting held 20 January 2022</b>		
i. Unclassified minutes	Unclassified	n/a
ii. Classified appendix	<b>Private / Confidential</b>	<b>1, 2, 3, 4, 5</b>
5. <b>Matters arising</b>		
a. Obituaries	Oral report Unclassified	n/a
b. Council correspondence	Oral report Unclassified	n/a
c. CEO update	Oral report Unclassified	n/a
6. <b>Matters for decision by Council and for report (unclassified items)</b>		
a. Discretionary Fund	Oral report Unclassified	n/a
b. Changes to Statutory Instrument for Statutory Membership Examination	Unclassified	n/a
c. Refugee Policy amendment	Unclassified	n/a
7. <b>Reports of standing committees – to note</b>		
a. Advancement of the Professions Committee	Unclassified	n/a

b. Audit and Risk Committee		
i. Unclassified minutes	Unclassified	n/a
ii. Classified appendix	<b>Confidential</b>	<b>1, 2, 3, 4</b>
c. Education Committee		
i. Unclassified minutes	Unclassified	n/a
ii. Classified appendix	<b>Confidential</b>	<b>1</b>
d. Finance and Resources Committee		
i. Unclassified minutes	Unclassified	n/a
ii. Classified appendix	<b>Confidential</b>	<b>1, 2, 3, 4</b>
e. Registration Committee		
i. Remote decisions made between 21 December 2021 – 11 January 2022, and meeting held 11 January 2022 – Classified appendix	<b>Confidential</b>	<b>1, 2, 4</b>
ii. Meeting held 9 February 2022 – Unclassified minutes	Unclassified	n/a
f. Joint Education and Registration Committee	Unclassified	n/a
g. Standards Committee		
i. Meeting held 24 January 2022 - Unclassified minutes	Unclassified	n/a
ii. Meeting held 24 January 2022 - Classified appendix	<b>Confidential</b>	<b>1, 2, 3</b>
iii. Meeting held 7 February 2022 – Unclassified minutes	Unclassified	n/a
iv. Meeting held 7 February 2022 – Classified appendix	<b>Confidential</b>	<b>1, 2, 3</b>
h. Veterinary Nurses Council		
i. Unclassified minutes	Unclassified	n/a
ii. Classified appendix	<b>Confidential</b>	<b>1, 2, 3, 4</b>
i. PIC / DC Liaison Committee		
i. Unclassified minutes	Unclassified	n/a
ii. Classified appendix	<b>Confidential</b>	<b>1, 3</b>
<b>8. Reports of statutory committees – to note</b>		
a. Preliminary Investigation Committee	Unclassified	n/a
b. RVN Preliminary Investigation Committee	Unclassified	n/a
c. Disciplinary Committee and RVN Disciplinary Committee	Unclassified	n/a

9. <b>Notices of motion</b>	Oral report Unclassified	n/a
10. <b>Questions</b>	Oral report Unclassified	n/a
11. <b>Recommendation for the appointment of Officers – President and Vice-President (Senior) respectively, for confirmation at the AGM on 8 July 2022</b>	Oral report Unclassified	n/a
12. <b>Election of Vice-President (Junior) – recommendation for confirmation at the AGM on 8 July 2022</b>	Oral report Unclassified	n/a
13. <b>Election of Treasurer – recommendation for confirmation at the AGM on 8 July 2022</b>	Oral report Unclassified	n/a
14. <b>Other elections</b>		
a. Chair, Advancement of the Professions Committee	Oral report Unclassified	n/a
b. Chair, Education Committee	Oral report Unclassified	n/a
c. Chair, Standards Committee	Oral report Unclassified	n/a
15. <b>Any other College business (unclassified items)</b>	Oral report Unclassified	n/a
16. <b>Risk Register, equality and diversity (unclassified items)</b>	Oral report Unclassified	n/a
17. <b>Date of next meeting</b> Thursday, 21 April 2022 at 10:00 am (reconvening in the afternoon) – to be held in committee.	Oral report Unclassified	n/a
18. <b>Matters for decision by Council and for report (confidential items)</b>		
a. Estates Strategy - update	<b>Oral report Confidential</b>	<b>1, 2, 3</b>
b. Draft accounts 2021	<b>Confidential</b>	<b>1</b>
c. Re-appointment of lay members due to retire in July 2022	<b>Private / Confidential</b>	<b>1, 4, 5</b>

d. RCVS Honours and Awards	<b>Private / Confidential</b>	<b>1, 5</b>
<b>19. Any other College business (confidential items)</b>	Oral report	
a. Classified appendices from standing committees	Oral report <b>Confidential</b>	<b>1, 2, 3, 4</b>
<b>20. Risk Register, equality and diversity (confidential items)</b>	Oral report <b>Confidential</b>	<b>1, 2, 3, 4</b>
<b>21. Risk Workshop</b>	<b>Confidential</b>	<b>1, 2, 3, 4, 5</b>
<p>Dawn Wiggins Secretary, RCVS Council 020 7202 0737 / <a href="mailto:d.wiggins@rcvs.org.uk">d.wiggins@rcvs.org.uk</a></p>		

### **1**Classifications explained

Unclassified	Papers will be published on the internet and recipients may share them and discuss them freely with anyone. This may include papers marked 'Draft'.
Confidential	Temporarily available only to Council Members, non-Council members of the relevant committee, sub-committee, working party or Board and not for dissemination outside that group unless and until the relevant committee or Council has given approval for public discussion, consultation or publication.
Private	The paper includes personal data which should not be disclosed at any time or for any reason, unless the data subject has agreed otherwise. The Chair may, however, indicate after discussion that there are general issues which can be disclosed, for example in reports to committees and Council.

**<sup>2</sup>Classification rationales**

Confidential	<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. To allow the Committee or Council to come to a view itself, before presenting to and/or consulting with others</li><li>2. To maintain the confidence of another organisation</li><li>3. To protect commercially sensitive information</li><li>4. To maintain public confidence in and/or uphold the reputation of the veterinary professions and/or the RCVS</li></ol>
Private	<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>5. To protect information which may contain personal data, special category data, and/or criminal offence data, as listed under the General Data Protection Regulation</li></ol>

<b>Summary</b>	
Meeting	Council
Date	17 March 2022
Title	January 2022 Council minutes
Summary	Minutes of the meeting held on Thursday, 20 January 2022
Decisions required	To approve the unclassified minutes and classified appendix
Attachments	Classified appendix ( <b>confidential</b> )
Author	Dawn Wiggins Secretary, Council 020 7202 0737 / <a href="mailto:d.wiggins@rcvs.org.uk">d.wiggins@rcvs.org.uk</a>

<b>Classifications</b>		
<b>Document</b>	<b>Classification<sup>1</sup></b>	<b>Rationales<sup>2</sup></b>
Paper	Unclassified	n/a
Classified appendix	<b>Confidential</b>	<b>1, 2, 3, 4.</b>

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## Council

Minutes of the remote meeting held via Zoom on Thursday, 20 January 2022 at 10:00 am

### Members:

Dr K A Richards (President in the Chair)	
Dr L H Allum	Professor S A May
*Mrs B S Andrews-Jones	Mrs C-L McLaughlan
Miss L Belton	Professor T D H Parkin
Professor D Bray	Dr S Paterson
Mr J M Castle	Professor C J Proudman
Dr D S Chambers	Mr M E Rendle
Dr N T Connell	Dr N C Smith
Dr M A Donald	Mr T J Walker
Dr J M Dyer	Dr C M Whiting
Ms L Ford	Professor J L N Wood
Dr M M S Gardiner	Ms J S M Worthington
Dr M O Greene	

\*Denotes absent

### In attendance:

Ms E C Ferguson	Registrar
Ms L Lockett	CEO
Ms C McCann	Assistant Registrar / Director of Operations (DoO)
Miss C H Middlemiss	(UK) Chief Veterinary Officer (CVO) (Observer) (closed session only)

### Guests:

Ms C Ashcroft	MRCVS.co.uk/visionline (open session only)
Mr E J Davies MRCVS	(open session only)
Mr K F Gill	Audit and Risk Committee (ARC) Member (open session only)
Mr P Imrie	<i>Veterinary Times</i> (open session only)
Mr J Loeb	<i>Veterinary Record</i> (open session only)
Ms J Shardlow	ARC Chair

## President's introduction

1. The President welcomed guests and outlined the order of the meeting.



## Apologies for absence

2. Apologies for absence had been received from Mrs Andrews-Jones.

## Declaration of interest

3. Declarations of interest were received from:
  - Dr Connell: he had been invited by the Veterinary Council of Ireland to join its Education and Training Grant Evaluation Working Group; and, additionally, was now a Trustee of the Scottish Society of the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (SSPCA);
  - Dr Greene: From 1 February 2022 would be employed as Medical Director of Vets Now.

## Minutes

4. Council had had the opportunity to comment electronically on the unclassified minutes and classified appendices of the meetings held on 11 November and 21 December 2022. There were no further comments.
5. A vote was taken:

For:	21
Against:	0
Abstain:	0
Did not vote:	2
6. The unclassified minutes and classified appendices were accepted as true records of the meetings by a majority vote.

## Matters arising

### Obituaries

7. The President reported the passing of Professor Peter Biggs, formerly of the Royal Veterinary College and the University of Bristol. She encouraged Council to spend a moment of reflection following the meeting for all members of the professions that had passed since it last met.

### Council correspondence

#### RCVS Council election 2022

8. Council was reminded that, subject to eligibility, the deadline for submission of nominations to stand for RCVS Council was 5:00 pm on Monday, 31 January 2022. Council members were not permitted to nominate anyone, and registered addresses must be used on the Nomination Form.

### Elections for: Vice-President (Junior), Treasurer, Chairs of Advancement of the Professions, Education, and Standards, Committees for the College year July 2022 – July 2023

9. Council was reminded that any member of Council could apply for any of the above roles; the deadline of submissions was 5:00 pm on Tuesday, 15 February 2022 and would be agenda items at the Council meeting to be held on Thursday, 17 March 2022. It was noted that whilst convention was that a Chair was in place for three years, this was subject to election annually.

### RCVS Honours and Awards 2022

10. Council was reminded that the deadline for the 2022 Honours and Awards was 5:00 pm on Friday, 28 January 2022; details of how to submit nominations was on the RCVS website.

### External recruitment for Preliminary Investigation, and Disciplinary Committees

11. Council was informed that recruitment for members of statutory committees would commence shortly. Members of those committees were on staggered terms, and there was a rolling recruitment process conducted by an independent agent; selected candidates would be before Council for ratification at a later date. This recruitment exercise would also include a number of new Preliminary Investigation Committee members to undertake the interim legislative measures as agreed by Council at its June 2021 meeting.

### Finance claims

12. Council was informed that the Finance Team was in the process of closing the accounts for 2021 and preparing for the annual audit. Members were reminded that any claims for 2021 they wished to submit should be done by the end of the week. As agreed previously by Council, any claims not made within six months of the respective meetings would subsequently lapse; unusual claims would be referred to the Treasurer for validation.

### CEO update

13. The CEO reported that good progress had been made across all areas of the Strategic Plan as outlined in the paper. It did not, however, reflect the 'business as usual' and the pressure on Teams across the College at the moment. She highlighted:
- Legislation Working Party: positive progress had been made and a letter of acknowledgement had been received from Defra regarding the issues raised;
  - two survey reports – on the impact of Covid on veterinary nurses and veterinary surgeons – had been published and were now available on the website;
  - Council culture project was ongoing and good progress was being made; the Steering Group was due to meet in February, although the final reports may not reach the March Council meeting due to diary commitment delays;
  - the Director of Advancement of the Professions was managing the Workforce Project and there was a huge amount of work being undertaken by her Team. The Workforce Summit held on 30 November 2021 had had the benefit of being held in person and had involved a range of people including practitioners, educators, and representatives from employers, associations, and government, with feedback provided on the six themes of the day. There

had been a lot of good ideas that could be developed collaboratively, although it was noted that there had not been anything that could be done immediately. More research was to be undertaken regarding the needs of veterinary businesses as well as veterinary service users, and a report of the day would be published, followed by an action plan. Findings from the Summit would be shared with the global veterinary profession as the issues were not UK-centric.

14. Comments and questions on the report included but were not limited to:

- an Extra-Mural Studies event had also taken place in November that had been very useful;
- on behalf of Council, thanks were given to the CEO and the various College Teams for the work undertaken not only on the Strategic Plan but also for the efforts made during the Covid-19 pandemic, and the forthcoming move out of Belgravia House;
- clarity was sought on the 'all' descriptor in certain columns – for example, in column B2, should it be assumed 'all' referred to all of 'B'? Accountability should be made clear;
  - o the report would be amended following the meeting.

15. The update was noted.

## Matters for decision by Council and for report (unclassified items)

### Temporary Council decision to recognise graduates from European Association of Establishments for Veterinary Education (EAEVE) accredited schools

16. The Chair, Education Committee, reminded Council that at its June 2019 meeting it had approved the temporary policy to recognise graduates from EAEVE accredited schools to assist during the EU-exit transitional period; the rationale was to mitigate any negative impacts on the workforce in the UK. It was noted that the degrees from EAEVE schools may not be directly equivalent to those from UK schools and the previous decision was part of a multi-pronged approach. Council was asked whether the arrangements should continue for a further 12 months.

17. Comments and questions included but were not limited to:

- had there been any problems during the last year, for example, was it known if any overseas members recognised in this manner had been subject to the disciplinary process?
  - o the Registrar was unaware of any direct impact on the disciplinary process of members recognised in that way and reassured Council that there was a regular check on the details of members before Disciplinary Committee to ensure that there was no bias; this would be an agenda item at the next Preliminary Investigation Committee and Disciplinary Committee Liaison Committee meeting (PIC DC LC);

- as EAEVE graduates had been registered through that route, and there were no perceived issues, it would not be problematic from a public perception;
- had there been any development of more substantive recognition agreements between the EU and the UK generally?
  - o there had been some contact made with vet schools within the EU and the UK standards had been provided; this would be followed up;
- what was the difference between accreditation and approval of EAEVE schools?
  - o accreditation considered both the school and the education standards, whereas approval focused more on the school facilities with no review of education standards – approval had been phased out;
- was the College going to be in the same position next year if a 12-month extension was approved, or would there be something more permanent in place?
  - o the issue of a more permanent solution was being addressed but expectations also had to be managed as ‘unpicking’ EU-exit was a complicated process. It was noted that mutual recognition was an option only if other all other EU regulators agreed, rather than via discussions with the individual schools, and not all EU countries had regulators in the way that we would recognise; discussions were ongoing at government level that the College had input into, but it could not be promised that ‘Mutual Recognition of Professional Qualifications (MRPQ) 2’ could be resolved within another year – if ever;
  - o it should also be noted that the University of Nottingham, and also Harper Keele, were increasing veterinary student numbers within UK schools;
- it should be noted that EAEVE schools were not just situated within Europe and could be anywhere in the world, which may have an impact on the number of graduates from outside of the EU who need to sit the statutory membership examination.

18. A vote was taken whether to recognise veterinary graduates from EAEVE accredited schools as eligible for RCVS registration for another year, until the next annual review:

For:	23
Against:	0
Abstain:	0

19. Dr Smith experienced technical difficulties and submitted an email vote. The vote was unanimously agreed.

### Lay members of Council – re-appointment process

#### Mr Castle, Ms Ford, Ms Worthington declared an interest as it would directly affect their involvement on Council

20. The CEO introduced the paper and outlined the recommendations for the two-stage process, stage two of which would be brought back to Council with full details in order to commence in 2025 in line with the new RCVS Strategic Plan 2025-29. It was recognised that it was not about the people as they had made enormous contributions to discussions but rather about the process, and to ensure that it was no more excessive than for any other member of Council. If Council approved the process, some actions would be required in time for the March Council meeting, whilst the majority would happen within the interim years to be developed alongside the next Strategic Plan.
21. There was a discussion about whether current lay members should be present for this debate because of conflicts of interest. It was noted that as part of a diverse Council their views were important; whether they should continue in their roles was a discussion for March Council, the paper was about the appointment process going forward. There was also a separate stream of work ongoing within the Council Culture Project, which would feed into the process. The lay members remained present for the discussion.
22. Comments and questions included but were not limited to:
- the process should be future-looking and future-proof accountability – a person was not the same from first joining Council to 10 years later;
  - the third term should be exceptional and not the ‘norm’; a maximum of 12 years (subject to Council’s agreement of re-appointment) was too long;
    - o terms of office were written into the legislation (the Legislative Reform (Constitution of the Council of the Royal College of Veterinary Surgeons) Order 2018) of four-years with a maximum of three successive terms before a mandatory two-year break was required before re-election or re-appointment could be considered. However, more radical changes could be written into the appointment process, for example, specific skill sets; appraisal systems, etc.;
    - o there was also lay representation on Veterinary Nurses Council, but their terms were not written into legislation so could be more easily changed;
  - the way the paper was written it gave the impression that the lay members’ role was solely about governance rather than the wider issues of animal health and welfare and the public interest;
  - the College should inform the profession who and why it had appointed the people it had and the backgrounds each member had; whilst there were some governance similarities there were also a lot of differences; be transparent, and diverse in appointments;

- it would be useful for lay members to have a couple of external visits to veterinary practices annually;
- skill sets were under consideration within the Council Culture Project as well as how to increase the visibility of everyone on Council.

23. A vote was taken to agree the two-stage process as outlined in the paper:

For:	20
Against:	0
Abstain:	3

24. The recommendations were agreed by a majority vote. There would be a paper before Council at its March 2022 meeting regarding recommendations for re-appointment of the current lay members due to retire in July 2022 (they have all indicated a willingness to continue in post), thereafter a further paper would be brought back to Council at a later date with full details of the changes to the process commencing in 2025.

#### Public involvement with RCVS activities

25. The CEO reminded Council that it was part of the current RCVS Strategic Plan to have a greater public input into decisions as the College worked in a public interest. The paper identified the various places where it would be appropriate to include the public, and how it could be a useful exercise when building agendas of work and to test messaging before it went out to the general public. It should, however, be emphasised that it was not a 'one size fits all' solution.

26. Comments and questions included but were not limited to:

- the College had to work out what it wanted to communicate and why; for example, if over 60% of vets did not understand the difference between a person with a Certificate in Advanced Veterinary Practice, and an Advanced Practitioner, it would definitely be difficult for the public;
- lay members were already involved in the processes and the College was considering public inclusion, but do not forget about members of the veterinary community that had a lot to offer, for example, veterinary practice managers had great insight both to the professions and to the public and could be used as a way to bring the public voice forward;
  - o regular meetings were held with the Veterinary Management Group (VMG) and there was also representation of the Group into the Mind Matters Initiative. There was a British Veterinary Receptionists Association that could feed into the College, and the RCVS Academy would be accessible to other members of the veterinary team in due course;
- other professions had grappled with the same issue so their experience could be drawn upon. Flexibility was key as well as a wide pool of people so that you could vary between particular needs and where a complete breadth of opinion was required. There was a risk that people with specific agendas could be involved so clarity and transparency was essential. The matter of loss of earnings / expenses was questioned and caution expressed not to sign up to

something that could become very expensive; look at how contributions could be made i.e. virtual meetings that do not require a physical presence;

- paragraph 16 of the paper was questioned and the need to set a specific number of meetings per annum – this was developing a structure before the process was right e.g. the review of the Practice Standards Scheme: it may be better to draw one person from the Public Advisory Group (PAG) rather than have input from the whole group. Also, a one-off recruitment exercise may not be the best solution; the pool of people to draw from should be refreshed regularly and terms should not be set for too long;
- the ‘pool of people’ approach was preferred, not only so that a variety of different users of veterinary services could be included, but also to ensure a diversity of locations was represented – London-centric issues were not the same as issues faced in, for example, Bute;
- could RCVS Knowledge be a good way to collaborate with the public, as there was fascinating insight to be found in the archives and they might be in contact with certain groups already?
  - o RCVS Knowledge played a strong part regarding the history of the profession, but the paper referred to the strategic narrative; space had to be kept between them and the RCVS as a regulator;
  - o comments were noted regarding set times and flexibility to draw on people in a range of ways, although Finance and Resources Committee would need an idea of numbers of people / days, and subsequent costs;
- be careful what was done with the information gleaned from external sources, feedback was important – if you wanted specific feedback ask specific groups – a lot of people could be upset very quickly if their opinions had been asked for but then the College did nothing with the information received;
- early input was welcomed not only in public consultation areas, and this could be extended into other areas of work within the College.

27. It was agreed that the CEO would work with Officers (as communications fell under their remit) to reflect the debate and produce principles for engagement, which would come back to Council for agreement in due course.

## Reports of Standing Committees – to note

### Advancement of the Professions Committee (APC)

28. The Chair, APC, introduced the report. It was noted that some items had since moved on and the Team was thanked for its hard work, particularly in making the Workforce Summit a success. Other items included:

- the RCVS / Veterinary Schools Council (VSC) Black Asian and Minority Ethnic (BAME) Student Support Working Group had completed its work around the issues faced by BAME students during their studies and would present its report at the next APC meeting;
- the Mind Matters Symposium held on 24 November 2021;
- the Mind Matters Initiative (MMI) Sarah Brown Mental Health Research Grant had opened its applications for 2022: researchers were invited to apply for a £20,000 grant to fund mental health research projects; details and how to apply were on the MMI website;
- applications for RCVS Fellowship had opened, the deadline for applications was 5:00 pm on 14 February 2022;
- a presentation had been given to the Committee by the Environment and Sustainability Working Group that had detailed how these items had been incorporated into the Practice Standards Scheme; Dr Paterson was thanked for her lead on this work.

29. It was commented that, notwithstanding the work undertaken, it was disappointing that there was nothing new in the report from the Workforce Summit regarding primary care, and that the topic did not seem to be moving forwards. It was questioned when a more substantive report would be made available to the public? It was noted that the minutes were from the meeting dated 16 November and the Summit held on 30 November 2021, however, an action plan was being developed. There were no simple solutions, and it was recognised that more research was needed particularly around business needs and animal owners.

30. The report was noted.

#### **Audit and Risk Committee (ARC)**

31. With the introduction of the report, the Chair, ARC, reminded Council of the standing items that the Committee considered at each meeting:

- review of Corporate Risk Register: along with any changes in levels of assurance; risks; and what was provided to make sure items remained relevant;
- a departmental risk register: at the November meeting it had been the Advancement of the Professions Department; the relevant Director joined the meeting for that item to provide any additional information required by the Committee.

32. Additionally at the most recent meeting it had considered:

- the Auditor's report and the plan for the annual audit, with various suggestions of what could also be concentrated on; these had been added to the plan;
- specific Project Risk Register re: Data sharing; it was felt it needed some further articulation;



- Risk Management Policy: that pulled together all risk steps across the College, through to committees and Council; the paper suggested a few tweaks that would come back to Council at a later date;
- European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education (ENQA) work had been updated.

33. It was questioned what happened to the items highlighted under the Risk Register, Equality and Diversity agenda item at each Council meeting. It was confirmed that:

- the Council Secretary liaised with the Governance Officer / Secretary to ARC to formally report the risks raised from the meetings, who in turn then produced a summary of anything new (from any meeting, not just Council) and / or had major risk implications for the College to be considered by the Committee at its next meeting;
- details were entered on to the Risk Register – which included all risks, operational and corporate. At ARC the top 10 risks were highlighted so the major areas of concern could easily be identified, as well as changes to the Register;
- the risk may / may not be within the top 10 but, in any event, it would be entered onto the longer list and had explicit questions asked in order to mitigate the risk, and would be regularly reviewed;
- Council should be assured that notification of risks was welcomed by the Committee, and the Risk Management Policy would ensure nothing was missed;
- it would be an agenda item at a forthcoming Committee meeting to discuss how to join up the process with Council.

34. The report was noted.

#### **Education Committee (EC)**

35. The Chair, EC, introduced the report and highlighted that:

- work was ongoing on the new accreditation standards and methodology agreed at the November Council meeting and there would be a further paper at the February Committee meeting;
- new Statutory Membership Examination (SME) Guidance had been drafted with additional sections on support for refugees and the wearing of religious items during examinations; further, that additional benefits were now available that had not been present when the document was drafted such as: financial support for English language testing, financial support for the SME fee, and free membership to various veterinary professional organisations. It was great to see the generosity of the profession to provide benefits to refugees;

- Extra-Mural Studies (EMS): completion dates from the schools had been assessed and, at the time, it had been decided not to amend the arrangements further for the current cohort in place, but the Committee would reassess the matter again in February based on completion data. However, the new first year cohort coming in and the requirement for Animal Husbandry Extra-Mural Studies (AHEMS), and the clinical cohort in year three / their clinical EMS and it was agreed to put that back to the pre-pandemic level, so that would be the full requirement for those two groups;
- virtual abattoir experience continued until in-person placements became available; this would be reviewed at the February Committee meeting;
- temporary extension of accreditation periods was no longer necessary as face-to-face visitations had recommenced;
- quarterly updates from the veterinary schools introduced during the pandemic would continue until the end of the current academic year;
- thanks were given to the Education Team that continued to do an enormous amount of work.

36. It was noted that students had enjoyed the virtual abattoir experience and it was questioned if it would remain as part of the course going forward. It was noted that whilst the virtual experiences were a fantastic resource, general consensus was that there was no replacement for the sights, sounds, and smells of an abattoir and that students would be required to physically experience them.

37. It was further questioned what key changes put in place because of the pandemic would remain now that restrictions were being lifted? It was noted that there had been a huge amount of innovation from the schools, and it was felt that there could be a blended approach in teaching undergraduates going forwards. The students enjoyed having a split approach where they could have lectures online thereby enabling intense focus on classroom activities. Most higher education sectors had ongoing projects to consider the learning from the pandemic.

38. The report was noted.

#### **Finance and Resources Committee (FRC)**

39. The Treasurer introduced the report and highlighted that at the Committee meeting there had been an update from the College's investors, Investec; consideration had been given to the RCVS Digital Plan; and the Committee agreed the Academy Plan. Further, that the RCVS no longer accepted cheques, postal orders, or payable orders as methods of payment.

40. There were no comments or questions, and the report was noted.

#### **Registration Committee (RC)**

41. The Chair, RC, introduced the report and highlighted the discussion regarding the different types of temporary registration applications, levels of supervision from the supervising M/FRCVS,

clarification of guidance and application forms. It was agreed that applications would remain as currently considered on a one-to-one basis, and the guidance and forms would be reviewed.

42. It had also been agreed that a more formal relationship be established with student vets / veterinary nurses with access to the My Account area of the database under a new 'student status' to help build its student engagement activities. There would be managed communication campaign with the vet schools to inform them of this new development.
43. There were no comments or questions, and the report was noted.

### **Standards Committee (SC)**

44. The Chair, SC, introduced the reports and highlighted:

- the discussion of the issue of prescription fraud and further work to be undertaken to find ways to prevent it;
- consideration had been given to the re-writing of Supporting Guidance, Chapter 25: Recognised Veterinary Practice: the work was nearing completion and a meeting would be held the following day. It was a small, but important, part of the guidance relating to animal welfare;
- in December the decision was made to reinstate temporary guidance allowing remote prescribing as the Covid Omicron variant was spreading rapidly; this would be reviewed again at the February Committee meeting;
- there had been a large amount of work and multiple meetings, so the Committee and staff were thanked for their work.

45. It was commented that, regarding Chapter 25, it was incredibly important but difficult to encourage innovation in the profession but still maintain animal health and welfare.

46. There were no questions, and the report was noted.

### **Veterinary Nurses Council (VNC)**

47. The Chair, VNC, introduced the report and highlighted the incredibly useful first workshop around delegation and how it was multi-faceted within both the vet and veterinary nurse professions; this would be part of a bigger piece of work going forward. Thanks were given to Ms Kingswell-Barnett who attended the workshop and had been particularly knowledgeable and useful in that process.

48. The nominations period to stand for VNC was open until 5:00 pm on 31 January 2022, and members in veterinary practice that worked with veterinary nurses that wished to get engaged in VNC were asked to encourage them to stand.

49. There were no comments or questions, and the report was noted.

### **Preliminary Investigation Committee and Disciplinary Committee Liaison Committee (PIC DC LC)**

50. The President introduced the report and reminded Council that it was a monitoring and oversight committee. Items monitored were Key Performance Indicators (KPIs); working methods; and outcomes; there was also feedback and reports from the Veterinary Client Mediation Service (VCMS) and the Committee acted as an important loop as the Chair, SC, attended the meetings so, if there was an increase in complaints or issues around a certain matter, it could be fed back to SC for further consideration, for example, if the Code of Professional Conduct (CoPC) needed to be clarified.
51. There was a lot of activity taking place around the recruitment of new members for Stage 1 PIC and the new Charter Case Committee (working title). The Registrar confirmed that the College had been working with external recruitment consultants and was finalising the paperwork with the intention that Thewlis Graham Associates (TGA) would get the advert out early the following week to commence the process. There would be a link on the RCVS website directing people to the correct area to apply and applicants from as many areas of the profession would be encouraged.
52. There were no comments or questions, and the report was noted.

### **Reports of statutory committees – to note**

#### **Preliminary Investigation Committee (PIC)**

53. It was questioned that, when considering the KPIs and the number of Case Managers that had left over a period of months, whilst new ones had been recruited, had those leaving been asked why they were leaving and, assuming support was needed, was the College putting support in place for those that were left and for the new members of the team, so that the new Case Managers do not just follow and do exactly the same thing?
54. The Registrar confirmed that every member of staff that left the College had an exit interview and was encouraged to provide a lot of feedback. Reasons why people left were many and varied: a proportion was personal reasons that had nothing to do with the organisation; a proportion came from continual onslaught of increasingly virulent comments from members of the public and the profession in relation to concerns. In talking to people in practice, times had been difficult for everybody, tempers and patience were frayed and the ways in which people might deal with disagreements had been more vocal in terms of the way they handled it. This had been a contributing factor in terms of Case Managers, where it was an isolating experience when they had been working from home. Some Case Managers had commented that, whilst they had experience with other regulators, the veterinary world was unique, and the RCVS was the only place to get experience of it; the processes were different so it could take some time to settle in.
55. The College had put extra measures in place; the Department had been restructured to increase the support levels and, looking at external areas of support, it had already been discussed how things could be raised in terms of dealing with difficult conversations, that was an ongoing matter where HR was involved in because it was not just about hiring someone for difficult conversations but it related to specific conversations where people were understandably very emotional in

connection with what had happened with their animals. As previously discussed, Case Managers had to be very careful because they wanted to be very sympathetic but it was not a case of saying a matter was terrible, because in terms of the role the College had, staff had to ensure they were also being scrupulously fair to the vets and veterinary nurses that were being looked at and not give the wrong impression to any member of the public, or the profession, that the College was in any way pre-judging anything.

56. As Chair, PIC DC LC, the President commented that it did take time for the new Case Managers to embed and thinking ahead to the next report from PIC DC LC she did not expect to see a significant difference in the KPI figures but rather that the College was heading in the right direction.

#### **Registered Veterinary Nurses Preliminary Investigation Committee (RVN PIC)**

57. There were no comments or questions, and the report was noted.

#### **Disciplinary Committee (DC)**

58. There were no comments or questions, and the report was noted.

#### **Notices of Motion**

59. There were no notices of motion received.

#### **Questions**

60. There were no questions received.

#### **Any other College business (unclassified)**

61. There was no other College business identified from the public session of the meeting.

#### **Risk Register, equality and diversity (unclassified)**

62. The CEO suggested that the new Public Advisory Group be added to the Corporate Risk Register as it was new territory for the College that may bring some associated risks.

## Date of next meeting

63. The next meeting would be on Thursday, 17 March 2022 at 10:00 am, reconvening in the afternoon. This meeting would be a hybrid meeting to be held at a London venue to be confirmed.

## Matters for decision by Council and for report (confidential items)

### Classified appendices from committee reports (confidential)

64. This information is available in the classified appendix at paragraphs 1 – 6.

### Estates Strategy (confidential)

65. This information is available in the classified appendix at paragraphs 7 – 11.

## Any other College business (confidential items)

66. This information is available in the classified appendix at paragraphs 12 – 16.

## Risk Register, equality and diversity (confidential items)

67. This information is available in the classified appendix at paragraphs 17 – 18.

68. The meeting was brought to a close.

<b>Summary</b>		
Meeting	Council	
Date	17 March 2022	
Title	Proposal for revised wording for the statutory instrument (Statutory Membership Exam re-sit policy)	
Summary	<p>Overseas veterinary surgeons are required to pass the RCVS Statutory Membership Exam (SME) to be able to work as a veterinary surgeon in the UK. The SME is currently held once a year with the written component taking place at the end of April/start of May and the practical component in July. Regulations in place for this process are detailed within the Veterinary Surgeons (Examination of Commonwealth and Foreign Candidates) Regulations 2005 which is part of the Statutory Instrument.</p> <p>At present the Statutory Instrument requires both the written and practical aspects of the SME to be taken and passed within a 12-month period. If a candidate fails, they must repeat both parts of the exam. There is no opportunity for candidates who have passed the written component but failed the practical aspect to re-sit only the practical element.</p> <p>This proposal is to add a re-take policy to the Statutory Instrument, allowing candidates who pass the written component but fail the practical component to re-sit the practical component the following diet.</p>	
Decisions required	Council is asked to consider the proposed changes to the Statutory Instrument and approve the revised wording, prior to it to be progressed to external organisations.	
Attachments		
Author	Jude Bradbury Examinations Manager <a href="mailto:j.bradbury@rcvs.org.uk">j.bradbury@rcvs.org.uk</a> / 020 7050 5043	
<b>Classifications</b>		
Document	Classification <sup>1</sup>	Rationales <sup>2</sup>
Paper	Unclassified	n/a

**<sup>1</sup>Classifications explained**

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**<sup>2</sup>Classification rationales**

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## Revised wording for the Statutory Instrument (re-sit policy)

### Background

1. Overseas veterinary surgeons whose qualification is not recognised by the RCVS are required to pass the RCVS Statutory Membership Exam (SME) to be able to work as a veterinary surgeon in the UK as outlined in The Veterinary Surgeons (Examination of Commonwealth and Foreign Candidates) Regulations 2005.
2. This ensures that overseas veterinary surgeons are not less than the standard required to qualify as a veterinary surgeon under section 3(1) of the Veterinary Surgeons Act 1966.
3. The statute covers all aspects of the examination including:
  - Evidence required for the candidates to confirm their identity, qualifications, professional good standing, and English language skills.
  - Exam content such as clinical domains, areas of knowledge (e.g. medicine, surgery, public health) and the inclusion of written and practical components.
  - Examination fees.
  - Examination appeals.
4. Due to the relatively low number of candidates, the SME is currently held once a year, with the written component taking place at the end of April/start of May and the practical component in July.
5. The written component of the exam must be passed for candidates to progress on to the practical aspect. The written component has a pass rate of approximately 20% with the successful candidates moving on to the practical examination with a typical pass rate of 80-100%.
6. Each diet of the exam is subject to robust quality assurance checks to ensure the questions are appropriate and set at the standard of RCVS Day One Competences. The relatively low pass mark of the written papers is thought to be a consequence of the need for candidates to demonstrate their competence across all clinical domains (companion animal, equine and production animal and Veterinary Public Health) as many candidates have been working in one area since graduating and some struggle to 'see practice' across all domains.

### Proposal

7. There is currently no opportunity for candidates to re-sit part of the SME within the current statute. The written component of the exam must be passed first, followed by the practical component within a 12-month period.
8. This proposal suggests potential additional wording to the current statute to enable candidates who pass the written exam but fail the practical exam one re-sit attempt at the practical component at the next available opportunity.
9. Section 4, paragraph 5 of the statute currently states:

(5) In order to pass the statutory examination overall, the candidate must pass the written examinations and the clinical, practical examination at the same sitting within a given 12-month period.

10. The proposed additions to section 4 of the statute are quoted in red and underlined.:

(5) Ordinarily, in order to pass the statutory examination overall, the candidate must pass the written examinations and the clinical, practical examination at the same sitting within a given 12-month period unless otherwise determined by the Education Committee.

(6) If a candidate should pass the written examinations but fail the clinical, practical examination they shall be allowed to re-sit the clinical, practical examination at the next sitting without repeating the written examinations. If the candidate then fails the clinical, practical examination a second time they will be required to repeat both parts of the examination at their next attempt.

11. The next available opportunity should ideally be the next sitting (diet) although exceptional circumstances such as illness, travel restrictions etc. may result in a candidate deferring subject to approval by Education Committee. In this instance a candidate must retake their practical examination within two years of their previous failed attempt.

12. As re-sitting the practical exam would take a candidate beyond the 12-month period current imposed by the statute, the proposal also recommends adding in some flexibility to this timeframe within paragraph (5) at the Education Committee's discretion.

13. Candidate's re-sitting the practical examination would be required to pay a reduced fee to the RCVS of £2000<sup>1</sup> (full fee is £2,500 – comprising £2200 examination fee plus £300 admin fee).

14. Candidates would be required to re-sit all three domain aspects of the practical exam regardless of their previous performance.

15. If a candidate retakes the practical exam but fails on their second attempt, they would then be required to restart the process and sit the written component in their next attempt with a full fee of £2500 should they wish to continue.

16. A candidate's right to appeal their examination result or to withdraw with a refund will proportionately remain the same; if a candidate withdraws before the closing date (14 February) they will be entitled to a refund of the full (reduced) examination fee of £2000. If they withdraw 28 days or more before the examination their refund is 50% of the examination fee, and there is no refund if a candidate withdraws less than 28 days before the examination.

<sup>1</sup> The proposed fee is based on omitting the admin fee (£300) and the cost per candidate of the written paper exam platform (~£200). The majority of admin is carried out prior to accepting the applicant as a candidate processing paperwork etc. The practical exam (OSCE) is by far the most expensive component of the SME.

## Decision

17. Council is asked to review and approve the proposed changes to the Statutory Instrument prior to progression through DEFRA and Privy Council.

<b>Summary</b>	
Meeting	RCVS Council
Date	17 March 2022
Title	Refugee policy amendment
Summary	<p>The RCVS refugee policy implemented in 2020 provides financial support to refugee veterinary surgeons looking to sit the Statutory Membership Exam (SME) in order to become registered and work in the UK. The support package includes funding for the exam entry fee (£2500), the costs of one attempt at a recognised English Language test (if not exempt), and travel / accommodation costs for attending the practical exam (if the candidate reaches that stage).</p> <p>To date, refugees approaching the RCVS have been from schools where the degree was not currently recognised by RCVS (i.e. not accredited by RCVS directly, EAEVE or recognised through a Mutual Recognition Agreement). Hence, the support for refugees was proposed as part of the Statutory Examination process. However, the current crisis in Ukraine may result in refugee veterinary surgeons wishing to register with the RCVS who do not need to sit the SME, as one school has recently been awarded EAEVE accreditation. Although elements of this programme are taught in English, the majority of the degree is taught in Ukrainian and therefore graduates would still be required to pass an approved English language test to be eligible to register, even though their degree is recognised.</p> <p>This proposal looks at amending the current refugee policy to ensure all refugee veterinary surgeons can receive financial support to aid them in becoming eligible for registration with the RCVS.</p>
Decisions required	Council is asked to approve the amendment to the refugee policy to allow all veterinary surgeon refugees financial support for English language testing where it is needed.
Attachments	none
Author	<p>Jude Bradbury Examinations Manager</p> <p><a href="mailto:j.bradbury@rcvs.org.uk">j.bradbury@rcvs.org.uk</a> / 020 7050 5043</p>

<b>Classifications</b>		
<b>Document</b>	<b>Classification<sup>1</sup></b>	<b>Rationales<sup>2</sup></b>
Paper	Unclassified	n/a

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<b><sup>2</sup>Classification rationales</b>	
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## Refugee policy amendment

### Background

1. In 2020 the RCVS established a refugee policy to provide financial aid to veterinary surgeons with refugee status in the UK looking to sit the Statutory Membership Exam (SME). This includes the following:
  - Examination fee
  - One attempt at an English language test per exam diet
  - Travel and accommodation costs relating to the practical exam component
  - RCVS Knowledge membership

We have also recently negotiated free membership of other veterinary organisations to support refugees learning.

2. The above expenses are paid for by the RCVS via the Refugee Council.
3. Overseas veterinary surgeons who graduated from schools that are not accredited by RCVS (or otherwise recognised through accreditation by the European Association of Establishments for Veterinary Education – EAEVE – or a Mutual Recognition Agreement) are required to pass the RCVS SME to be able to work as a veterinary surgeon in the UK as outlined in The Veterinary Surgeons (Examination of Commonwealth and Foreign Candidates) Regulations 2005.
4. To date, refugees approaching the RCVS have been from schools where the degree was not currently recognised by RCVS. Hence, the support for refugees undertaking English language testing was proposed as part of the Statutory Examination process. However, the current crisis in Ukraine may result in refugee veterinary surgeons wishing to register with the RCVS who do not need to sit the SME, as one school has recently been awarded EAEVE accreditation. Although elements of this programme are taught in English, the majority of the degree is taught in Ukrainian and therefore graduates would still be required to pass an approved English language test to be eligible to register, even though their degree is recognised.
5. RCVS is aware of several vet schools within Ukraine, however only one school is currently EAEVE accredited (awarded in 2021).
6. The RCVS currently recognises passing scores from the academic International English Language Testing System (IELTS) and the veterinary Occupational English Test (OET).

### Proposal

7. It is proposed that the current refugee policy to allow financial support for refugees is amended, to 'decouple' the financial support for one attempt at an English language test from the other financial support aspects for candidates needing to sit the SME (i.e. the exam fee, and travel / accommodation costs).

8. This would enable RCVS to support any veterinary surgeon refugee whose primary veterinary degree was not taught and assessed entirely in English, in one attempt at a recognised English Language test, even if they are not required to sit the SME.
9. This would have an incurred cost of around £228 (IELTS) to £375 (OET) per refugee including the 17% Refugee Council administration fee.
10. Refugees required to sit the SME would continue to receive additional financial support outlined in the refugee policy for the exam fee, one attempt at an English language test and travel / accommodation to the practical exam.

## Decision

11. RCVS Council is asked to review and approve the proposed amendment to the refugee policy.

<b>Summary</b>	
Meeting	Council
Date	17 March 2022
Title	Advancement of the Professions Committee Report 8 Feb 2022.
Summary	<p>To note the attached minutes of the meeting held on 8 Feb 2022.</p> <p>In particular, to note the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Committee were presented with the BAME Student Working Group Report.</li> <li>• The Committee approved the formation of a working party which would address Limited Licensure.</li> <li>• The Committee was presented with outcomes from the recent Workforce Summit.</li> </ul>
Decisions required	None
Attachments	N/A
Author	Ceri Chick Secretary APC c.chick@rcvs.org.uk / 0207 856 1034

<b>Classifications</b>		
<b>Document</b>	<b>Classification<sup>1</sup></b>	<b>Rationales<sup>2</sup></b>
Paper	Unclassified	n/a



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## Minutes of the Advancement of the Professions Committee meeting held on Tuesday, 8 February 2022 at 2:30pm via Microsoft Teams.

### Members:

Ms A Boag*	Chair, Board of Trustees for RCVS Knowledge
Dr N Connell	Chair, Diversity and Inclusion Group
Prof S Dawson	Chair, Mind Matters Initiative
Dr J Dyer	Council member
Dr M Gardiner	Council member, Deputy Lead for Global Development
Dr M Greene (Chair)	Senior Vice-President, Council member
Professor J Innes*	Chair, RCVS Fellowship Board
Ms L Lockett	Chief Executive Officer
Dr S Paterson	Chair, Environment and Sustainability Working Group
Mr M Rendle*	VN Futures Project Board liaison point
Dr C Tufnell*	Innovation and Global Lead
Mr T Walker	Lay Council Member
Dr C Whiting*	Council Member, Deputy Lead for Innovation

<b>In attendance:</b> Mrs A Belcher	Director for Advancement of the Professions
Miss A Hanson	Mind Matters Initiative Officer
Mr B Myring	Policy and Public Affairs Manager
Ms C Chick	Senior Leadership Officer
Miss G Gill	Leadership and Inclusion Manager
Mr I Holloway	Director of Communications
Miss J Macdonald	Vet Nurse Futures Project Manager
Miss L Pitcher	MMI Outreach and Engagement Senior Officer
Ms L Thurman	Veterinary Medicine Student, RCVS EMS Placement
Miss R Greaves	Policy and Public Affairs Officer

Prof R Pettitt	Chair, RCVS Veterinary Schools Council BAME Working Group (for agenda item 6 only)
Miss S Rogers	ViVet Manager
Dr S-R Flicker	Chair, RCVS Veterinary Schools Council BAME Working Group (for agenda item 6 only)

### Welcome and apologies for absence

1. The Chair welcomed all present to the meeting of the APC and noted that the meeting would be recorded for minuting purposes.
2. Apologies were received from:
  - a) Ms A Boag
  - b) Prof J Innes
  - c) Mr M Rendle.
  - d) Dr C Tufnell
  - e) Dr C Whiting

### Declarations of Interest

3. Dr N Connell declared that he was applying for Fellowship this year.

### Minutes of the last meeting held on 16 November 2021

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

### Matters Arising

5. No new matters were discussed.

### Updates from APC workstreams

6. The responsible Committee members or the relevant staff lead provided an update on each of the eight workstreams within the scope of the APC; this reflected the contents of the paper (APC November 21 AI01).
7. The Committee considered these updates, as well as other specific matters raised that were brought to it for discussion and, in some cases, decision. These are highlighted below, in addition to the main questions and comments prompted by each update.

### Diversity and Inclusion Working Group

8. The Chair of the Diversity and Inclusion Group (DIG) noted that the Group would be meeting at the end of February.
9. The Group would continue their work and possibly extend this to explore the topic of Reasonable Adjustments in the near future.
10. The Chair noted that it was encouraging to see their work coming through, such as the Chronic Illness survey.

### Fellowship

11. It was noted that the Fellowship team was working towards releasing a new Fellowship Newsletter in the following weeks, which would highlight any upcoming events and key achievements to members of the Fellowship.
12. The Fellowship team was aiming to launch a discussion platform, Discourse, to the Fellowship towards the end of February. The Fellowship Board, along with members of the staff team, had begun populating the platform with discussion topics for Fellows to respond to once the platform had been officially launched and users were given access.

### Global Strategy

13. Information around this workstream's activities were discussed at Agenda Item 6 (APC Feb22 AI06).

### Innovation

14. Information around this workstream's activities were discussed at Agenda Item 7 (APC Feb22 AI07).

### Leadership

15. Work continued around the re-launch of the Edward Jenner Veterinary Leadership Programme, awaiting responses from the NHS Leadership Academy. This was aimed for spring 2022.
16. It was noted that work around the Leadership Framework was still in the pipeline and remained a priority.

### Mind Matters Initiative

17. The Chair of the Mind Matters Taskforce thanked the staff team for their continued hard work.
18. It was noted that the Mind Matters Initiative (MMI) Research Symposium at the end of 2021 had been well received and attended. Summaries were available on the MMI website for those who wish to read them.
19. It was also noted that applications for the Sarah Brown Mental Health Research Grant were being accepted. The Committee was encouraged to disseminate information around the grant to encourage applications.

### RCVS Knowledge

20. Information around the release of the RCVS Knowledge Evidence-Based Veterinary Medicine (EBVM) Learning for the practising vet, which would include more relevant examples for in-

practice use in comparison to the previous example which was more relevant to students, had been approved.

### Sustainability

21. The Council representative for Sustainability thanked the Chair for her expert chairing of the Practice Standards Scheme (PSS) sub-group, whose work on sustainability in practice was moving along at pace.

### VN Futures

22. It was noted that as the project moved into phase two, slight working practice changes had been agreed upon. Each organisation – RCVS and the British Veterinary Nursing Association (BVNA) - would address actions that sat firmly within their own remit moving forward. The RCVS portion of the project would also work on strengthening synergies with other internal workstreams.

### BAME Student Working Group Report

23. Professor R Pettitt and Dr S-R Flicker were welcomed to the meeting to present the BAME Student Working Group report on behalf of the RCVS/Veterinary Schools Council (VSC) BAME Student Working Group.
24. Professor Pettitt thanked the Working Group, as well as the UK veterinary schools and students involved in this report.
25. It was noted that the report would be submitted to the VSC for comment and approval before being published. Students at Surrey Vet School had volunteered to be involved in providing photographs to complete the guidance on the wearing of religious clothing in clinical settings, which would also be circulated to the VSC for comment before publication.
26. Dr Flicker noted the report would not only benefit current members of the professions, but would also highlight to those thinking about entering the professions that this was a well-thought-out area, and would therefore bring confidence and comfort to those individuals beginning their veterinary journey.
27. The Chair thanked the members of the Working Group for their continued efforts towards this report.

### Limited Licensure and Reasonable Adjustment

28. The Committee was presented with a paper that discussed the topic of Limited Licensure and Reasonable Adjustment.
29. It was noted that there was a desire within the College to improve access to the professions across the board, but in particular for those who have a disability or chronic health condition.

The College was aware that there were significant barriers for some of those wishing to enter the professions who had a disability.

30. The Committee was reminded that currently those who met Day One Competences and registered with the RCVS essentially received a 'general licence'. If an individual was unable to meet those Competences - particularly the requisite practical assessments - due to a disability, they would not be accepted onto the veterinary degree course, and therefore could not qualify and go on or register as a member of the RCVS.
31. It was highlighted that this was a different treatment to those who develop a disability once they are on the Register, where they would be trusted, as part of their professional judgement, to only practice where they would be competent to do so.
32. The Limited Licensure proposal aimed to address these issues by providing a licence that would be limited to their competencies, allowing an individual to register and practice where they were physically able to do so.
33. Criticism was received during the Legislative Reform, stating that the College could and should do more via reasonable adjustment to address this issue, rather than using limited licensure. However, it is possible that one or both mechanisms may be appropriate, depending on the individual case.
34. A task-and-finish working party was proposed to research into detail the most appropriate way forward for this piece of work, concluding with a report outlining the issues and providing recommendations to be presented to the Committee in due course.
35. The Committee highlighted that this work should take a positive approach and consider changing the terminology to "Focussed Licensure", and to give focussed efforts into reasonable adjustments.
36. It was suggested that representatives from other regulators who had explored this area previously should be invited to various project meetings to offer their expertise and experiences.
37. The Committee approved both the formation of the working party and its terms of reference. This would then be presented to RCVS Finance and Resources Committee for final approval.
38. The Committee thanked Miss R Greaves and Mr B Myring for their efforts towards this work.

### **Global Membership**

39. The Committee was presented with a paper that outlined ways in which the College could do more to engage with its overseas members.
40. The paper followed a survey sent to overseas members in 2019, which revealed that overseas members wanted more engagement from the College and that many were unaware of initiatives such as MMI that were available to them.

41. Research had been carried out to discover what initiatives other Royal Colleges had in place to engage with their global membership.
42. It was highlighted that increased efforts to engage with overseas members could encourage those who move abroad to retain their MRCVS status.
43. Work around the regulation of continuing professional development (CPD) requirements for overseas members was ongoing.
44. Work would continue around this topic and the Committee would be kept informed of any progress.

### Post-Workforce Summit Update

45. Miss S Rogers presented an update on the outcomes from the recent Workforce Summit.
46. Prior to the event, Vivet held online Insight Sessions, which had been open for all members of the professions to apply to attend. A total of 516 individuals had registered to take part in the RCVS Insight Sessions, which allowed over 100 people to take part in lunchtime and evening sessions. These sessions were split into the following streams:
  - a) Those considering leaving the professions.
  - b) Those trying to return to work.
  - c) Those working in corporate/ independent practices.
  - d) Those not in full-time work and veterinary nurses.
47. Individuals who had been unable to attend the insight sessions had been invited to complete a survey or send a video recording to share their experiences. In total, 76 additional responses were received along with two video recordings. These data all contributed to a clear picture of the professions' personal experiences.
48. The ViVet team had also approached external veterinary organisations to provide data that could assist the project in attaining a clear picture of the challenges that members of the professions face. Disappointingly, response had been limited.
49. In addition, the Public Affairs team had produced two reports based on data available from the RCVS Register, one focusing on the VN profession and the other focusing on the veterinary profession, both had since been published on the RCVS website.
50. All of this information had fed into the Workforce Summit event by identifying six high-priority areas for improvement. These topics were:
  - a) Readiness for Work
  - b) Work-Life Balance
  - c) Workplace Culture



- d) Client Interaction
- e) Career Development
- f) Return to Work

51. A report of the day was in its final stages. This report, once published, would be sent to all stakeholders who were unable to attend on the day to encourage them to offer their feedback and expertise. This report would also be available on the College website and circulated to the media.
52. The Summit was attended by veterinary professionals from a variety of backgrounds, including practice (both independent and corporate), food hygiene/ production, government, academia and human resources/ people management, as well as delegates from professional associations and representative bodies. Covid did cause an impact on delegates attending, for example, a change in certain travel regulations meant that some individuals were unable to attend, despite intention to do so. There had also been a storm the previous day that restricted the ability of delegates from Scotland to attend.
53. The independent external facilitators were well received and help shape a successful event.
54. The event began with focusing on the empathy-building and design-thinking stage, as with the issues due to be discussed, it was important to ensure that delegates were on the same page and aware that all were there for the same purpose. This ensured a longer-term agreement approach around workflows and stakeholder engagement in the most positive way possible.
55. It was emphasised that the project would not exclude other stakeholders or groups who would like to contribute, and provide valuable expertise. This event was the starting point of this project and would continue to grow with the support of the professions.
56. Internally, a roadmap of the various potential projects to support the mitigation of challenges around Recruitment, Retention and Return had been drafted. This included a programme of time-sensitive priorities to give meaningful outputs as soon as possible. This would be refined in collaboration with stakeholders before publication.
57. To continue this work, various resource management processes were being considered, such as "Sprinting" project management and recruiting external consultants with specific skill sets.
58. The Committee highlighted the vast amount of time and effort that had been contributed by the RCVS staff towards this project and emphasised the importance of making this clear externally to appreciate the efforts made to improve the professions. The Committee thanked Miss S Rogers for her efforts in driving this project forward while simultaneously working to advance the ViVet project.

### **Subcommittee Review**

59. The Committee was presented with a paper that outlined the structure and terms of reference of its reporting groups. The purpose of this was to ensure that no surplus groups were standing which were no longer relevant or active.
60. It was noted that all standing reports continued to be relevant, with the Environment and Sustainability Working Party having finished its task and disbanded as per its original remit.

### **Any other business**

61. No other business was discussed.

### **Date of next meeting**

62. The Chair closed the meeting noting the next meeting would be in the afternoon of 10 May 2022.

<b>Summary</b>	
Meeting	RCVS Council
Date	17 March 2022
Title	Audit and Risk Committee (ARC) Minutes 10 February 2022
Summary	Minutes of the ARC in February 2022
Decisions required	N/A
Attachments	Classified appendix
Author	Alan Quinn-Byrne Governance Officer/Secretary a.quinn-byrne@rcvs.org.uk / T 020 7227 3505

### Classifications

Document	Classification <sup>1</sup>	Rationales <sup>2</sup>
Paper	Unclassified	n/a
Classified appendix	<b>Confidential</b>	<b>1, 2, 3, 4</b>

### <sup>1</sup>Classifications explained

Unclassified	Papers will be published on the internet and recipients may share them and discuss them freely with anyone. This may include papers marked 'Draft'.
Confidential	Temporarily available only to Council Members, non-Council members of the relevant committee, sub-committee, working party or Board and not for dissemination outside that group unless and until the relevant committee or Council has given approval for public discussion, consultation or publication.
Private	The paper includes personal data which should not be disclosed at any time or for any reason, unless the data subject has agreed otherwise. The Chair may, however, indicate after discussion that there are

	general issues which can be disclosed, for example in reports to committees and Council.
<b><sup>2</sup>Classification rationales</b>	
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## Minutes of the Audit and Risk Committee (ARC) held in Belgravia House and online via Microsoft Teams on 10 February 2022

### Members:

Ms J Shardlow	Lay member, Chair
Prof D Bray	Lay member of RCVS Council
Mr V Olowe	Lay member
Mr K Gill	Lay member
Dr M M S Gardiner	Council Member

### In attendance:

Dr N T Connell	Treasurer
Ms L Lockett	CEO
Ms C McCann	Director of Operations (DoOps)
Mr A Quinn-Byrne	Secretary to ARC / Governance Officer
Dr L Prescott Clements	Director of Education

### Apologies for absence and Welcome

1. There were no apologies for absence.

### Declarations of interest

2. There were no new declarations of interest.

### Minutes of the Audit and Risk Committee meeting held on 18 November 2021

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

### CEO Update

4. The CEO provided an oral update to the Committee, and the following points were noted:

Confidential information is available in the classified appendix at paragraph 1.

## Leaving Belgravia House Risk Register

5. Due to the scale of the project of leaving Belgravia House, it was acknowledged that a risk register would need to be managed, this register was presented to the Committee for comment.
6. The Director of Operations (DoOps) provided a full update to the Committee on the status of the Estates Strategy.
7. Confidential information is available in the classified appendix at paragraph 2-7.

## Corporate Risk Register

8. The Corporate Risk Register was presented in its new form of top ten risks as requested by the Committee. The following comments were noted:
9. Confidential information is available in the classified appendix at paragraph 8.

## ENQA update

10. The Committee was provided with the RCVS Accreditation Visitation Work Plan for Veterinary Schools and Vet Nursing qualifications. The Director of Education Dr Linda Prescott Clements Joined the meeting to present the ENQA update.
11. Confidential information is available in the classified appendix at paragraph 9-12.
12. The Committee praised the work that had gone into the ENQA process and was content with the level of assurance in place; an update on ENQA progress would come before the Committee in May 2022.

## Any other business

13. It was noted that the accounts would be reviewed at a joint session of ARC and FRC in May 2022.
14. Confidential information is available in the classified appendix at paragraph 13.

## Date of Next Meeting

15. The date of the next meeting was confirmed as Thursday, 12 May 2022 at 10:00 am. This would be held virtually.

<b>Summary</b>	
Meeting	RCVS Council
Date	17 March 2022
Title	Education Committee Minutes of the meeting held on 8 February 2022
Summary	Council to note Education Committee Minutes of the meeting held on 8 February 2022
Decisions required	To note
Attachments	Classified Appendix
Author	Britta Crawford <a href="mailto:b.crawford@rcvs.org.uk">b.crawford@rcvs.org.uk/</a> 020 7202 0777

<b>Classifications</b>		
<b>Document</b>	<b>Classification<sup>1</sup></b>	<b>Rationales<sup>2</sup></b>
Paper	Unclassified	
Classified appendix	<b>Confidential</b>	<b>1</b>

## Education Committee

### Minutes of the meeting held on 8 February 2022

<b>Members:</b>	Dr Niall Connell	
	Ms Linda Ford	- Lay member
	Professor Tim Parkin	
	Mrs Susan Howarth	
	Dr Susan (Sue) Paterson	- Chair
	Professor Chris Proudman	
	Professor Stuart Reid	
	Professor Susan Rhind	
	Dr Colin Whiting	
	Ms Anna Bradbury	- Student representative
Ms Kate Dakin	- Student representative	
<b>By invitation:</b>	Dr Melissa Donald	- CertAVP Subcommittee Chair
	Mr Danny Chambers	- Adv Practitioner Panel Chair
	Dr Joanne Dyer	- PQSC Chair
	*Dr Mandisa Greene	- VetGDP subcommittee Chair
	*Professor Nigel Gibbens	- Chair of Accreditation Review Group
<b>In attendance:</b>	Mr Duncan Ash	- Senior Education Officer
	Dr Jude Bradbury	- Examinations Manager
	Dr Linda Prescott-Clements	- Director of Education
	Mrs Britta Crawford	- Senior Education Officer
	Mr Jordan Nicholls	- Lead for Undergraduate Education
	Ms Beckie Smith	- Education Assistant
	Ms Jenny Soreskog-Turp	- Lead for Postgraduate Education
	Mr Kieran Thakrar	- Education Assistant
	Mrs Kirsty Williams	- Quality Assurance Manager
	Ms Lizzie Lockett	- CEO
Dr Kate Richards	- Officer Team Observer	

### Apologies for absence and welcome

1. Apologies were sent from Mandisa Greene and Nigel Gibbens.

### Declarations of interest

2. There were no declarations of interest.



## **Minutes**

3. The minutes of the meeting held on 16 November 2022 were agreed as an accurate record.

## **Matters arising**

4. The Committee noted that VSC had been asked to note that following review by EC, the temporary amendments whereby IMR practices could be “working towards” PSS accreditation had now reverted back to pre-covid policy and practices would need to be PSS accredited. It was also noted that schools were still struggling with live access to abattoirs. The online assessment policy had been discussed with the AVS, noting that it did not insist that schools introduce proctoring. The synoptic exam review was on-going and the remaining actions from the minutes had been completed or were included in the agenda.

## **Education Department update**

5. The Director of Education, Dr Linda Prescott-Clements, gave an oral update on the work of the Education Department. The Committee were updated on the recent meeting between the PSRB's (Professional, Statutory and Regulatory Bodies) and the Office for Students (OfS) regarding phase two of the consultation on their new standards. The Committee heard that the OfS would not generally investigate concerns if the regulator was already involved, although, if necessary, they would take the views of the regulator into account. The OfS were committed to working with PSRB's around any issues arising during the review of programmes.
6. The proposal for the RCVS to allow the Veterinary Council of Ireland (VCI) to use the written part of the RCVS Statutory Membership Examination (SME) was progressing and there would be at least one VCI candidate this year.

## **Primary Qualifications Sub-Committee (PQSC)**

### **Report of the sub-committee meetings held on the 14 and 27 January 2022**

7. Reports of meetings held on 14 and 27 January 2022
8. Since the minutes of the previous PQSC meetings were still with the committee for approval, PQSC chair Dr Dyer gave Education Committee a verbal update on the discussions that had taken place.
9. The decision had been made to split the January PQSC meeting into two because the workload was too great to consider in one meeting.
10. The first meeting in January considered the annual monitoring reports from the UK Vet Schools as well as the reports received from schools in Australia and New Zealand. Reports were considered by the committee and where further clarifications were sought; these were being followed up directly with the schools.

11. The second PQSC meeting was arranged to consider the general business items separate from the annual monitoring reports.
12. PQSC were presented with the visitation reports from the Nottingham and Bristol visitations, for initial review, and both reports had been returned to the schools for the formal consultation period and University response, which would come back to PQSC in April so that the committee could make its recommendation on accreditation status.
13. Confidential file notes of the informal progress meetings between RCVS and Harper and Keele Vet School, and RCVS and Aberystwyth/RVC, were considered by PQSC and noted.
14. Minutes from the SME Board meetings in October and December were presented, and an update on the SME was to be presented later in the Education Committee agenda.
15. Finally, the frequency of PQSC meetings was looked at in relation to the workload that the committee now had. PQSC currently met four times a year to discuss business and make recommendations to Education Committee. With an increase in veterinary schools, both in the UK and overseas, the core business of PQSC had now reached a point where the numbers of papers for consideration was a challenge to fit into these four meetings. Therefore, to spread the workload more evenly throughout the year, PQSC agreed to increase the frequency from four to six meetings annually.

**Action: PQSC to move from four to six meeting per year.**

### **Conflict of interest changes**

16. The committee reviewed an updated version of the accreditation visit Conflict of Interest policy. As well as clarification of the policy, the committee were also asked to suggest an appropriate time frame between a potential visitor having an association with a Vet School and being a member of the visiting panel. The committee suggested and approved reducing the current period of 10 years to 5 years for those who have graduated from, or been employed full time by the school being evaluated during the last 5 years.; and to add a period of 3 years separation since a potential visitor was engaged as an external examiner by the vet school.
17. The committee also pointed out some corrections to be made including the name change of the Education Committee, changing Head of Education to Chair of Education, and reducing the term "chairman" to simply "chair".

**ACTION: Amend conflict of interests policy**

### **EAEVE Observation report**

18. Comments on the report are available in the confidential appendix

### **Appeals Process**

19. Following a review of appeal procedures across the College by the Legal Services team at the RCVS, some amendments were proposed within the accreditation of veterinary programme appeal procedure.
20. The main amendment surrounded the panel which would consider any appeal, which had originally been the Examinations Appeal panel. Since it was felt that an Examinations Appeal panel may not have any expertise or experience with university programme accreditation, it was agreed that a more subject specific panel should be created as needed, which would include a member appointed from the RCVS list of visitors.
21. Education Committee agreed to the proposed changes, and it was agreed to make the draft final.  
**Action: Update appeals procedure in accreditation documentation.**

## **EMS**

### **Review of the temporary policy**

22. As part of the on-going three-monthly reviews of the temporary EMS requirement, Education Committee was asked to consider EMS completion data submitted from schools at the end of January. It was noted that there had been no further changes to the policy when it was last considered at Education Committee in November 2021.
23. It was noted that following the previous reductions, the penultimate and final year students appeared to be on track to meet their clinical EMS requirements from the data returned, as well as those currently in Year 2 (Year 3 Cambridge) in meeting the pre-clinical requirement.
24. The completion data for those who had just started the programme in September 2021 varied, but this was more down to schools' individual timetabling, with some scheduled to start pre-clinical EMS earlier than others. Therefore, it was noted that this data would be reviewed again at the next meeting in May before considering whether any possible reductions would be needed.
25. Therefore, members were asked to consider whether a reduction of 3 weeks EMS to the requirement for Year 3 (Year 4 Cambridge) should be agreed. Whilst there was one opinion that the requirements should remain unchanged, there was an argument put forward on behalf of the students, in that although restrictions had now been lifted there was still a backlog of placements that providers were working through for those in their later years which was influencing availability for those who had just started their clinical years. The completion rate was also lower than what would normally be expected by this time.
26. It was therefore agreed that the clinical EMS requirement for the cohort year of 2024 would be reduced by 3 weeks, to 23 weeks in total, considering the difficulty in securing placements since the beginning of term in September 2021.

**Action: RCVS to inform VSC of the decision and update EMS pages on the website**

### **Pre-clinical EMS intercalation rules**

27. Following the introduction of the temporary EMS policy due to the pandemic, rules around the requirements for intercalating students were also agreed upon. However, these rules have been based specifically on clinical EMS and the requirement to be registered as a veterinary student to be able to carry this out. There are currently no rules in place specifically for those who would be intercalating prior to their clinical years, which can create an anomaly when it comes to their pre-clinical EMS requirements. There are also currently no formal rules in place around students needing to repeat years or taking gap years or suspending their studies. Education Committee was therefore invited to consider additions to the rules around intercalation.
28. Whilst there was agreement that the rules presented in the paper seemed sensible, it was suggested that it would be best to check with the schools initially before putting any rules into place to ensure that it would match up with their internal policies. Therefore, it was agreed that VSC would be consulted before bringing the issue back to Education Committee at its next meeting in May.

**Action: RCVS to consult with VSC on intercalation rules**

### **EMS stakeholder event report and future planning**

29. On 22 November, the RCVS hosted a stakeholder event to consider the longer-term future implementation of EMS. During the event, workshops were held for stakeholders to discuss different possible options for potential ways forward for EMS, and new ideas for addressing the future challenges were invited as part of a 'blue sky' thinking session. Education Committee received a paper which contained a report of the day and summaries of each of the workshops and the discussions around them. The paper also presented a proposal for potential options to be included in a plan for a new EMS system, which Education Committee were invited to consider.
30. It was reported that the paper would be shared with VSC after the meeting, and any comments could be considered when returning to this agenda item in May.

**Action: RCVS to share paper with VSC**

31. Further reference to communications and logistics can be found in the confidential appendix.

### **CPD**

#### **Updates from the CPD Policy & Compliance subcommittee**

32. The committee received and noted the minutes from the last meeting of the CPD Policy and Compliance subcommittee. Ms Ford gave a brief overview of discussions at the meeting, which included 1CPD usage and CPD compliance. The results of the CPD audit for 2021 will be presented to the Education Committee at its next meeting in May.

**Action: Present the results of the CPD Audit at the next meeting**

### **Statutory Membership Exam (SME): Update on candidate numbers**

33. The exams manager reported that at present 54 candidates have been accepted onto the 2022 exam, but more are expected ahead of the deadline of 14 February. It was also reported that one candidate from the VCI will be sitting the written exam at present.
34. The changes to the English language requirements previously approved by the Committee have been implemented. From those which applied prior to this being changed, 12 candidates have chosen to defer their IELTS/OET.
35. It was reported that one refugee is expected to sit the 2022 exam although there are currently 14 refugees on the active list. All the refugees have taken up the offer of free memberships to a variety of veterinary organisations in the UK. The exams manager flagged that this may result in over ten refugees wishing to sit the 2023 exam which would exceed the RCVS' planned allowance.

**Action: exams manager to request additional funding for refugees in 2023 from Finance and Resources Committee**

### **Veterinary Graduate Development Programme (VetGDP)**

#### **Minutes from the VetGDP subcommittee held on 1 February 2022**

36. The secretary of the VetGDP subcommittee gave an overview of the discussions at the meeting which was noted by the Committee.

#### **VetGDP Adviser Training Report**

37. The committee received the results of the evaluations completed by all VetGDP Advisers at the end of the VetGDP on-line training. The results were extremely positive, and a majority found all areas of the training to be either 'very' or 'extremely useful'.
38. The training was rated positive consistently across all different groups. Female respondents and those working for a corporate practice were in general more positive about the training but there were no major differences in any of the areas.
39. Respondents who had previously received other formal training felt that the course had been as useful as those respondents who had previously not any received previous training in coaching or mentoring and there were no major differences between the two groups.
40. The results were particularly pleasing given the that the profession was given little notice to complete the training, in a climate of high stress due to covid and difficulties with a shortage of staff.

#### **Summary report of the graduate and VetGDP Adviser surveys.**

41. The Committee were provided with a summary report of the graduate and VetGDP Adviser surveys. These surveys are particularly useful as they capture nearly 100% of graduates, as they are a pre-requisite to starting the VetGDP. This compares to a less than 10% response rate to graduate surveys completed in the past. The Committee understood that a fully redacted set of data had been sent to each school with their own data. The department was thanked for their foresight in collecting such useful data.

#### **Review of subcommittees and working parties which report to Education Committee.**

42. The committee received and noted the terms of reference for all the committees that report to Education Committee. The committee approved them all but suggested to amend the wording to PQSC's terms of reference to include a reference to re-accreditation in the first paragraph (point 1) and update the membership of the specialist subcommittee to ensure 50% of the committee are made up from specialists.

**Action: Update ToR for PQSC and Specialist Subcommittee**

#### **Certificate in Advanced Veterinary Practice (CertAVP) report from the meeting held on 1 February 2022**

43. The chair of the CertAVP subcommittee gave a report on the meeting which had happened the previous week. The Committee noted that Liverpool had been approved to assess the Poultry modules and the Veterinary Management and Leadership module and that one further candidate had been given approval to take their synoptic exam for the third time.

#### **Advanced Practitioner Status**

##### **List of approved Advanced Practitioners**

44. The list of approved Advanced Practitioners was noted.

#### **Advanced Practitioner (AP) Evaluation**

45. The committee was presented with the project plan. There was some discussion around ensuring that a broad range of veterinary professionals would be represented in the task and finish groups. With the proviso that Specialists and Fellows be asked to join the second group, the committee agreed to the project plan.

**ACTION: Findings of the task and finish group to be reported at September EC**

#### **Specialist subcommittee**

46. The minutes from the Specialist Sub-Committee (SSC) held on 12 January 2022 were received and noted.
47. Education Committee approved the additions and re-additions to the List of Specialists, as recommended by SSC.

#### **Remuneration**

48. At its meeting in January 2021, the SSC had asked Education Committee to consider the possibility of remuneration for committee members assessing Specialist applications. However, the discussion did not take place at the meeting in February 2021, and therefore the committee were asked if this could be discussed.
49. It was noted that the Advanced Practitioner Panel of Assessors were offered an honoraria for considering applications, and the VetGDP panel would also be set to receive honoraria for peer review of portfolios. Therefore, it was agreed that the SSC should also be able to receive an honorarium. It was clarified that this honorarium would be for applications from those who did not hold European Diplomas and would therefore be applying via the "full" application system whereby contributions, publications and CPD etc would need to be considered by the committee.
- Action: EC to recommend to FRC that honoraria for assessment for Specialist applications is introduced**

### **Application system for European Specialists**

50. Since the introduction of the new streamlined application system for European Specialists was introduced, it has become apparent that many RCVS Specialists' five-year accreditations are out of sync with their five-year accreditation with EBVS. Previously, it had been the responsibility of any RCVS Specialist to inform RCVS if their EBVS accreditation ended, and they would either need to re-apply to RCVS in full to continue being listed or lapse their status. RCVS had also asked any Specialists who were granted their RCVS five-year accreditation in the same year as their EBVS accreditation, proof of this before their accreditation was fully granted. However, the system is clunky and there are risks that a five-year RCVS accreditation could be granted based on an EBVS accreditation that is not then renewed part way through the RCVS period.
51. Education Committee was therefore asked a change to the application system could be introduced, where the immediate period of accreditation would depend on when the applicants next accreditation period with EBVS would be due, rather than given a blanket five-year accreditation. Then, once the application systems were lined up, each applicant would receive the full five-year accreditation, in line with the dates of the EBVS accreditation. New applicants would also be encouraged to apply immediately once they had received their latest EBVS accreditation.
52. Education Committee agreed to the proposal and confirmed that the process could be developed by the Education Department.

**Action: Education Department to implement updated application system for European Specialists**

### **Risk Register**

53. The risks discussed can be found in the confidential appendix.

### **Any other business**

54. The Committee were advised that the RCVS had been approached by a veterinary surgeon who qualified from a university in Canada asking to sit the SME as a route to being eligible to register and work as a vet in the UK. It was commented that this situation was atypical given the recognition agreement the RCVS has with the mainland US and Canadian vet schools. Veterinary surgeons who graduate from accredited schools in these countries are ordinarily eligible to register after passing the North American Veterinary Licensing Examination (NAVLE).
  
55. It was discussed that although an alternative route is available that should not prevent an overseas veterinarian from choosing the SME as their preferred route to registration. It was however agreed that if a candidate should fail the SME, they should not then be able to register by the alternative route.
  
56. It was also discussed that there appears to be a lack of uniformity in the choice of route to registration between different countries where Mutual Recognition Agreements exist. The Committee recommended that a process should be agreed to provide clarity and equality to all overseas veterinary surgeons wishing to sit the SME.

**ACTION: RCVS to produce a comprehensive process for route to registration via the SME for all overseas vets**

**Date of Next Meeting**

10 May 2022

Britta Crawford

February 2022

[b.crawford@rcvs.org.uk](mailto:b.crawford@rcvs.org.uk)



<b>Summary</b>	
Meeting	RCVS Council
Date	17 March 2022
Title	Finance and Resources Committee (ARC) Minutes 10 February 2022
Summary	Minutes of the FRC in February 2022
Decisions required	N/A
Attachments	Confidential Appendix
Author	Alan Quinn-Byrne Governance Officer/Secretary a.quinn-byrne@rcvs.org.uk / T 020 7227 3505

<b>Classifications</b>		
Document	Classification <sup>1</sup>	Rationales <sup>2</sup>
Paper	Unclassified	n/a
Classified appendix	<b>Confidential</b>	<b>1, 2, 3, 4</b>

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## Minutes of the Finance and Resources Committee (FRC) meeting held at Belgravia House and online via Microsoft Teams on Thursday, 10 February 2022.

### Members:

Dr N T Connell	Chair / RCVS Treasurer
Dr S Paterson	Representative from Education Committee
Dr M O Greene	Representative from Advancement of Professions Committee
Ms J S M Worthington	Lay Member RCVS Council
Ms C-L McLaughlan	Representative from Standards Committee
Mr M E Rendle	RCVS Council / Veterinary Nurses Council Chair
Dr M A Donald	Representative from PIC/DC Liaison Committee
Mr T J Walker	Lay Member RCVS Council
Ms J Davidson	Representative from Veterinary Nurses' Council
*Professor S A May	Elected member RCVS Council

\*Denotes absent.

### In attendance:

Dr K Richards	RCVS President
Ms L Lockett	CEO
Ms E Ferguson	Registrar / Director of Legal Services
Ms C McCann	Director of Operations (DoO)
Mr A Quinn-Byrne	Secretary / Governance Officer
Ms J Delaloye	Head of Finance
Mr B Myring	Policy and Public Affairs Manager
Mr J Nicholls	Lead for Undergraduate Education
Ms V Hedges	Vet Nursing Examinations Manager
Ms L Hall	People Director
Mr R Grover	Pension Consultant (Pension Review Item Only)

### Apologies for absence

1. Apologies were received from Professor May.

### Declarations of interest

2. There were no new declarations of interest.

## Minutes of the meeting held on 18 November 2021

3. It was agreed the minutes of the meeting held on 18 November were a true reflection of the meeting.

## Update from the Director of Operations (DoO)

4. The DoO gave a comprehensive update to the Committee; some key points were as follows:

Confidential information is available in the classified appendix at paragraph 1.

## Pension review

5. Confidential information is available in the classified appendix at paragraphs 2-5.

## Veterinary nursing support package

6. RCVS Examination Manager presented the paper to the Committee and asked FRC to consider its contents and agree a budget for the support package.
7. RCVS had agreed a support package for veterinary surgeons holding refugee status who need to pass the Statutory Membership Examination before applying to enter the Register. A paper was provided to the Committee outlining the financial and other support that could be made available to veterinary nurses with refugee status. Veterinary Nurses Council had considered the contents of the paper at its meeting on 17 November 2021 and agreed unanimously to recommend to Finance and Resources Committee (FRC) that the support package should be implemented as detailed.
8. RCVS Examination Manager presented the paper to the Committee and asked FRC to consider its contents and agree a budget for the support package. A breakdown of costs was provided to the Committee, with the total cost for all activities associated with applying for registration in the region of £2,000 per candidate.
9. It was confirmed that whilst the RCVS had not yet received any applications from veterinary nurses with refugee status it was important that a support package be considered ahead of the first application. This may encourage applications from individuals who met the criteria but for whom the costs involved represented a barrier.
10. The Committee approved the proposal and agreed to cap the number of applications at 10 and if further applications were needed this would come before FRC again for discussion.

## Legislative reform recommendations

11. The RCVS Policy and Public affairs Manager presented a paper to the Committee, It was noted that one of the RCVS Legislative Reform recommendations was that the powers should be introduced to allow limited/focused licensure in order to allow registration for those whose disability may not allow them to meet all of the Day One Competencies (D1Cs). It is also possible that the use of 'reasonable adjustment' could be expanded to allow the D1Cs to be met, and some had suggested that this would be preferable to using limited licensure. The paper circulated explored this issue with reference to other UK regulators and the overseas context.
12. The Committee was asked to consider whether to approve the funding in relation to the formation of a working party to take this work forward.
13. It was confirmed for the Committee that the estimate costs, based on loss of earning claims for six Council/VN Council members, amounted to £697 per meeting (five x quarter-day loss of earnings), or £2,790 over the length of the working party. It was anticipated that all meetings would be virtual.
14. It was raised could this be extended to the veterinary nursing profession; it was noted that there was no reason why its recommendations couldn't be applicable to both veterinary surgeons and veterinary nurses.
15. It was felt that 'focused' licensure could be a more appropriate term to use instead of limited and this would be discussed at the working party meetings.
16. The Committee endorsed this proposal and agreed to set up the working party.

## Accreditation expenses

17. The RCVS Lead for Undergraduate Education presented a paper on Accreditation Visitor Payments to the Committee. As noted in the paper circulated to the Committee:
 

*“Setting and monitoring the standards for veterinary education is a key responsibility of the RCVS, and it has a statutory duty (set out in the Veterinary Surgeons Act (VSA) to set and monitor the standards of veterinary degrees for registration purposes. The RCVS undertakes formal visitations to universities to ensure that the veterinary degree standards are being maintained”.*
18. The Committee was asked to consider offering an honorarium for all RCVS accreditation visitors of £325 per day, for eight days (five days for the visitation, plus three days of preparatory work of reading the self-evaluation report (SER) and attending pre-visit meetings), plus travel and subsistence expenses where necessary, as a standard visitation rate. This fee would be payable to the individual.

19. It was clarified that core hours for a day rate were considered to be eight hours (i.e., 09:00 – 17:00). Where visitors are required to be away from home as part of College business, and undertake visitation duties above and beyond these hours, an additional £75 per day would be payable on top of the £325 day rate.
20. It was noted that should a visitation stretch beyond the standard eight days, additional days would be payable at the above rates.
21. It was considered that not offering a payment could affect the diversity of the RCVS visitor list as those unable to afford a week away on a visitation, would be unlikely apply to be a visitor.
22. A discussion took place on conflicts of interest and those with a pecuniary interest not being able to vote on this proposal.
23. The Committee members who could vote, voted to accept the proposed honorarium for all RCVS accreditation visitors.

### Corporate Risk Register

24. The Corporate Risk Register was presented to the Committee.
25. Confidential information is available in the classified appendix at paragraphs 6-9

### Management Accounts

26. The management accounts for the twelve months to 31 December 2021 were presented to the Committee. The Committee were provided with an in-depth paper, some key highlights from the paper that were discussed were as follows:
27. Confidential information is available in the classified appendix at paragraphs 10-11
28. The Committee was content with the Management Accounts.

### Investment update

29. Confidential information is available in the classified appendix at paragraphs 12-14

### Any other business

30. It was noted the accounts would be reviewed at a joint session of ARC and FRC on 12 May 2022.

## Date of Next Meeting

31. The date of the next meeting was confirmed as Thursday, 12 May 2022 at 10:00 am. This would be held virtually.

<b>Summary</b>	
Meeting	RCVS Council
Date	17 March 2022
Title	Registration Committee Minutes 9 February 2022
Summary	Minutes of the Registration Committee in February 2022
Decisions required	N/A
Attachments	N/A
Author	Alan Quinn-Byrne Governance Officer/Secretary a.quinn-byrne@rcvs.org.uk / T 020 7227 3505

<b>Classifications</b>		
<b>Document</b>	<b>Classification<sup>1</sup></b>	<b>Rationales<sup>2</sup></b>
Paper	Unclassified	n/a



<b><sup>1</sup>Classifications explained</b>	
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<b><sup>2</sup>Classification rationales</b>	
Confidential	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. To allow the Committee or Council to come to a view itself, before presenting to and/or consulting with others</li> <li>2. To maintain the confidence of another organisation</li> <li>3. To protect commercially sensitive information</li> <li>4. To maintain public confidence in and/or uphold the reputation of the veterinary professions and/or the RCVS</li> </ol>
Private	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>5. To protect information which may contain personal data, special category data, and/or criminal offence data, as listed under the General Data Protection Regulation</li> </ol>

## Minutes of the Registration Committee meeting held on 9 February 2022 at Belgravia House, and online via Microsoft Teams.

### Members:

Dr M A Donald	Chair
Mrs B S Andrews-Jones	
Dr N T Connell	Treasurer
Ms L Ford	
Dr M O Green	
Professor C J Proudman	
Dr K A Richards	President
*Dr N C Smith	

### In attendance:

Ms E C Ferguson	Registrar
Ms L Lockett	CEO
Ms C L McCann	Director of Operations
Mr A Quinn Byrne	Secretary to ARC / Governance Officer
Mr R Hewes	Head of Insight & Engagement

\*Not in attendance – apologies received

### Apologies for absence

1. Apologies for absence were received from Dr Smith.

### Declarations of interest

2. There were no new declarations of interest.

### Minutes of Previous meetings

3. The following minutes came to this meeting for approval:
  - (a) Minutes of Registration Committee Meeting November 2021
  - (b) Minutes of Joint Education and Registration Committee Meeting December 2021
  - (c) Minutes of Registration Committee Meeting January 2022

4. All minutes were accepted as a true record of the meetings held. However, there was a minor grammatical error on the December 2021 minutes. It was noted that the titles of Chair of Education and Chair of Registration needed to be switched on the names they were against on the minutes. The secretary to this Committee noted this would be corrected. **(Action)**

**Action for Secretary**

## Temporary Registration Form

5. At the Registration Committee meeting in November, the Committee required a review of the temporary registration application form, it was noted that it did not provide a declaration from the supervising vet around language and they were satisfied that language levels of the candidates were suitable for the role envisaged. It was also felt there could be greater clarity on the level of supervision being provided to the individual on the Temporary Register. It was suggested therefore that the onus should be placed on the supervisor to review the English language capabilities of the Temporary Registrant and confirm it in a stronger declaration. It was confirmed that both the temporary registration form and supervisor guidance would be amended.
6. The Committee were presented with the amended temporary registration application form at this meeting along with the updated guidance as requested. The Committee requested that the Secretary should add the word 'listening' to the spoken and written declaration requirements.
7. The Secretary of the Committee would amend and notify the amendment to the Registration Department, for Registration to provide this as the new temporary registration application form. **(Action)**

**Secretary to make slight amendment on Temp Reg form**

## Registration Statistics Report

8. The Head of Insight and Engagement provided the Registration Statistics Report to the Committee. It was noted that the purpose of this regular report is to provide a current picture of the trends across registration data for vets, VNs and practice premises, in order to furnish the Committee with insight for any future actions, considerations, or changes.
9. It was noted that feedback from the Registration Committee meeting in November 2021, was taken on board and the report now provided key Registration data from the last five quarters to give a wider overview. The Committee also previously expressed particular interest in reasons given for voluntary removal, which was confirmed was now covered in this report. The formatting was also improved, so the data is easier to compare. The Committee also requested seeing information on geographical location and number of years practicing. However, it was noted that at this stage this was not possible, however this will be kept under consideration when developing the reports for future meetings.

10. The Committee praised the work that had gone into getting this report to where it is now and found the data quite useful.

### Temporary Registration Report

11. A report was provided to the Committee by the Head of Registration on the number of RCVS approved applications for Temporary Registration of Official Veterinarians.
12. It was noted that since the new Temporary Registration of Official Veterinarians Policy was triggered by DEFRA on 1 June 2021 56 new applications have been approved. It was confirmed that one application, has been rejected as it did not meet the requirements set out in the policy.
13. The average time to process a new application, this takes place once all documents and the payment have been received, is 5 calendar days. Applications are processed by the Registration Department.
14. The Committee were content with this report.

### Temporary Registration Application Request

15. The Committee were asked to vote on the temporary registration application of a Bovine Reproductive Specialist.
16. After a discussion on this application, it was confirmed that the Committee voted in favour of this application: The results were **5 Yes votes to 3 non votes.**

### AOB

17. It was noted that a paper would be coming to this Committee on the publication of the register at the next registration meeting in May.

### Date of next meeting

18. It was confirmed the date of the next meeting is 11 May 2022. This will be held online.

<b>Summary</b>	
Meeting	Council
Date	17 March 2022
Title	Joint Education and Registration Committee minutes
Summary	Minutes of the meeting held on Thursday, 2 December 2021.
Decisions required	To note the unclassified minutes.
Attachments	None
Author	Britta Crawford Secretary, Education Committee 020 7202 0777 / <a href="mailto:b.crawford@rcvs.org.uk">b.crawford@rcvs.org.uk</a>

<b>Classifications</b>		
<b>Document</b>	<b>Classification<sup>1</sup></b>	<b>Rationales<sup>2</sup></b>
Paper	Unclassified	n/a

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**<sup>2</sup>Classification rationales**

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Private	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>5. To protect information which may contain personal data, special category data, and/or criminal offence data, as listed under the General Data Protection Regulation</li> </ol>

## Joint meeting of Education Committee and Registration Committee

Minutes of the remote meeting held on Thursday, 2 December 2021 at 12:00 noon.

### Members:

#### Education Committee (EC)

\*Ms A Bradbury  
Dr N T Connell  
Ms K Dakin  
Ms L Ford  
Mrs S D Howarth  
\*Professor T D H Parkin  
Dr S Paterson (Chair, EC)  
\*Professor C J Proudman  
Professor S W J Reid  
\*Professor S M Rhind  
Dr C M Whiting

#### In attendance:

Dr M A Donald  
Dr K A Richards  
Dr L Prescott-Clements  
Dr J Bradbury  
Mrs B Crawford

#### Registration Committee (RC)

\*Mrs B S Andrews-Jones  
Dr N T Connell  
Dr M A Donald (Chair, RC)  
Ms L Ford  
\*Dr M O Greene  
\*Professor C J Proudman  
Dr K A Richards  
\*Dr N C Smith

#### In attendance:

Ms E C Ferguson  
Ms L Lockett  
Ms C L McCann

\*Denotes absent

## Apologies for absence and general matters

1. Apologies for absence were received from:

- Mrs Andrews-Jones
- Ms A Bradbury
- Dr M O Greene
- Professor Parkin
- Professor Proudman
- Professor Rhind

2. Dr Smith was not in attendance.

3. It was agreed that Dr Donald would take the Chair at this joint committee meeting.

4. It was noted that the Meeting Procedure Rules 2021 made no provision for this type of “amalgamated” committee meeting so rules regarding quorum were unclear – it was noted that individually EC was quorate, but RC was not, however, as one and numbers taken as a whole, then the meeting was quorate. It was agreed that this was acceptable (noting also that in terms of the Meeting Rules the Chair has discretion to modify the rules in their application to that meeting in any event, and that none of the votes were marginal).
5. For the purposes of voting, members that attended both committees would have one vote only, not one per committee. Whilst Drs Donald and Richards could not vote as a non-voting Observers of EC; they could, however, vote as full (i.e. voting) members of RC.

## Declarations of interest

6. There were no declarations of interest.

## Matters for decision by Committee

### Review of Pearson Test of English (PTE) (the Pearson Test)

7. The Registrar outlined the paper and highlighted that whilst the International English Language Testing System (IELTS) and Occupational English Test (OET) was currently accepted by the College for candidates applying for full registration or to sit the Statutory Membership Examination (SME), the Pearson Test was not. This had been raised particularly in relation to the Temporary Registration of Official Veterinarians (OVs) and availability of visas for entry into the UK.
8. Research into the Pearson Test had been undertaken by the University of York (UoY) and the response had included some caveats for the College when it was looking for assurance. In particular, at point 3 of the Report, there was a question regarding security as the test was totally computerised. Furthermore, the test had been considered as a whole rather than as its individual components (reading, writing, speaking, listening), so the Committees may wish to ask for further clarification for each; and equivalency comparisons had been to Level 7 of IELTS, not Level 5 as required by the Home Office for visa applications.
9. It was noted that adding a third route to English language testing might be helpful as candidates currently may have to sit two tests that could become expensive and a block to registration.
10. Comments and questions included but were not limited to:
  - the implication from the paper was that IELTS was readily available in a virtual setting;
    - o accessibility was variable as IELTS was available in a virtual setting only where there was not a physical centre within a country, so a candidate may have to travel a considerable distance;
  - was there a dramatic difference in costs between the various tests?



- OET was c. £315, IELTS was c. £195-225, whereas the Pearson Test was c. £170;
- Cost varied between countries;
- what proctoring was factored in to ensure robustness of the Pearson Test?
  - there were some issues around security that the Committees might wish to have checked before making a decision;
- that there were limitations to IELTS accessibility had not been realised;
- the security and proctoring of the Pearson Test should be checked as the evidence provided to the UoY had been delivered by Pearson which was not an independent source;
- proctoring in particular was very important. There was mention of 'justification in Covid times', but safety would not be compromised by having Zoom calls to check fluency; go back to the UoY to see if they could do a randomised trial of candidates that had undertaken the Pearson Test;
  - in relation to monitoring, the College could request a randomised trial, but it should be emphasised that once a member was on the Register they could not be removed if the College was to change its mind at a later date about the efficacy of the Pearson Test;
- more assurance was needed around equivalence and the standard of the test and care should be taken not to over-compensate between speaking and reading as there was a lot of risk in that area;
- was the OET not still used as an alternative to IELTS, which was also available virtually?
  - there were plenty of centres for IELTS and OET testing. However, online options were now exceptionally limited as both organisations were trying to stop virtual testing and get candidates back into the centres; accessibility was more of an issue when trying to reach the physical centres;
- Pearson offered centre-based testing as well as online testing;
- reasons for returning to testing centres post pandemic lockdowns was twofold: the validity of the test and a satisfactory level of assurance regarding checks such as identity and prevention of cheating; and that proctoring software licensing was extremely expensive;
- did any university members of the Committees know of their universities using the Pearson Test?
  - Harper-Adams had had a few students that had sat the Pearson Test. However, there was a difference between letting someone onto a course where you could support them

through their deficits in English language as opposed to registration when they could not be removed. There was not enough data as it was a fairly new test;

- the Royal Veterinary College (RVC) also accepted students that had taken the Pearson Test;
  - the College had looked to see what other regulators were currently using the Pearson Test and, with the exception of possibly one (architects), no others were; discussions with the General Medical Council (GMC) had shown that they believed more work should be undertaken around assurances, and they were not doing that yet;
  - that other regulators were not using the test yet was persuasive; in fairness from a public interest perspective, there should be a creation of consistency and standardisation of what assurance there was and what could be trusted by regulated professionals offering similar groupings. Could the College collaborate with other regulators and agree collectively whether it should or should not be accepted?
11. The discussion was brought to a close and clarification sought on the vote to be undertaken. It was agreed that to vote yes was if the Committees were prepared to accept the Pearson Test at this time, and to vote no would mean that the Committees required more work to be done on this matter – this was clearer than having a ‘conditional acceptance’.
12. It was not agreed that the Pearson Test be accepted at this time by a majority, instead more work should be undertaken on: its individual components; the equivalence to Level 5 IELTS; randomised trial of candidates taking the test; security and proctoring of online testing. Thereafter the matter would come back to Committees to be discussed again at a future meeting and before approaching other regulators.

#### English Language test exemption policy

13. At present only a primary veterinary degree taught and assessed entirely in English can be used by overseas veterinary surgeons as evidence for English language testing exemption prior to registration or sitting the SME.
14. The committees were asked to consider the inclusion of post-graduate veterinary qualifications as an alternative confirmation of appropriate English language skills for overseas veterinary surgeons wishing to register or sit the SME.
15. It was discussed that with such a range of post-graduate veterinary qualifications available it would be difficult to standardise, and as such the RCVS could not be certain all parts of English language skills (reading, writing, listening, and speaking) would be used and assessed to the required level.
16. It was commented that the current system was robust and that any additions to the exemption policy should maintain that standard.

17. The committees voted to keep the English language exemption policy as it currently stands; only primary veterinary degrees taught and assessed entirely in English can be used as evidence for English language testing exemption.

#### **English Language testing validation timeframe**

18. At present successful English language tests are only considered valid for two years. For SME candidates who take longer than two years to prepare or who are unsuccessful and need to re-sit the SME this may result in them taking IELTS/OET multiple times despite being proficient in English.
19. The committees were asked to consider the decision made by Primary Qualifications Subcommittee (PQSC) to allow a successful English language test for overseas veterinary surgeons to be valid indefinitely, provided they can show evidence of continued English language use.
20. It was discussed that the evidence provided for continued English language use and proficiency must be reliable, and that some examples of suitable referees given in the paper may have insufficient levels of contact with the candidate to ensure their reliability.
21. It was discussed that the integrity of the referee would be key to ensuring the reliability of this extended IELTS/OET validation.
22. The committees voted to extend the validity of successfully completed English language tests indefinitely provided the overseas veterinary surgeon could provide evidence of ongoing English language use in the form of a reference from a veterinary surgeon registered by the appropriate competent authority in an English-speaking country.

<b>Summary</b>	
Meeting	Council
Date	17 March 2022
Title	Standards Committee Minutes
Summary	<p>Minutes of Standards Committee held remotely on Monday 24 January 2022, at 2pm.</p> <p>The Committee's attention is drawn to paragraphs 1 – 11 in the classified appendix.</p>
Decisions required	None
Attachments	Classified appendix
Author	<p>Stephanie Bruce-Smith</p> <p>Senior Standards and Advice Officer</p> <p><a href="mailto:s.bruce-smith@rcvs.org.uk">s.bruce-smith@rcvs.org.uk</a></p>

<b>Classifications</b>		
<b>Document</b>	<b>Classification<sup>1</sup></b>	<b>Rationales<sup>2</sup></b>
Paper	Unclassified	n/a
Classified appendix	<b>Confidential</b>	<b>1, 2, 3</b>

## 1 Classifications explained

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Private	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>5. To protect information which may contain personal data, special category data, and/or criminal offence data, as listed under the General Data Protection Regulation</li> </ol>

## Minutes of the Standards Committee Meeting held remotely on Monday 24 January 2022 at 2pm

<b>Members:</b>	Dr M A Donald	Chair
	Dr L Allum	
	Ms B Andrews-Jones	
	Miss L Belton	Vice Chair
	Mr M Castle	
	Dr D Chambers	
	Dr M Gardiner	
	Ms C-L McLaughlan	
	Prof T Parkin	
	Mrs C Roberts	
<b>In attendance:</b>	Ms E C Ferguson	Registrar
	Dr M Greene	Senior Vice President
	Ms L Lockett	CEO
	Ms G Kingswell	Head of Legal Services (Standards)
	Ms B Jinks	Standards and Advisory Lead
	Ms S Bruce-Smith	Senior Standards and Advice Officer

### AI 1 Apologies for absence and declarations of interest

1. The Chair welcomed the CEO and Senior Vice President to the meeting as observers.
2. Apologies were received from Mrs Roberts.
3. Dr Greene declared that she will be employed by VetsNow as the medical director.

### AI 2(a) Under Care and out of hours – confidential

4. Confidential information is available in the classified appendix at paragraphs 1-10

### AI 3 Any other business and date of next meeting on 7 February 2022

5. Confidential information is available in the classified appendix at paragraph 11.

<b>Summary</b>	
Meeting	Council
Date	17 March 2022
Title	Standards Committee Minutes
Summary	<p>Minutes of Standards Committee held remotely on Monday, 7 February 2022, at 10am.</p> <p>In particular, the Committee is to note that it was decided that the temporary dispensation for remote prescribing, which was reinstated in December 2021, should come to an end on 14 March 2022.</p> <p>The Committee's attention is drawn to paragraphs 1 – 24 in the classified appendix.</p>
Decisions required	None
Attachments	Classified appendix
Author	Beth Jinks Standards and Advice Lead <a href="mailto:b.jinks@rcvs.org.uk">b.jinks@rcvs.org.uk</a>

<b>Classifications</b>		
<b>Document</b>	<b>Classification<sup>1</sup></b>	<b>Rationales<sup>2</sup></b>
Paper	Unclassified	n/a
Classified appendix	<b>Confidential</b>	<b>1, 2, 3</b>



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Private	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>5. To protect information which may contain personal data, special category data, and/or criminal offence data, as listed under the General Data Protection Regulation</li> </ol>

## Minutes of the Standards Committee held remotely on Monday, 7 February 2022, at 10 am

<b>Members:</b>	Dr M A Donald	Chair
	Dr L Allum	
	Ms B Andrews-Jones	
	Miss L Belton	Vice Chair
	Mr M Castle	
	Dr D Chambers	
	Dr M Gardiner	
	Ms C-L McLaughlan	
	Prof T Parkin	
	Mrs C Roberts	
<b>In attendance:</b>	Ms E C Ferguson	Registrar
	Dr M Greene	Senior Vice President
	Ms L Lockett	CEO
	Ms G Kingswell	Head of Legal Services (Standards)
	Ms B Jinks	Standards and Advisory Lead
	Ms S Bruce-Smith	Senior Standards and Advice Officer
	Mx K Richardson	Senior Standards and Advice Officer
	Ms K Bowles	Standards and Advice Officer
	Dr B Phillipson	Bee Health Policy Lead, APHA (AI 3(a) only)
	Dr A Ridge	Veterinary Advisor, APHA (AI 3(a) only)

### AI 1 Apologies for absence and declarations of interest

1. The Chair welcomed the Senior Vice President and CEO to the meeting as observers.

### AI 1 Minutes of the meetings held on 15 December 2021

2. It was agreed that the minutes of the previous meetings are accurate.
3. It was reported that every action item has either been actioned or appears on the agenda for this meeting.

### AI 2 Standards and Advice Update

4. The paper was noted, and the following points were highlighted:
  - a) A total of 4,603 queries were responded to by the team in 2021 (including emails and phone calls).

- b) An additional team member has been recruited and will start with the RCVS in a few months.

### Matters for decision

#### AI 3(a) Export Health Certificates for the export of live bees – Confidential

5. Please see confidential appendix paragraphs 1-6

#### AI 3(b) Review of endorsements – Confidential

6. Please see confidential appendix paragraphs 7-13

#### AI 3(c) UCOOH – Confidential

7. Please see confidential appendix paragraphs 14-24

#### AI 3(d) Remote prescribing

8. The Committee were reminded that the dispensation allowing remote prescribing of POM-Vs during the pandemic was reinstated in December 2021 following government guidance to work from home where possible, with a view to reconsidering the dispensation at this meeting.
9. The Committee discussed the ongoing challenges posed by Covid-19 and recognised that staff absences due to isolation requirements were still causing issues. However, given the relaxation of the requirement to work from home in England, Scotland and Northern Ireland and relaxation of restrictions generally across the UK, the Committee felt it was time to end the dispensation.
10. It was agreed that the profession should be given a months' notice of the change, and therefore the dispensation will end on the 14 March 2022.

**Action: Head of Legal Services (Standards)**

#### AI 4(a) DC report

11. The report was noted.

#### AI 4(b) PSS report

12. The report was noted.

#### AI 4(c) Riding Establishments Subcommittee report

13. The report was noted.

#### AI 5(a) RVP Subcommittee report – Confidential

14. The report was noted.

#### AI 5(b) ERP report – Confidential

15. The report was noted.

#### AI 5(c) Certification subcommittee report – Confidential

16. The report was noted.

#### Risk and equality

17. It was agreed that there are no new risks to be added.

#### Any other business

##### FSA

18. The Registrar explained that the Food Standards Agency (FSA) has written to industry representative to state that they intend to bring the control of OVs in house from 2023. This letter forms part of the update requested by this Committee on the work being undertaken to tackle to issue relating to the extension of the Groupage Export Facilitation Scheme (GEFS). There will be a full update from the FSA in March 2022.

#### Date of next meeting

19. The date of the next meeting is 9 May 2022.

## Table of actions

Paragraph(s)	Action	Assigned to
10	Work with RCVS Comms to inform the profession of the temporary remote prescribing dispensation coming to an end.	<b>Head of Legal Services (Standards)</b>

<b>Summary</b>	
Meeting	Council
Date	17 March 2022
Title	Veterinary Nurses Council Report to Council
Summary	To note the minutes of the meeting of Veterinary Nurses Council (VNC) held on 9 February 2022.
Decisions required	None
Attachments	Classified appendix
Author	Annette Amato Committee Secretary a.amato@rcvs.org.uk / 020 7202 0713

<b>Classifications</b>		
<b>Document</b>	<b>Classification<sup>1</sup></b>	<b>Rationales<sup>2</sup></b>
Paper	Unclassified	n/a
Classified appendix	<b>Confidential</b>	<b>1, 2, 3, 4</b>

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## Veterinary Nurses Council

### Minutes of the meeting held on Wednesday 9 February 2022

<b>Members:</b>	Mrs Belinda Andrews-Jones	-	Vice-Chair
	^ Miss Alison Carr		
	Dr Niall Connell	-	Officer Team observer (non-voting)
	^ Ms Elizabeth Cox		
	^ Miss Jane Davidson		
	^ Mr Dominic Dyer		
	^ Ms Sarah Fox		
	^ Mrs Susan Howarth		
	^ Mrs Katherine Kissick		
	Mrs Donna Lewis		
	Dr Susan Paterson		
	Mr Matthew Rendle	-	Chair
	^ Dr Katherine Richards		
	^ Ms Stephanie Richardson		
	^ Mrs Claire Roberts		

^Denotes remote participant

<b>In attendance:</b>	Mrs Tash Goodwin-Roberts	-	Veterinary Nursing Registration Lead
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<b>Remote:</b>	Mrs Annette Amato	-	Committee Secretary
	Mr Luke Bishop	-	Media and Publications Manager
	Mrs Julie Dugmore	-	Director of Veterinary Nursing
	Ms Eleanor Ferguson	-	Registrar
	Miss Shirley Gibbins	-	Qualifications Manager
	Mrs Victoria Hedges	-	Examinations Manager
	Mr Robert Hewes	-	Head of Insight and Engagement
	Ms Lizzie Lockett	-	Chief Executive Officer
	Mr Ben Myring	-	Policy and Public Affairs Manager

<b>Guests:</b>	<i>Ms Rachael Buzzel</i>	-	<i>VN Times</i>
	<i>Ms Caitlin Frances</i>	-	<i>Visionline</i>
	<i>Mr Josh Loeb</i>	-	<i>BVA Journals</i>



### Apologies for absence

1. There were no apologies for absence.

### Declarations of interest

2. There were no new declarations of interest.

### Obituaries

3. Council noted the obituary for Jean Turner RVN and the Chair spoke warmly in her memory. Council observed a minute's silence for all members of the professions who had passed away since the last meeting.

### Minutes of the meeting held on 17 November 2021

4. The Minutes of the meeting held on 17 November 2021 were approved as a correct record.

### Matters arising

5. There were no matters arising on the previous Minutes.

### CEO update

6. The CEO presented her update report, which included a summary of activity against the 2020-2024 Strategic Plan as submitted to RCVS Council in January, and provided an update on further activities since the report had been prepared.
7. The RCVS had announced the purchase of its new permanent headquarters in Hardwick Street, Clerkenwell, which would provide sufficient space for any increased staff numbers, for committee and Council meetings and disciplinary hearings, and provided a good investment for the professions. The building currently had tenants and it was likely that the RCVS would not move in for at least a year. In the meantime, some shared office space was being rented in Chancery Lane, and committees would either meet remotely or in rented meeting rooms. The CEO thanked the Chair and Kathy Kissick who had been a part of the working group involved in sourcing the new premises.
8. In the meantime, normal activities were continuing as usual. The annual VN renewal fee period had recently ended and the Diamond Jubilee celebrations were continuing. The Council Culture project was still ongoing, looking at the various mechanisms and processes such as elections, nominations, inductions and training and once some decisions had been reached this information would come through to VN Council. It was recalled that it had been intended to provide Council with the report on the Council Culture work at the current meeting, but unfortunately there had been a slight delay as some of the working groups still needed to meet.

9. The Workforce Summit had been held on 30 November looking at both the veterinary and veterinary nursing professions, preceded by some online insight groups which had fed into the meeting. The Summit had included representation from vets and veterinary nurses in practice, associations, employers, veterinary schools and government. Themes for the day provided by the insight groups had included return to work, career development, client interaction, workplace culture, work life balance and readiness for work. The report would be published shortly and further work would be carried out as a result.
10. Council passed on their thanks to the Senior Team for keeping business running smoothly whilst undergoing all the changes.

### **E-Certificate for Veterinary Nurse Registration**

11. The Veterinary Nursing Registration Lead presented a paper summarising the feedback from the trial of the use of E-certificates for newly registered veterinary nurses, which had been agreed at the previous meeting of Council. The trial had commenced on 1 November 2021 and had included one large cohort of Higher Education applicants and all Further Education applicants from that date. There had been ten days at the beginning of the trial period when the communication had not made it sufficiently clear that registrants would be able to request a hard copy of the certificate at a later date, in addition to the electronic version. This had initially led to some negative feedback, but the communications had subsequently been revised and later feedback had been more positive.
12. The overall theme of the feedback had been that individuals appreciated the environmental positives of the e-certificate and the practicalities of having immediate access to proof of registration, however they felt that a hard copy certificate had greater meaning, and they also would like access to this. The opportunity to obtain a hard copy of the certificate had been offered from 1 February 2022, and to date 20% of those with an E-certificate had requested a paper copy.
13. Council was asked to consider continuing the trial period, whilst also offering the option to order a hard copy of the Certificate of Registration. It was confirmed that no charge would be made for the first hard copy, although there would be a charge for replacements, as is currently the case. The hope was expressed that there would be scope in the future to offer E-certificates for the Certificates in Advanced Veterinary Nursing and it was confirmed that this would be the case, as well as extending the digital concept to other areas.
14. Council agreed that the trial should continue as outlined in the paper, although it should be made clear that the certificate was not in itself a confirmation that the holder was currently on the Register of Veterinary Nurses. Any communications, while supporting the use of the E-certificate, should also include reminders to check the online Register for confirmation of a nurse's registration status.

### **Veterinary Nurse Education Committee (VNEC)**

15. Susan Howarth, Chair of the VNEC, presented the minutes of the meeting of the VNEC held on 17 December, and drew attention to the following points:

16. Student enrolments for the new academic year were progressing well and the new online enrolments process had now been introduced. Overall enrolment numbers would be reported to the June meeting of the Committee. The RCVS had continued to receive some applications from those who had completed their qualification, but had been unable to complete the required 1,800 required practice training hours due to the effect of the Covid pandemic, and these were being reviewed on a case by case basis according to the agreed guidelines.
17. The Committee had agreed to a small programme change from one institution, and had received a number of reports and updates on action plan monitoring and quality monitoring activities carried out by the qualifications team.

### **Continuing Professional Development (CPD)**

18. Claire Roberts presented the update from the CPD Policy and Compliance Subcommittee. It had been pleasing to note that 98% of veterinary nurses were now using the 1CPD app. The Committee had been looking at ways to communicate the forthcoming mandatory introduction of the use of 1CPD in a supportive way. Suggestions as to how to communicate with some of the older age group, who sometimes were not so accustomed to use of apps, would be welcome.
19. The use of QR codes to assist in recording of attendance at lectures, webinars and so on had been discussed. It was confirmed that the use of QR codes was intended to be a way of facilitating recording of some aspects of CPD and to encourage engagement with the app. The recording of the many other forms of CPD that did not involve formal attendance was also being actively encouraged and there were resources available on the RCVS website to assist with this.

### **Reports from RCVS Committees**

#### **Registered Veterinary Nurse Preliminary Investigation Committee (RVN PIC)**

20. Council noted the report of the work of the RVN PIC since November 2021.

#### **Standards Committee**

21. There were no items to report from the Standards Committee.

#### **Policy and Public Affairs update**

22. The Policy and Public Affairs Manager provided a brief update.
23. A comprehensive preliminary workforce report had been drawn up for the Workforce Summit, which would now be built upon, looking at cohort studies to help to understand and ascertain the causes of leaving the Registers at different times, in the hope to be able to better address this in the future. There would also be some workforce modelling.

24. There continued to be lobbying in relation to the proposed changes to the legislation, and there have been useful meetings recently including with the devolved assemblies, and meetings with the British Veterinary Association (BVA) and other stakeholders, which were going well.
25. Together with the Comms Department, simple straightforward messaging was being developed around the legislation proposals, for use in the lobbying campaigns.
26. The nurse prescriber research would be resumed in the coming year, having been put on hold for a couple of years during the Covid pandemic.

### VN Register report

27. Council noted a report showing statistics on the total number of registered veterinary nurses, including the number of new registrations annually for the calendar years 2016 – 2021. Information on removals from the Register would be available at the May meeting of Council. Figures were also provided for the number of student enrolments for the past six academic years, and the number of those enrolling for a period of supervised practice, having been unregistered for a period of five years or more.

### Communications report

28. The Media and Publications Manager provided an overview of recent VN-related activities in the Comms Department.
29. The report of the Mind Matters Initiative (MMI) student veterinary nurse wellbeing discussion forum had recently been published and was available on the RCVS and MMI websites. This would be feeding into the MMI strategy, so veterinary nursing would have a prominent voice in MMI, going forward.
30. As mentioned earlier, the Workforce Summit report was due to be published imminently, and there would also be a report of the MMI Veterinary Mental Health Research Symposium published within the next week.
31. The *VN Education* digital newsletter providing updates and key developments within VN education for Awarding Organisations, Higher Education Institutions, Centres and Training Practices was to be revived, having been suspended during the pandemic.
32. Work was currently being carried out to produce careers materials for secondary school children, under the auspices of the VN Futures School Ambassadors programme.
33. The revised VN Standards framework would shortly be published on the website.
34. A press release had been issued earlier in the week announcing the VN Council election nominations. There were nine candidates standing for the available two places. The voting period would commence in mid-March. The Chair commented that the comms around the election had worked well, and thanked the Comms team.

35. There would be a webinar held on 13 July 2022 for student veterinary nurses and veterinary nurses, on dealing with difficult situations that may crop up within the first few months of practice.

**Any other business (unclassified)**

36. There was no other business raised.

**Date of next meeting**

37. Wednesday 11 May 2022 – venue to be confirmed.

<b>Summary</b>	
Meeting	Council
Date	Thursday, 17 March 2022
Title	Minutes from Preliminary Investigation Committee and Disciplinary Committee Liaison Committee meeting of Thursday, 17 February 2022
Decisions required	None
Attachments	Classified appendix
Author	Hannah Alderton Secretary, PIC DC LC 020 7856 1033 <a href="mailto:h.alderton@rcvs.org.uk">h.alderton@rcvs.org.uk</a>

<b>Classifications</b>		
<b>Document</b>	<b>Classification<sup>1</sup></b>	<b>Rationales<sup>2</sup></b>
Paper	Unclassified	n/a
Classified appendix	<b>Confidential</b>	<b>1, 3</b>

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## Minutes of the Preliminary Investigation Committee / Disciplinary Committee Liaison Committee meeting held on Thursday, 17 February 2022

<b>Members:</b>	Mr I Arundale*	Chair, Disciplinary Committee (DC)
	Dr N T Connell	Member of Council / Treasurer
	Dr M A Donald	Member of Council / Chair, Standards Committee (SC)
	Mrs S K Edwards	Chair, RVN Preliminary Investigation Committee (RVN PIC)
	Dr K A Richards	Member of Council / President (Chair)
	Dr N C Smith	Member of Council
	Dr B P Viner	Chair, Preliminary Investigation Committee (PIC) (Vice-Chair)
	Dr C M Whiting	Member of Council
	Ms J S M Worthington	Member of Council

<b>In attendance:</b>	Miss H Alderton	Secretary
	Ms G Crossley	Head of Professional Conduct
	Ms E C Ferguson	Registrar / Director of Legal Services
	Ms L Lockett	CEO
	Dr M Whiting	Vice-Chair, Disciplinary Committee

\*Denotes absent

### Apologies for absence

1. Apologies for absence were received from Mr Arundale and Dr Whiting, the Vice-Chair of the Disciplinary Committee (DC), attended in his absence.

### Declarations of interest

2. It was stated that there were no new declarations of interest.

### Minutes of the meeting held on Thursday, 25 November 2021

3. The minutes of the previous meeting were approved.

### Updates – general

4. The Registrar updated the Committee that the Preliminary Investigation Committee (PIC) audit was due to be completed the following week and that the DC audit was underway and would hopefully be completed ready to be reported at the next meeting.



5. The recruitment for new members of the Statutory Committees was underway ready for the new intake, which would start at the beginning of July. The Committee was also informed that both the Chair and the Vice-Chair were reaching the end of their tenure and would complete their terms at the end of June and so recruitment for the roles would start shortly.
6. The Registrar was thanked for her update and the Committee confirmed that they had no questions.

### Monitoring/performance/working methods/outcomes/dashboard/KPIs

7. The Head of Professional Conduct explained that enquiry numbers were still high due to a number of factors that included ongoing Covid arrangements, practices having staffing issues, the increase in pet ownership and increased financial hardship for clients. It was explained that the December figures were predictably low due to the Christmas period but that the January figures were artificially low due to administration issues.
8. A number of new staff had joined and were in the process of being trained; it was anticipated that shortly they would be in a position to take on their own caseloads, which would have a positive impact on KPIs.
9. The Committee commented on how hard the Professional Conduct team was working.

### Disciplinary Committee Report

10. The report was noted, and the Committee was informed that Mr Botes had lodged an appeal with the Privy Council of the Disciplinary Committee's decision to remove his name from the Register. It was explained that this was a slow process that would likely take up to a year. It was confirmed that the College did not have interim suspension powers and that he would remain on the Register until the appeal process was complete.
11. It was mentioned that awareness of the need for new legislation, which included interim suspension orders, was being made with members of parliament to generate support for the College's proposals.

### Veterinary Client Mediation Service (VCMS) feedback

12. The Registrar reported that the percentage of cases at each phase of mediation had remained consistent. However, the actual number of cases at each stage had increased dramatically, similar to the increase in complaints coming through the College.
13. It was commented that the benefit of the VCMS was being seen as the College would not have been able to deal with the number of complaints that were going through the VCMS on top of the current case load.

14. The Committee asked whether there was any communication that could be circulated that would explain to the public that complaints were better dealt with directly with the practice. It was agreed that information could be put on the concerns section of the RCVS website but given how busy practices were it would be important to try to mitigate people's expectations in terms of response times.

## Implementation of Process Changes

15. This information can be found at paragraph 1 – 7 of the confidential appendix.

## Annual DC Statistic Report

16. The Registrar explained that the report was to see if any group was being under or overrepresented at DC. The conclusion was that there was no trend and the data continued to be 'consistently inconsistent'. It was agreed that the exercise was useful in order to monitor whether any trends emerged so that any relevant action could be taken.
17. While it might be possible to change the threshold for being included in the report to those cases where advice was given at PIC, such cases are more variable and it was confirmed that DC cases were selected as these were the most serious potentially impacting on ability to practise.

## Feedback to Standards Committee v.v. Liaison Committee Annual DC Statistic Report

18. It was confirmed that there was nothing to feed back.

## Risk Register, equality, and diversity

19. The only point that was raised was the changes to the complaints process being implemented.

## Date of next meeting

20. The date of the next meeting was confirmed as Thursday, 19 May 2022 at 10:00 am. It was confirmed that the meeting would be virtual.

Hannah Alderton  
Secretary, PIC / DC Liaison Committee  
020 7856 1033  
[h.alderton@rcvs.org.uk](mailto:h.alderton@rcvs.org.uk)

<b>Summary</b>	
Meeting	Council
Date	17 March 2022
Title	Preliminary Investigation Committee Report to Council
Summary	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 RCVS.
Decisions required	None
Attachments	None
Authors	<p>Chris Murdoch Senior Case Manager <a href="mailto:c.murdoch@rcvs.org.uk">c.murdoch@rcvs.org.uk</a></p> <p>Gemma Crossley Head of Professional Conduct <a href="mailto:g.crossley@rcvs.org.uk">g.crossley@rcvs.org.uk</a></p>

<b>Classifications</b>		
<b>Document</b>	<b>Classification<sup>1</sup></b>	<b>Rationales<sup>2</sup></b>
Paper	Unclassified	n/a

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## Preliminary Investigation Committee

### Report to Council March 2022

#### Introduction

1. This report provides information about the activities of the Preliminary Investigation Committee in January and February 2022 (4 March 2022 being the date of writing the report).
2. Since the last Report to Council (which gave information to 10 January 2022), there have been three Preliminary Investigation Committee (PIC) meetings: 19 January, 2 February and 16 February.

#### New cases considered by the PIC

3. The total number of new cases considered by the Committee at the three meetings referred to above is 5. Of the 5 new cases considered:
  - 3 were concluded at first consideration by the Committee. Of these:
    - 2 cases were closed with no further action, and
    - 1 case was closed with advice issued to the veterinary surgeon.
  - 2 were referred for further investigation, that is, further enquiries, visits and/or preliminary expert reports.
4. No cases have been referred to the RCVS Health or Performance Protocols in the reporting period.

#### Ongoing Investigations

5. The PI Committee is currently investigating 40 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

6. There are two veterinary surgeons either under assessment or currently on the RCVS Health Protocol.

#### Performance Protocol

7. There are no veterinary surgeons currently on the RCVS Performance Protocol.

#### Professional Conduct Department - Enquiries and concerns

8. 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.

9. In the period 10 January to 4 March 2022,

- the number of matters registered as Enquiries was 564, and
- the number of formal Concerns registered in the same period was 100.

10. The table below shows the categories of matters registered as Concerns between 10 January and 4 March 2022.

**Concerns registered between 10 January and 4 March 2022**

Description of Category	Number of Cases
- Advertising and publicity	0
- Appeal against DC decision	1
- Certification	0
- Client confidentiality	1
- Clinical and client records	0
- Clinical governance	0
- Communication and consent	0
- Communication between professional colleagues	0
- Conviction/notifiable occupation notification	3
- CPD compliance	0
- Delegation to veterinary nurses	0
- Equine pre-purchase examinations	0
- Euthanasia of animals	2
- Giving evidence for court	1
- Health case ( <i>potential</i> )	0
- Microchipping	0
- Miscellaneous	1
- Practice information, fees & animal insurance	1
- Performance case ( <i>potential</i> )	1
- Referrals and second opinions	0
- Registration investigation	0
- Restoration application	0
- Social media and networking forums	0
- Treatment of animals by unqualified persons	0
- Use of samples, images, post-mortems and disposal	0
- Veterinary care	82
- Veterinary medicines	0
- Veterinary teams and leaders	2
- Whistle-blowing	0
- 24-hour emergency first aid and pain relief	2

- Unassigned	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>100</b>

Data source – Profcon computer system concerns data.

### Referral to Disciplinary Committee

11. In the period 10 January to 4 March 2022, the Committee has referred 3 cases involving 2 veterinary surgeons to the Disciplinary Committee.

### Veterinary Investigators

12. The Chief Investigator has undertaken 1 visit since the last report. This was a joint visit with the SSPCA and the Police to a canine fertility business to execute a search warrant.

### Concerns procedure

13. At Stage 1 of the process, the aim is for the Case Examiner Group to decide 90% of cases within four months of registration of complaint (the Stage 1 KPI). In the two months since the last Report to Council the KPI has been met in 62% and 70% of cases respectively. As explained in the last report, changes have been made in the department and new members of staff recruited, and these steps are still in the process of taking effect, while case numbers remain high. Little time has passed since the last report, but the new Case Managers are settling in well and are beginning to build larger caseloads. Given that the newest recruits have only been with us two months, they are still learning the ropes and we are yet to feel the full benefit of the expanded team, but we are hopeful that the improvement in the number of cases meeting the target in the last month is a positive sign that we are heading in the right direction.
14. The Stage 2 KPI is now for the PIC to reach a decision on simple cases before it within seven 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.
15. In the period 10 January to 4 March 2022, the PIC reached a decision (to close, hold open or refer to DC) within the relevant KPI in 1 out of 3 simple cases.
16. 3 complex cases were decided, of which none met the 12-month KPI. In accordance with normal practice, these cases (and KPI's in general) will be reported and discussed in detail at the PIC/DC Liaison Committee meeting.

### Operational matters

17. New staff members are settling in well and contributing to the work of the department. While the number of cases meeting the Stage one KPI target is still not where would like it to be, we are hopeful that it is now going in the right direction and that this will continue to improve.
18. As the College has recently relocated, we have not held any meetings in person since November last year, but are hopeful that we will be able to make arrangements to do so later in March. The planned training has been deferred until later in the year, when new PIC members and the changes in process can be addressed.

<b>Summary</b>	
Meeting	Council
Date	17 March 2022
Title	RVN Preliminary Investigation Committee Report to Council
Summary	This report sets out the work of the Registered Veterinary Nurse (RVN) Preliminary Investigation Committee (PIC)
Decisions required	None
Attachments	None
Authors	<p>Sandra Neary Professional Conduct Officer <a href="mailto:s.neary@rcvs.org.uk">s.neary@rcvs.org.uk</a> / 020 7202 0730</p> <p>Gemma Crossley Head of Professional Conduct <a href="mailto:g.crossley@rcvs.org.uk">g.crossley@rcvs.org.uk</a> / 020 7202 0740</p>

<b>Classifications</b>		
<b>Document</b>	<b>Classification<sup>1</sup></b>	<b>Rationales<sup>2</sup></b>
Paper	Unclassified	n/a



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# Registered Veterinary Nurses Preliminary Investigation Committee

## Report to Council

### Introduction

1. Since the last Report to Council, there has been one meeting of the RVN Preliminary Investigation Committee, which took place on 11 January 2022. The meeting that was due to take place on 22 February was cancelled as there were no new or ongoing cases for decision. The next scheduled meeting is on 5 April 2022.

### RVN Concerns received / registered

2. In the period 11 January to 3 March 2022, there were 6 new Concerns relating to RVNs. Of these 6 new Concerns:
  - All are currently under investigation by the Case Examiner Group (a veterinary nurse and lay member on RVN PIC and a Case Manager).

### RVN Preliminary Investigation Committee

3. There has been 1 new case considered by the RVN PIC between 11 January and 3 March 2022. This case was referred to external solicitors for formal statements to be taken.

### Ongoing Investigations

4. Two concerns are currently under investigation and will be returned to the RVN PIC for a decision in due course.

### Health Concerns

5. One RVN is currently 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, no cases have been referred to the RVN Disciplinary Committee.

### Disciplinary Hearings

8. The Disciplinary hearing in respect of Laura Davies RVN is scheduled to take place between Thursday 24 March and Friday 1 April 2022.

<b>Summary</b>	
Meeting	Council
Date	17 March 2022
Title	Disciplinary Committee Report
Summary	Update of Disciplinary Committee since the last Council meeting
Decisions required	None
Attachments	None
Author	Hannah Alderton Committee Liaison Officer Tel: 020 7202 0729 Email: <a href="mailto:h.alderton@rcvs.org.uk">h.alderton@rcvs.org.uk</a>

<b>Classifications</b>		
<b>Document</b>	<b>Classification<sup>1</sup></b>	<b>Rationales<sup>2</sup></b>
Paper	Unclassified	n/a

**<sup>1</sup>Classifications explained**

Unclassified	Papers will be published on the internet and recipients may share them and discuss them freely with anyone. This may include papers marked 'Draft'.
Confidential	Temporarily available only to Council Members, non-Council members of the relevant committee, sub-committee, working party or Board and not for dissemination outside that group unless and until the relevant committee or Council has given approval for public discussion, consultation or publication.
Private	The paper includes personal data which should not be disclosed at any time or for any reason, unless the data subject has agreed otherwise. The Chair may, however, indicate after discussion that there are general issues which can be disclosed, for example in reports to committees and Council.

**<sup>2</sup>Classification rationales**

Confidential	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. To allow the Committee or Council to come to a view itself, before presenting to and/or consulting with others</li> <li>2. To maintain the confidence of another organisation</li> <li>3. To protect commercially sensitive information</li> <li>4. To maintain public confidence in and/or uphold the reputation of the veterinary professions and/or the RCVS</li> </ol>
Private	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>5. To protect information which may contain personal data, special category data, and/or criminal offence data, as listed under the General Data Protection Regulation</li> </ol>

## Report of Disciplinary Committee hearings since the last Council meeting

### Background

1. Since the last update to Council, the Disciplinary Committee ('the Committee') have met on four times.

### Hearings

#### Gary Samuel

2. The Disciplinary Committee met for a restoration hearing of Gary Samuel on 16-17 December 2021.
3. In July 2018 Mr Samuel was removed from the Register following convictions for causing unnecessary suffering to protected animals and failing to ensure the animals had a suitable environment in which to live. He was sentenced to 12 weeks imprisonment and suspended for 12 months on condition that he completed 150 hours of unpaid work and paid a fine of £100. He was also ordered to pay costs of £500 and a victim surcharge of £80. He was subject to a disqualification order in relation to keeping animals. The length of that order was adjusted on appeal, from an indefinite order to an order for three years, which took effect on 4 April 2018.
4. Mr Samuel provided both oral and written submissions for the Committee as well as a bundle which also contained a petition signed by approximately 100 people comprising former clients and friends in support of his application.
5. The original Disciplinary Committee found that all the matters alleged proved and determined that the convictions rendered Dr Samuel unfit to practise veterinary surgery. It was directed that his name should be removed from the Register. In its decision on sanction, that Committee noted the following aggravating factors:
  - actual injury to an animal
  - risk of injury to an animal
  - misconduct repeated over a period of time
  - no insight
  - the animal cruelty took place within Dr Samuel's veterinary practice and home
6. The original Disciplinary Committee noted the following mitigating factors:
  - Dr Samuel had no previous disciplinary findings against him
  - He had been a registered vet since July 1999
7. The Committee was satisfied that the behaviour found proved in this case was serious. The Committee was not satisfied on the evidence before it that Dr Samuel had insight into the serious nature of what he had done, particularly where he continued to deny responsibility in his recent email to the College and felt that he posed a risk to animals in the future. Although the Committee accepted that the offending arose out of a domestic arrangement, they were concerned that Dr Samuel maintained that he lacked any responsibility for the offending and that he had allowed animals to suffer when they lived under the roof of his veterinary practice and home.

8. The original Disciplinary Committee noted that the concept of fitness to practise involves three elements: the protection of animals, maintenance of public confidence in the profession and the declaration of standards of conduct for the membership of the profession. Furthermore, they were not satisfied that a suspension order would maintain public confidence in the profession or uphold proper standards of conduct for the profession. The Committee therefore decided that the behaviour found proved was fundamentally incompatible with being a Veterinary Surgeon because in this case there had been a serious departure from standards as set out in the RCVS Code of Conduct. There had been serious harm caused to a number of animals and a risk of serious harm to more. Whilst the Committee accepted that the situation arose due to a domestic arrangement it was not persuaded that this was a sufficient mitigating factor to allow Dr Samuel to remain on the register. His omission to act at that time was fundamentally incompatible with a core tenet of the veterinary profession, to protect the health and welfare of animals.
9. Dr Samuel has fully accepted the original DC's decision. He did not in any way seek to challenge or go behind the findings of the DC of 11 July 2018. His answers in evidence were consistent in that he accepted the findings. They found his vocabulary may not be as sophisticated as one might expect, but the key expression was acceptance of selfishness. He spoke of making an error, but was not seeking to downplay his conduct.
10. Dr Samuel accepted the seriousness of the findings that the harm inflicted on the animals in 2015 was not deliberate, but it was inflicted through the wholesale lack of care within his premises.
11. The Committee considered the factors set out in the Disciplinary Committee's Procedure Guidance in exercising its judgement and in deciding if Dr Samuel was fit to be restored to the Register, namely:
  - a. Acceptance by the Applicant veterinary surgeon of the findings of the Committee at the original inquiry hearing;
  - b. The seriousness of those findings;
  - c. The protection of the public;
  - d. The future of the welfare of animals in the event of the Applicant veterinary surgeon being permitted to have his or her name restored to the Register;
  - e. The length of time off the Register;
  - f. The Applicant veterinary surgeon's conduct since removal from the Register;
  - g. Efforts by the Applicant veterinary surgeon to keep up to date in terms of Knowledge, skills and developments in practice, since removal from the Register (accepting that he or she must not practise as a veterinary surgeon);
  - h. The impact on the Applicant veterinary surgeon of having his or her name removed from the Register; and
  - i. The public support for the applicant veterinary surgeon.
12. In addition, the Committee considered there would be a real and continuing risk to the reputation of the profession and to the public confidence in the profession if Dr Samuel were restored to the Register. They felt that conduct of this kind was of particularly egregious nature for a member of this profession. Regardless of the approach taken by the criminal courts by way of punishment,

the statutory Regulator continues to be responsible for public confidence in the profession and are confident, when bringing their animals to veterinary practices for treatment and care, that they will be treated and looked after properly. The Committee was firmly of the view that if a veterinary surgeon who has committed such serious offences with regards to multiple animals, was liable to be seriously undermined. They felt that Dr Samuel's omission to act at that time was fundamentally incompatible with core tenet of the veterinary profession to protect the health and welfare of animals.

13. For a veterinary surgeon, conduct involving neglect of animals is at the highest end of the spectrum of serious professional misconduct. The Committee considered Dr Samuel continued to represent a risk to animal welfare and thus allowing him to be restored to the Register would seriously undermine public confidence in the profession. For all these reasons the application to restore Dr Samuel to the Register is refused.
14. The complete decision can be found here: [Samuel, Gary James Cassius, Decision of the Disciplinary Committee - Professionals \(rcvs.org.uk\)](#)

#### Marthinus Botes

15. The Disciplinary Committee met for an in person hearing on from 10 – 14 January 2022.
16. The charges spanned a period of time from March 2016 to February 2018 and related to concerns arising out of total hip replacement (THR) surgery carried out by Mr Botes in respect of 4 dogs, Cola, Kilo, Daisy and Sora. One of the further charges was relation to a consultation in respect of a fifth dog, Penny, when it is alleged that Dr Botes recommended a left THR. Dr Botes was also charged with record-keeping failures in relation to his interventions in the care of the five dogs which featured in the charges.
17. The College's Counsel informed the Committee that he would call no evidence in respect of Charges 1 and 2 and invited the Committee to find those matters not proved. The reason for the position taken by the College in relation to Charges 1 and 2, as explained by Counsel, was that the owner of Cola, LB, who had made a witness statement (which was not before the Committee) had taken the position that she would not attend to give evidence, leaving the College in a position where it was required to make an application for her witness statement to be read by the Committee, without hearing from her in person. That would leave Dr Botes unable to challenge her in cross-examination if the Committee decided to admit LB's witness statement. If the Committee did not admit it, Mr Bradly submitted that Charges 1 and 2 would fall in any event.
18. The Committee did not consider that the public interest would be undermined by the approach taken by the College and therefore found Charges 1 and 2 not proved.
19. The Committee found Charges 3 – 8 in their entirety proved by way of Dr Botes' admissions, and found Charge 9, as it applies to Charges 3 – 8, proved by way of Dr Botes' admission.
20. In deciding the matter on disgraceful conduct in a professional respect the Committee considered the oral submissions of both the College's and the Respondent's Counsel. The College submitted that all of the factual matters found proved amounted to disgraceful conduct in a professional

respect. The Respondent's Counsel reminded the Committee that Dr Botes accepted that all matters found proved amounted to disgraceful conduct in a professional respect and submitted that all Dr Botes' admissions were indicative of his insight. The Committee found all the factual matters proved to amount to disgraceful conduct in a professional respect.

21. The Committee accepted that the test for considering disgraceful conduct in a professional respect, is as set out by the Legal Assessor, namely whether the conduct falls far short of that which was expected of a member of the veterinary profession in the particular circumstances.
22. The Committee took into account the "Disciplinary Committee Sanctions Guidance" published by the RCVS, the expert evidence before it regarding the question of whether Dr Botes' conduct fell far below the standards expected of him, as well as Dr Botes' admissions, but was mindful that the final decision is its own.
23. The Committee took into account the Code of Professional Conduct for Veterinary Surgeons (the Code). In considering whether the conduct amounted to disgraceful conduct in a professional respect the Committee had regard to the public interest which included protecting the health and welfare of animals, maintaining public confidence in the profession and declaring and upholding proper standards of conduct and behaviour. The Committee considered whether each charge either individually or in combination could amount to disgraceful conduct in a professional respect.
24. In coming to its decisions, the Committee took into account Professor Innes' opinions that it was not reasonable for Dr Botes to have carried out the THR without sufficient investigation into Kilo's pain; that the THR undertaken in respect of Sora was not in the animal's best interests; and that it was "entirely unnecessary" to recommend the THR in respect of Penny. In addition, the Committee has found that both THRs performed in respect of Daisy were not in her best interests. Thus, in the Committee's view, Dr Botes' actions and omissions did not ensure the animals' health and welfare.
25. The Committee also took into account that the repeated failures to obtain informed consent were a breach of the owners' trust, the owners relying on Dr Botes for full consideration of the clinical signs and history, as well as sufficient advice, explanations and guidance given to them, including in respect of risks, benefits and alternative courses of action and their risks and benefits, so as to be able to give informed consent.
26. The Committee took into account the following aggravating factors:
  - The THRs in question were a source of financial gain;
  - Dr Botes conduct was repeated over a considerable period of time;
  - Increased position of trust and responsibility because of perceived expertise in small animal orthopaedics and its education.
27. The Committee took into account, as a mitigating factor that Dr Botes has indicated some insight into some aspects of in the Charges in his writing in communications to the College, in his witness statement dated 29 December 2021, and in his new admissions at the start of this Inquiry.



28. The Committee also took note of Dr Botes' assertion that his actions with regard to the obtaining of informed consent and other communications with owners were in accordance with Medivet's protocols at the time.
29. The Committee found all the factual matters proved to amount to disgraceful conduct in a professional respect.
30. Please find the committees full decision in relation to the finding of facts and disgraceful conduct in a professional respect here: [Botes, Marthinus Ryk, Decision on Finding of Facts and Disgraceful Conduct in a Professional Respect - Professionals \(rcvs.org.uk\)](#)
31. The respondents Counsel provided written submissions governing the issue of Sanction, which amongst other matters set out the rationale for the postponement of judgment by the Committee on the basis of undertakings. The Committee was also provided with a further witness statement from Dr Botes dated 12 January 2022, draft undertakings proposed by Dr Botes, and a bundle containing a number of character witness statements and testimonials, the authors of which all confirm that they are aware of the charges faced by Dr Botes.
32. The College confirmed that their position was that if the Committee was to decide that it was appropriate to postpone Judgment for two years, the undertakings proposed would meet the identified concerns.
33. The Committee heard evidence from Dr Duncan Simon Midgley, MRCVS Advanced Practitioner (Small Animal Orthopaedics), whom Dr Botes proposed to be his supervisor in accordance with Dr Botes' proposed undertakings. Along with three character witnesses.
34. The Committee took into account the following aggravating factors:
  - There was a previous finding by a Committee of the RCVS in 2008 which determined that Dr Botes was to be suspended from the Register for a period of six months. At that hearing in 2008 Dr Botes was found to have been guilty of disgraceful conduct in a professional respect on the basis of failures in respect of a dog which had been involved in a road traffic accident, namely: failing to provide ongoing assessment and care; failing to ensure that such assessment and care was provided; failing to rely on overnight monitoring by a webcam, having told the owner that he would do so; when Dr Botes knew or ought to have known that the webcam was not working, failing to inform the owner and failing to take any or any adequate steps to do so; and failing to make any or any adequate clinical notes in respect of the dog.
  - The THRs in question were a source of financial gain.
  - Dr Botes was in an increased position of trust and responsibility because of perceived expertise in small animal orthopaedics and its education. He was also the practice principal at his branch of Medivet.
  - Actual harm in carrying out the THRs to three of the dogs (Kilo, Daisy, and Sora), when they should not have been performed, and the risk of harm in recommending THR on one of the dogs (Penny).
  - Insufficient insight into all of the matters found proved.

- The disgraceful conduct spanned a considerable period of time and was repeated in many respects.
35. As referred to by the previous Committee in 2008, there are three findings of the South African Veterinary Council in 1996 or 1997. While no details of the finding were available to that Committee (or made available to this Committee), those findings were noted by the previous Committee to have included a short period of suspension. In light of their age, and the fact that it was not known to what they related, this Committee disregarded them for the purposes of its consideration upon sanction.
36. With regard to the 2008 decision itself, the Committee took into account its age, and the fact that it was in respect of failings which took place in 2007. However, the fact that part of those findings related to failures in record-keeping was, in the Committee's view, significant, in light of the repeated record-keeping failures which were found proved in these proceedings.
37. The Committee took into account the following mitigating factors:
- Full admissions made at the commencement of the hearing, and some admissions made prior to the commencement of the hearing.
  - Apology and remorse expressed for the failings and their impact on the dogs and their owners.
  - Length of time since the disgraceful conduct found proved.
  - A long career as a veterinary surgeon (having qualified in South Africa in 1990) in South Africa and the United Kingdom.
  - Character witnesses and testimonials.
  - A degree of insight.
  - Subsequent efforts to avoid a repetition of such behaviour and to remediate past misconduct.
  - Financial impact upon Dr Botes if he was prevented from being able to practise. This was set out in Dr Botes' witness statement dated 12 January 2022, and the Committee accepted this.
38. In relation to the option of postponement of judgment with undertakings the Committee concluded that while Dr Botes was clearly willing to commit to the lengthy undertakings which he has proposed, the Committee took the view that a postponement on the basis of undertakings would not be appropriate in this case. The failings were not in limited aspects of practice. Rather, the failings were fundamental, and wide-ranging, in relation to a large number of aspects of a veterinary surgeon's practice, and the level of Dr Botes' insight was limited, therefore in the Committee's view, nothing less than direct supervision, where Dr Botes' practice was personally directly monitored on a day to day basis would be sufficient to protect animals, clients, and to uphold the wider public interest. It would be impracticable to formulate undertakings capable of effectively addressing these issues. In any event, postponement of judgment with undertakings would not be appropriate, in the Committee's view, as a result of the limited insight shown by Dr Botes, the real risk of repetition of the conduct in question, and the need to maintain public confidence in the profession and the wider public interest.
39. The Committee carefully considered the sanction of removal from the RCVS Register. Dr Botes' actions and omissions created actual harm and a risk of harm to animals and clients, as a result

of performing and recommending invasive surgery when he should not have done so. He also failed to obtain informed consent to the THR's which he did perform, and in doing so, he breached those owners' trust. Dr Botes did not ensure the health and welfare of animals, and his actions struck at the heart of the veterinary profession. Further, there was a real risk of repetition of his behaviour which was a serious departure from standards set out in the Code, and which was prolonged and repeated in nature. The Committee's view was that the demands of the public interest in this case are high, and in light of all of the circumstances, removal from the register was the only means of protecting animals and the wider public interest, which includes the need to uphold proper standards of conduct and performance, and to maintain confidence in the profession and its regulation.

40. The Committee therefore decided to direct that Dr Botes should be removed from the Register. In coming to this decision, the Committee carefully applied the principle of proportionality and took into account the impact of such a sanction on Dr Botes' ability to practise his profession, as well as the financial impact upon him, taking into account his witness statement in this regard. However, the Committee determined that the need to protect animals and clients and uphold the wider public interest outweighed Dr Botes' interests in this respect. In light of the gravity of the conduct, and all of the factors taken into account, any lesser sanction would lack deterrent effect and would undermine public confidence in the profession and the regulatory process. Removal was the only appropriate and proportionate sanction.
41. The full decision on sanction can be found here: [Botes, Marthinus Ryk, Decision on Sanction - Professionals \(rcvs.org.uk\)](#)

#### Anne Mullen

42. The Disciplinary Committee met for an in person hearing of Anne Mullen on 31 January - 4 February 2022
43. The charges spanned a period from April 2019 - October 2020 and related to concerns arising from inadequate information to clients in relation to out of hours' emergency care after a spay surgery on 19 July 2019 to Cleo, and also in relation to surgery on 15 October 2019 to Boycie. Between 2 April 2019 and 23 October 2020, the respondent also failed to have in place adequate Professional Indemnity Insurance or equivalent arrangements.
44. On 13 May 2021, the Respondent was informed that allegations had been forwarded to the Disciplinary Committee and that a Notice of Inquiry would be issued in due course. The Respondent replied by email on 26 May 2021, to say that she could not deal with RCVS correspondence and that the matter would have to continue without her input.
45. On 17 January 2022 the Respondent made it clear that she would not be attending the hearing. She confirmed her home address was still her address, and that her email address (as used by the College) was correct. She confirmed that she had received correspondence from the College but had chosen not to open it.
46. The College invited the Committee to proceed in her absence. The College made written submissions to the Committee in support of the application, attached to which was a bundle of

supporting documents running to 80 pages, relating to the various efforts made by the College to serve relevant documents on the Respondent

47. The Committee read and considered the submissions of the college and took the decision to proceed in the absence of the respondent in the interests of justice under the Procedure and Evidence Rules 2004 provide at Part III, Rule 10.4:
48. The full Committees decision on proceeding in the response absence can be found here: <https://www.rcvs.org.uk/document-library/mullen-anne-mary-decision-of-disciplinary-committee-on/>
49. In relation to the finding of the facts the Committee heard evidence from a number of witnesses, including an expert witness. The Committee considered that all the witnesses at the hearing gave cogent, reliable, and credible evidence.
50. The Committee found charges 2(a) and 2(b) in relation to Cleo proved. They were satisfied so that they were sure that Cleo was discharged when she was unfit to be so and that she was discharged with an inappropriate and/or inadequate dressing.
51. Charge 2(c) was withdrawn at the commencement of the hearing.
52. In relation to charge 2(d)(i) the Committee did not consider that there was sufficient evidence from which it could be reasonably inferred that the bleed occurred during surgery or prior to discharge by the Respondent. Accordingly, the Committee did not find charge 2(d)(i) proved. The Committee also did not find charge 2(d)(ii) proved as from the evidence they were unable to be satisfied so that it was sure that the Respondent should have given specific advice about a possible post-operative haemorrhage.
53. The Committee found charge 2(d)(iii) proved as in the circumstances they were satisfied that the Respondent failed to provide adequate information as to arrangements for her out of hours' emergency cover, as required in the RCVS Code of Professional Conduct.
54. The Committee were satisfied so that it was sure that the Respondent failed to make adequate clinical records with regards to Cleo and so charge 2(e) was found proved.
55. Charges 1 (a) and 1(b) were found proved on the basis that the Committee was satisfied so that it was sure that the Respondent failed to provide adequate information to clients in relation to her out of hours' emergency cover.
56. In relation to the care of Boycie charges 3(a), 3(b), 3(c), 3(d), 3(e) and 3(f) were all found proved. After reviewing the evidence, the Committee concluded that the Respondent had failed to obtain informed consent, make adequate clinical records, ensure adequate monitoring of the patient whilst he was recovering from anaesthesia and failed to provide adequate details both about arrangements for out of hours' emergency cover and for at home care by the owners. There was a failure to offer an adequate range of options for Boycies overnight care and so he was left alone overnight when he was not in a fit condition to be so left.

57. The Committees full decision on find of facts can be found here: [Mullen, Anne Mary Decision of Disciplinary Committee on Facts - Professionals \(rcvs.org.uk\)](#)
58. The Committee next considered whether, on the basis of the Facts found proved the Respondent was guilty of disgraceful conduct in a professional respect.
59. The aggravating and mitigating factors were taken into account at this stage. The Committee considered that the aggravating factors relevant to this case were as follows
- Actual injury to an animal
  - Risk of Injury to an animal
  - Misconduct sustained or repeated over a period
  - Conduct contravening advice issued by the RCVS, including the Preliminary Investigation Committee and Professional Conduct Department or other appropriate authority
  - Blatant or wilful disregard of the role of the RCVS and the systems that regulate the veterinary profession
  - Previous adverse findings to the disciplinary Committee
60. The Committee was unable to find any mitigating factors in this case.
61. Animal welfare lies at the heart of the veterinary profession. The Committee considers that the Respondent's treatment of Cleo and Boycie constitutes a breach of this fundamental tenet of the profession. The Respondents failure to provide informed consent, failure to provide details about out of hours' cover, failure to have in place Professional Indemnity Insurance (PII), Continued Professional Development (CPD), and failure to respond to the College's request for information was inexcusable and fell far below the standard to be expected of a reasonably competent veterinary surgeon.
62. The Committee concluded that the Respondent's conducts in relation to the Charges found proved, taken in combination, amounted to disgraceful conduct in a professional respect.
63. The full decision on disgraceful conduct can be found here: [Mullen, Anne Mary, Decision of Disciplinary Committee as to Disgraceful Conduct - Professionals \(rcvs.org.uk\)](#)
64. The Committee considers that the Respondent has displayed a persistent lack of insight into the seriousness of her actions or their consequences. The Committee considers that the Respondent's conduct raises serious clinical concerns, shows disregard of obligations in relation to out of hours' care, indicates deficiencies in making decisions, demonstrates an obstructive attitude to her regulator and creates a potential risk to patients. She has not engaged with the regulator, she has not demonstrated insight into her misconduct, has learned nothing from her previous suspension in relation to PII, and has done nothing to remediate her disgraceful conduct. There is no evidence that the Respondent has complied with any of her obligations in relation to CPD.

65. The Committee considered the possible sanctions in order of severity. The Committee considered that it would be wholly inappropriate to take no further action. There would be nothing gained in postponing judgment and there would continue to be risks to animal welfare and this would not protect the public interest. The committee considered that the respondents conduct was so serious that removing the respondent from the register was the only course of action.
66. The Committee's full decision on sanction can be found here: [Mullen, Anne Mary Decision of Disciplinary Committee on Sanction - Professionals \(rcvs.org.uk\)](https://www.rcvs.org.uk/disciplinary-committee-on-sanction-professionals)

#### Walter Dingemanse

67. The Disciplinary Committee met for an online hearing on 14-15 February 2022.
68. The charges against the Respondent were in relation to a conviction, which after a guilty plea resulted in a sentence of 8 months' imprisonment, suspension for 24 months (with rehabilitation activity and unpaid work requirements); directions to sign the sex offenders' register for 10 years; and subjection to a forfeiture and destruction of a computer hard drive as well as orders to pay 420.00 prosecution costs and 140.00 victim surcharge.
69. Dr Dingemanse admitted the facts as contained within the charge. The Committee found the charge proved on the basis of the Respondent's admission, as supported by the evidence relied on by the College, namely the copy extract of the Memorandum of Conviction from the Oxford Crown Court.
70. The College submitted that the nature and circumstance of the offence, which led to the conviction, were such as to render the Respondent unfit to practice as a Registered Veterinary Surgeon. The Respondent accepted the College's submission and also provided some context and background to the offending behaviour.
71. The Committee felt that the Respondent's conduct was liable to have serious detrimental effects on the reputation of the profession and would undermine public confidence in the profession. The Committee was satisfied that his conduct fell far below the standard expected of a Registered Veterinary Surgeon and that the conviction was of a nature and seriousness that rendered the respondent unfit to practice as a Veterinary Surgeon.
72. In reaching a decision on sanction the Committee took into account all the evidence and documents provided, together with the submissions made on behalf of the respondent and all matters of personal mitigation.
73. The Committee found the following aggravating factors relevant in this case:
- actual (albeit indirect) injury to a human (in this case children);
  - actual (albeit indirect) injury to an animal (in this case dogs);
  - risk of injury to a human (in this case children);
  - risk of injury to an animal (in this case dogs);
  - pre-meditated misconduct;
  - the involvement of vulnerable individuals (both children and animals);

- sexual misconduct;
- a lack of integrity of a registered Veterinary Surgeon in behaving in this way;
- Dr Dingemanse was in a particular position to ensure animal welfare as a Veterinary Surgeon and failed to do so by possessing the 22 images of bestiality and thereby perpetuating the abuse of animals by being part of the market for such images;
- behaviour sustained over a period of time from November 2017 to April 2018 when on Kik chat;
- limited insight in that from 2021 onwards he made admissions and expressed remorse, but at interview in 2019 he made no comments and made no admissions.

74. The Committee considered the following mitigating factors:

- no previous disciplinary history;
- admissions to the matters alleged both at Court and to the College;
- some developing insight and steps taken to try to understand his behaviour in order to prevent a repetition;
- expressions of remorse;
- a positive testimonial from Professor Henri van Bree at the Faculty of Veterinary Medicine at Ghent University in Belgium, dated 6 February 2022, about the Respondent's academic abilities. However, it was unclear whether the Professor was aware of the Respondent's conviction and the nature of the conviction, there being no reference to it within the testimonial.

75. The Committee was of the view that the nature and seriousness of the Respondent's behaviour, which led to the conviction was fundamentally incompatible with being registered as a Veterinary Surgeon. In light of this conclusion the Committee decided that the only appropriate and proportionate sanction in this case was removal from the Register.

76. The full decision of the Committee can be found here: [Dingemanse, Dr Walter February 2022 Decision of the Disciplinary Committee - Professionals \(rcvs.org.uk\)](#) Please note that this decision contains reference to child and animal abuse.

### Upcoming DC's

77. There are six Inquires that have been listed to take place before the Disciplinary Committee:

- 7-8 March 2022
- 9-11 March 2022
- 21-23 March 2022
- 4-6 April 2022
- 25 -26 April 2022
- 13-22 June 2022

78. There is one Inquiry that has been listed to take place before the RVN Disciplinary Committee:

- 24 March – 1 April 2022

79. There are three other Inquiry's which have been referred to the Committee which have yet to be listed and the Clerk is currently working to list these as soon as possible.