



VETERINARY COUNCIL OF IRELAND STANDARDS OF ACCREDITATION FOR EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMMES OF VETERINARY MEDICINE IN IRELAND

Veterinary Council of Ireland Adopts EAEVE Standards for Accreditation

The Veterinary Council adopts the European System of Evaluation of Veterinary Training (ESEVT) Standards for Accreditation set out by the EAEVE in conjunction with the FVE for the accreditation of veterinary degree programmes in the Republic of Ireland. The ESEVT Manual of Standard Operating Procedure is a living document, and the Council adopts the current and all future content of the ESEVT Standards for Accreditation.

Addendum Requirements Particular to Irish Context

In addition to the ESEVT standards, the panel of experts carrying out an accreditation visitation on behalf of the Veterinary Council of Ireland shall give particular consideration to certain additional factors in the Irish context as set out in the following addendum:

1. External Practical Training (“Seeing Practice”)

Regarding External Practical Training, these should be adhered to in conjunction with the existing ESEVT Standards.

The Veterinary Council considers that the requirement to have completed EPT as part of the education and training of veterinary practitioners as very important so that graduates on ‘day one’ have experience of, and acquired skills in, working in practice. EPT is defined as the period during which students spend time developing their veterinary skills and knowledge in veterinary practices and a wide variety of other work-related environments. EPT requirements are laid down in Part 10 of this SOP.

The school should clearly demonstrate that EPT is an integral part of the education and training of veterinary students. There must be a structured system to enable students to undertake 12 weeks of pre-clinical animal husbandry related EPT in the early years of the course, and 24 weeks of clinically related EPT in the later years of the course. There must be a member of the academic, or academically related staff, responsible for the overall supervision of both categories of EPT, including liaison with EPT providers. Students should have access to a suitable database of EPT placements and must be able to seek and obtain advice and guidance on the suitability of EPT placements.

There should be a system in place to enable EPT providers to report back to the school on their assessment of the performance of students during EPT. Students should also record their EPT and there should be a mechanism to enable students to formally report on the quality of the instruction and experience of EPT placements.



2. Facilities, Equipment, and Clinical Resources

The following is an elaboration in the Irish context on the Council's expectations with regards to a school's clinical resources, and these should be adhered to in conjunction with the existing ESEVT Standard.

In relation to clinical education, the Council expects that both normal and diseased animals of various agricultural, domestic, and exotic species are available for instructional purposes, either as clinical patients or provided by the school. To ensure sufficient educational experience in a clinical context, it is essential that a diverse and sufficient number of surgical and medical patients are available during on-campus clinical activities. Experience can also include exposure to clinical education at off-campus sites, provided the college reviews these clinical experiences and educational outcomes. The teaching hospital(s) must provide nursing care, instruction in nursing procedures, and foster a knowledge of the veterinary nurse role in practice. Council expects that students are active participants in the workup of the patients, including physical diagnosis and diagnostic problem-oriented decision making. Medical records must be comprehensive and maintained in an effective retrieval system to efficiently support the teaching, research, and service programs of the college. In addition, tutoring in relation to the requirements of GDPR is essential.

3. Supports for Resilience, Mental Health, and Wellbeing

The school must clearly demonstrate that students are afforded appropriate training and support in the realm of professional resilience, mental health, and wellbeing as part of their education and training to becoming qualified veterinary practitioners. Training relating to resilience, mental health, and wellbeing should be treated with openness and proactivity. Support systems for students and staff must be available as appropriate and where required.

There should be appropriate systems in place throughout the duration of the programme to manage career expectations and generate an awareness of the general mental health and wellbeing challenges faced by the profession on a whole. Graduates must be prepared in order to enter the profession with a sense of knowledge about the challenges they and their peers may encounter, and a knowledge about the assistance resources that are available.

4. Business Management Studies

The school must provide business management studies early-on and throughout the programme in order to provide graduates with the foundations of knowledge required to lead a successful and sustainable career within the profession, be it as a business owner, an employee, self-employed or otherwise.

Training should cover factors such as business sustainability, income expectations, indemnity insurance, tax management, strategy management, staff management, and any other topics deemed to be relevant to fostering a knowledge of veterinary business and management.



5. Communication and Professionalism

The Veterinary Council considers that strong communication skills and professionalism underpin every aspect of best veterinary practice and knows that undesirable outcomes combined with poor communication skills can lead to complaints. The school is expected to demonstrate its provision of training to promote good professional conduct and strong communication skills in order to mitigate the occurrence of complaints and communication break-down in practice.

Training should cover factors such as listening skills, showing empathy and concern, giving instructions, setting expectations, answering questions, training support staff, written communication, professional behaviour and demeanour, and any other areas deemed to be relevant to fostering strong communication skills and professionalism.



VETERINARY COUNCIL OF IRELAND DAY ONE VETERINARY MEDICINE COMPETENCIES

The Council adopts the Day One Competencies as outlined by EAEVE in Annex 2 of the ESEVT Manual of Standard Operating Procedure for visitations.

1. Day One Competences

- 1.1 Understand the ethical and legal responsibilities of the veterinarian in relation to animals under his/her care, the environment, clients, policies and society.
- 1.2 Demonstrate knowledge of the organisation, management and legislation related to a veterinary business economics and employment rights.
- 1.3 Promote, monitor and maintain health and safety in the veterinary setting; demonstrate knowledge of systems of quality assurance; apply principles of risk management to their practice.
- 1.4 Communicate effectively with clients, the public, professional colleagues and responsible authorities, using language appropriate to the audience concerned and in full respect of confidentiality and privacy.
- 1.5 Prepare accurate clinical and client records, and case reports when necessary, in a form satisfactory to colleagues and understandable by the public.
- 1.6 Work effectively as a member of a multi-disciplinary team in the delivery of services.
- 1.7 Understand the economic and emotional context in which the veterinary surgeon operates.
- 1.8 Be able to review and evaluate literature and presentations critically.
- 1.9 Understand and apply principles of clinical governance, and practise evidence-based veterinary medicine.
- 1.10 Use their professional capabilities to contribute to the advancement of veterinary knowledge and One Health concept, in order to improve animal health and welfare, the quality of animal care and veterinary public health.
- 1.11 Demonstrate ability to cope with incomplete information, deal with contingencies, and adapt to change.
- 1.12 Demonstrate that they recognise personal and professional limits, and know how to seek professional advice, assistance and support when necessary.
- 1.13 Demonstrate an ability of lifelong learning and a commitment to learning and professional development. This includes recording and reflecting on professional experience and taking measures to improve performance and competence.
- 1.14 Take part in self-audit and peer-group review processes in order to improve performance.
- 1.15 Obtain an accurate and relevant history of the individual animal or animal group, and its/their environment.
- 1.16 Handle and restrain animal patients safely and with respect of the animal and instruct others in helping the veterinarian perform these techniques.
- 1.17 Perform a complete clinical examination and demonstrate ability in clinical decision-making.



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- 1.18 Develop appropriate treatment plans and administer treatment in the interests of the animals under their care with regard to the resources available.
- 1.19 Attend in an emergency and perform first aid in common animal species*.
- 1.20 Assess the physical condition, welfare and nutritional status of an animal or group of animals and advise the client on principles of husbandry and feeding.
- 1.21 Collect, preserve and transport samples, select appropriate diagnostic tests, interpret and understand the limitations of the test results.
- 1.22 Communicate clearly and collaborate with referral and diagnostic services, including providing an appropriate history.
- 1.23 Understand the contribution that imaging and other diagnostic techniques can make in achieving a diagnosis. Use basic imaging equipment and carry out an examination effectively as appropriate to the case, in accordance with good health and safety practice and current regulations.
- 1.24 Recognise signs of possible notifiable, reportable and zoonotic diseases as well as abuse and take appropriate action, including notifying the relevant authorities.
- 1.25 Access the appropriate sources of data on licensed medicines.
- 1.26 Prescribe and dispense medicines correctly and responsibly in accordance with legislation and latest guidance.
- 1.27 Report suspected adverse reactions through the appropriate channel.
- 1.28 Apply principles of biosecurity correctly.
- 1.29 Perform aseptic procedures appropriately.
- 1.30 Safely perform sedation, and general and regional anaesthesia; implement chemical methods of restraint.
- 1.31 Assess and manage pain.
- 1.32 Recognise when euthanasia is appropriate and perform it with respect of the animal, using an appropriate method, whilst showing sensitivity to the feelings of owners and others, with due regard to the safety of those present; advise on disposal of the carcase.
- 1.33 Perform a systematic gross post-mortem examination, record observations, sample tissues, store and transport them.
- 1.34 Perform ante-mortem inspection of animals destined for the food-chain, including paying attention to welfare aspects; correctly identify conditions affecting the quality and safety of products of animal origin, to exclude those animals whose condition means their products are unsuitable for the food-chain.
- 1.35 Perform inspection of food and feed including post-mortem inspection of food producing animals and inspection in the field of related food technology.
- 1.36 Advise on, and implement, preventive and eradication programmes appropriate to the species and in line with accepted animal health, welfare and public health standards.



2. Underpinning knowledge and understanding

In order to be able to undertake their professional duties effectively, new veterinary graduates will need a breadth of underpinning knowledge and understanding of the biological, animal and social sciences and laws related to the animal industries. This will include, but is not restricted to, the following:

2.1 Understanding of, and competence in, the logical approaches to both scientific and clinical reasoning, the distinction between the two, and the strengths and limitations of each.

2.2 Research methods, the contribution of basic and applied research to veterinary science and implementation of 3Rs (Replacement, Reduction, Refinement).

2.3 The structure, function and behaviour of animals and their physiological and welfare needs.

2.4 A knowledge of the businesses related to animal breeding, production and keeping.

2.5 The aetiology, pathogenesis, clinical signs, diagnosis and treatment of the common diseases and disorders that occur in the common animal species*.

2.6 Awareness of other diseases of international importance that pose a risk to national and international biosecurity and trade.

2.7 Legislation relating to animal care and welfare, animal movement, and notifiable and reportable diseases.

2.8 Medicines legislation and guidelines on responsible use of medicines, including responsible use of antimicrobials and antiparasitics.

2.9 The principles of disease prevention and the promotion of health and welfare.

2.10 Veterinary public health issues, e.g. epidemiology, transboundary epizootic diseases, zoonotic and food-borne diseases, emerging and re-emerging diseases, food hygiene and technology.

2.11 Principles of effective interpersonal interaction, including communication, leadership, management and team working.

2.12 The ethical framework within which veterinary surgeons should work, including important ethical theories that inform decision-making in professional and animal welfare-related ethics.

These Day One Competences are in agreement with the relevant EU Directives, Regulations and Proposals related to veterinary professional qualifications and the following references:

- OIE recommendations on the Competencies of graduating veterinarians ('Day 1 graduates') to assure National Veterinary Services of quality
- European Commission: A working document on the development of a common education and training framework to fulfil the requirements under the Directive
- FVE & EAEVE report on European Veterinary Education in Animal Welfare, Science, Ethics and Law
- Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area (2015)
- Final Recommendations of the 4th OIE Global Conference on Veterinary Education
- One Health approach as recognised by WHO and OIE



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In addition, the Council expects as a day one competency that graduates are fully conversant with and follow the Veterinary Council of Ireland Code of Professional Conduct. Course providers must ensure that the students are familiar with and understand the binding nature of compliance with the Veterinary Council of Ireland Code of Professional Conduct.