



**Veterinary Continuous Education in Europe
International non-profit association**

**Standards
&
Dossier of Competencies**

**For
Accreditation of European Veterinary Post Graduate
Continuous Education Programmes**

--

Approved by

The VETCEE Board

--

March 2016

1. Background

The Veterinary Continuous Education in Europe committee (VETCEE) was established collaboratively by some key European Veterinary organisations. Its members comprise:

Founding members:

- EAEVE (The European Association of Establishments for Veterinary Education)
- EBVS (European Board of Veterinary Specialisation)
- FVE (Federation of Veterinarians of Europe)
- UEVP (Union of European Veterinary Practitioners)

Co-opted members:

- FECAVA (Federation of European Companion Animal Veterinary Associations)
- The Statutory Bodies working group of FVE

2. VETCEE objectives

- To promote structured continuing professional development and life-long learning in order to improve the level of knowledge, skills and competencies of veterinary practitioners to a level higher than that at graduation but at a level below that of a European Diplomat Specialist.
- To encourage and facilitate the delivery of high quality veterinary care at first opinion practice level for the benefit of animal health and welfare and also the benefit of owners and society.
- To accredit structured programmes that are achievable by veterinarians in full time employment.
- To develop a system whereby practising veterinarians across Europe can gain recognition for attainment of structured postgraduate education which indicates a competence to deliver a high level of veterinary service in their chosen field of practice.
- To recognise and embrace systems, which already exist in some European countries and provide the basis for their mutual recognition across Europe.
- The VetCEE model would be totally different from the EBVS

specialisation model, which requires superior academic achievement, and continuing research-based post-qualification obligations.

3. Level

European Qualification Framework (EQF) level 7

Level descriptor

VETCEE accreditation requires that a programme leads to a qualification that is equivalent to a European Qualification Framework (EQF) level 7. It should meet the general requirements of this level under the three categories of knowledge, skills and competence as outlined in the Bergen conference of European ministers responsible for higher education 2005.

Knowledge includes both theoretical and factual knowledge.

Skills include cognitive skills (use of logic, intuitive and creative thinking) and practical skills (including use of method, materials and instrumentation). The teaching of key skills must be clearly shown in the application especially where embedded in other modules.

Competence refers to the professional's ability to integrate knowledge, skills and attitudes, apply them effectively, responsibly and autonomously to the job role, and being able to respond effectively to contingencies, change and the unexpected.

In the context of VETCEE accredited programmes the following is a description of the level required under these three headings:

3.1. Knowledge

- i) Knowledge and understanding that is founded upon and extends and/or enhances that typically associated with a primary veterinary degree
- ii) A thorough understanding of the knowledge base and a critical awareness of developments at the forefront of the candidates' area of professional practice.
- iii) A comprehensive understanding of techniques applicable to their own area of practice.
- iv) Originality in the application of evidence-based knowledge,

together with an ability to evaluate critically current literature and research in the relevant professional area.

v) Understanding of how established techniques of research and clinical enquiry are used to create and interpret knowledge in the relevant professional area.

vi) Evaluate clinical methodologies and techniques, and develop critiques of them and, where appropriate propose new approaches to professional practice.

In the context of clinical practice programmes:

i) Demonstrate a systematic knowledge and understanding of the aetiology and pathogenesis and clinical presentation of surgical/medical conditions relevant to their area of practice.

ii) Show a comprehensive knowledge and understanding of the diagnostic and therapeutic procedures, which may be employed in the diagnosis and management of these conditions.

3.2. Skills

i) The ability to integrate knowledge and handle complexity, formulate sound judgements with incomplete or limited information, including reflection on social and ethical responsibilities, and apply this knowledge and these skills in both common and complex clinical and professional situations.

ii) The ability to communicate clearly the conclusions, and the rationale underpinning them, to veterinary colleagues and to non-veterinary audiences, especially clients.

iii) Apply knowledge and understanding, and problem solving abilities in new or unfamiliar environments within the broad area of the field of study.

iv) Continue to advance their knowledge and understanding, and to develop new skills to a higher level.

3.3. Competence

- i) Demonstrate independent learning ability required for continuing professional development in a manner that may be largely self-directed or autonomous.
- ii) Demonstrate self-direction and originality in tackling and solving problems, and act autonomously in planning and implementing tasks in the relevant professional area of work.
- iii) Perform independently and accept responsibility at a professional level.
- iv) Sample dossiers of competencies for each in modular format will be contained in attached schedules

4. Scope

The scope will include species-orientated and discipline-oriented programmes. Due regard must be paid to the level to be obtained. In the case of a programme that has a discipline orientation it must be clear that the programme is not a specialist qualification. VETCEE will roll out standards for programme types in response to the needs of the veterinary profession in Europe as represented through their veterinary organisations affiliated to the VETCEE member organisations.

5. Quantum of learning

Duration of education

- i) Programmes should consist of 30 ECTS (European Credit Transfer System) units of learning. One ECT is equivalent to approximately 25 hours of learning and so programmes will typically consist of approximately 750 hours of blended learning, which is equivalent to 6 months full-time learning.
- ii) The learning should involve a mixture of learning types including direct teaching both theoretical and practical, self-directed case studies and assignments. The proportion of each learning type is not prescribed to allow flexibility except where there is a minimum requirement for a specified type of training ,e.g, practical surgical training. . However the structure of the programme must be

appropriate to achieving the desired level and scope of outcomes.

iii) Programmes should be structured to allow candidates to spread the learning over a period of approximately 3 years and not less than one year.

6. Enrolment in programmes pre-requisites

i) Candidates must hold a veterinary degree. It is intended that candidates complete their post graduate level of competencies and a basic level of experience before commencement of the program and therefore it should be a pre-requisite that, before enrolment, candidates are qualified for at least one year and have worked for a time equivalent to one year in an appropriate sector relevant to the program being undertaken. In addition candidates must have the equivalent of one year's full-time experience in the relevant area of veterinary practice. Where candidates are engaged in mixed practice the amount of experience with the relevant species for enrolment in a species-orientated programme should be equivalent to one year's full time work in that area.

ii) Candidates must complete the full program within 10 years. Programmes should facilitate necessary career breaks for family, health or professional reasons.

7. Modularisation

i) Programs should be structured in modules

ii) Accreditation is awarded to entire programmes and not to the individual modules.

iii) Programmes should facilitate, where possible, the credit of modules undertaken in another accredited programme so as to facilitate candidates who wish to undertake modules in another programme within the same country or from another country for reasons of practicality or to enhance the professional and cultural experience of their professional development. It is accepted that modules will not always be exactly comparable between programmes and so acceptance of prior learning from another VETCEE accredited programme is not a mandatory requirement but desirable where

practical.

8. Quality assurance

i) Quality assurance of programmes and their qualifications is of utmost importance.

ii) Programme providers should have a policy and associated procedures for the assurance of the quality and standards of their programmes and awards.

iii) They should also commit themselves explicitly to the development of a culture that recognises the importance of quality and quality assurance in their work.

iv) Programme providers should develop and implement a strategy for the continuous enhancement of quality.

v) The quality assurance system should cover the programme design and delivery, assessment of candidates, quality of teachers and teaching, learning resources, information systems and communications.

vi) Teachers should have appropriate professional skills and sufficient international experience within the teaching team.

vii) The quality and relevance of the practice or work place experience and sufficient supervision or support of students should be ensured so that students can achieve experience appropriate to achieving the desired learning outcomes of the program. Where necessary, students should be given additional support to compensate if their place of normal employment does not provide sufficient experience.

viii) The program team must include a member who holds a European Diplomat (EBVS) qualification or a qualification that is recognised by the EBVS as equivalent. The qualification and experience of all teachers involved in the delivery and/or assessment of the

programme must be appropriate to the programme. In addition the program team should include at least one member with a qualification in Education or proven relevant teaching experience such that appropriate pedagogical knowledge can be demonstrated. The course provider should provide inductions and training of an appropriate nature in teaching and assessment for those involved in delivery of the programmes. The quality assurance system must be one that is recognised within the European Higher Education community and/or veterinary professional bodies. Existing recognised systems such as accreditation of the provider by the European Association of Establishments for Veterinary Education (EAEVE) or a quality assurance system that is approved by the European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education (ENQA), or a body that is recognised as an authority for awarding higher education qualifications at EQF level 7 or above is a minimum requirement.

ix) In countries where there is a statutory body or competent authority which regulates the veterinary profession and where the award is delivered at a national level, this body must confirm its approval of the programme as a valid veterinary professional qualification.

9. Assessment

- The assessment system should be governed by a recognised quality assurance system as described above under “quality”.
- Assessments can be undertaken in the native language
- All programme applications and supporting documentation must be in English. Provision should be made for translation into English of assessment documentation and evidence as required for accreditation purposes.
- Minimum mandatory attendance levels are not prescribed in these standards however it is assumed that program providers do consider the level of attendance required for competency and that the assessment system should adequately ensure appropriate learning outcomes.
- Programmes must include ongoing self-assessments and self-

evaluations to enable students to determine their progress.

- Programs should record pass rates for each cohort of students.

10. Qualifications & Awarding Bodies

i) VETCEE accredits programmes according to its standards and does not award qualifications to individual candidates.

ii) Candidates who successfully complete an accredited programme are awarded qualifications by the appropriate national awarding body or in the case where a programme cannot be conducted at national level, by a recognised awarding body. Attention is again drawn to the requirements for quality assurance.

11. Post nominals and titles

The use of professional post nominals or titles is a matter for the statutory body within the country where the veterinarian is practising.

It is strongly recommended that the use of the word “specialist” is avoided in programme titles, post nominals or individual titles so as to avoid any potential confusion with the higher level of diplomat qualifications.

12. Re-certification

i) Programmes must be re-evaluated at least every five years. In the interim period, the VETCEE committee must be informed in writing of any substantive changes to the programme, management or its delivery.

ii) The VETCEE committee reserves the right to undertake a review of accreditation status at any time either on a spot check audit basis, or in response to reported concerns about the programme.

iii) Programmes will be required to have a system in place for re-certification of candidates every five years in order for candidates to continue to use a title or post nominal and to keep their name on a list of those who have completed the programme.

iv) Programme providers should liaise and collaborate where possible with the statutory body in execution of a system of re-certification.

v) The requirements for re-certification can be based on completion of a minimum of 20 hours of relevant CE per-annum averaged over five years or may also be based on completion of re-certification modules. Self-certification with accompanying validation of undertaking appropriate CE may be used with a system of auditing to ensure accuracy and compliance. It is the programme provider's responsibility to ensure that a list of those re-certified is maintained and made available to VETCEE Committee in an electronic format.

13. Appeals procedure

i) The program provider must have an appeals process for candidates who have been unsuccessful in their course assessments.

ii) Appeals by programme providers in relation to their application for programme validation may be made to the VETCEE committee.

14. Latitude

There will be some latitude allowed in the accreditation of programmes in existing before 1st January 2013 in order to take account of existing programme structures provided that they meet the required level, scope and quality as laid down by the accreditation standards. The degree of latitude will be at the discretion of the VETCEE Committee.

15. Schedules – Competencies and modules

This section includes sample module descriptors and dossiers of competencies for each of the programmes.

- Dossier of Competences and module descriptors for VETCEE accredited Companion Animal programmes, drafted by Companion Animal sub-committee of VETCEE
- Dossier of Competences and module descriptors for VETCEE accredited Equine programmes, drafted by Equine sub-committee of VETCEE
- Dossier of Competences and module descriptors for VETCEE accredited Laboratory Animal programmes, drafted by Laboratory Animal sub-committee of VETCEE
- Dossier of Competences and module descriptors for VETCEE accredited Porcine programmes, drafted by Porcine sub-committee of

- VETCEE
- Dossier of Competences and module descriptors for VETCEE accredited Bovine Health and Production programmes, drafted by Bovine sub-committee of VETCEE
 - etc.

16. VETCEE Secretariat

Despoina Iatridou VETCEE Office, Avenue de Tervueren, 1040 - Belgium,
Tel: +32 2 533 70 20 E-mail: despoina@fve.org