



## Professional Communications

A recent complaint case concerning unprofessional comments made on an internet forum highlights the care that must be taken to ensure appropriate professional communications are maintained in this age of "multimedia" choices. There have been previous cases regarding inappropriate or unprofessional use of the internet and websites. Veterinarians are reminded that any

information posted on an internet website is in the public domain. Additionally there can be difficulties in getting items deleted from websites and even then deleted material can often be retrieved at a later date. Section 5 of the Code of Professional Conduct for Veterinarians clearly specifies the standards expected of veterinarians when dealing with all types of media.



## Review of the Code of Professional Conduct for Veterinarians

The draft ethical requirements for client and professional relationships are now available for comment.

Drafts of the proposed ethical requirements applying to client and professional relationships are available for comment at [www.vetcouncil.org.nz/news.php](http://www.vetcouncil.org.nz/news.php)

and professional integrity. This work is expected to be completed by the end of the year ready for consultation on the proposals early in the New Year.

Council will be formally consulting before finalising the revised Code, but meantime the Code Review Working Party would welcome receiving feedback on the latest drafts. Please email your comments to [registrar@vetcouncil.org.nz](mailto:registrar@vetcouncil.org.nz)

The working party is now turning its attention to the remaining sections of the code - animal welfare, legislative responsibilities, veterinary services



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## We need your help to ensure the accuracy of the online practice register

The online practice register has been updated to include the names and practising details of the vets associated with each practice/employing organisation.

The practice database information is sourced from the details vets provide in their registration and practising certificate application forms.

Under s23 (3) of the Veterinarians Act vets must notify the Council within one month of changing their contact address or practice.

Unfortunately some vets are not aware, or choose not to comply, with this statutory requirement so the list of vets associated with each practice may not be as up to date as it could be.

**Please help us improve the accuracy of this information by arranging for your entry to be checked at: [www.vetcouncil.org.nz/onlinePractice.php](http://www.vetcouncil.org.nz/onlinePractice.php)**

Please advise us of any changes on 04 473 9600 or [vet@vetcouncil.org.nz](mailto:vet@vetcouncil.org.nz)

## Rate the Council's Performance

As part of its strategic goal to ensure effective governance Council has recently undertaken an internal review of its performance.

Council now wishes to extend this review by gathering and evaluating stakeholders' views on how it is performing.

We need to know how individual vets and registration applicants perceive the Council, what we do well and where we could do better.

We need to know how you rate our progress in meeting our strategic goals of:

- ~ fully implementing the functions of the Veterinarians Act 2005
- ~ ensuring high standards of governance and management in the conduct of our business
- ~ engaging stakeholders to promote confidence and understanding of our role

Feedback from the survey will help us in developing priorities for the 2010 business plan and inform a stakeholder session planned for February 2010.

The survey is available on our website at: <http://www.vetcouncil.org.nz/news.php>

**We value your feedback. Please take the time to complete the survey and return it to the Council office by 25 October.**

## Check your current approval status as a trader of restricted veterinary medicines



Veterinarians cannot assume that their veterinary registration and APC automatically entitles them to trade in restricted veterinary medicines in all situations. Veterinarians who operate retail outlets, fill other veterinarians' prescriptions or involve non veterinary staff in sales transactions need to apply

for individual formal recognition to do so from the Agricultural Compounds and Veterinary Medicines (ACVM) Group of the New Zealand Food Safety Authority.

### Vets who are considered approved by ACVM

Veterinary registration and a current APC is sufficient for recognition/approval as a trader:

- if you only sell products directly to your clients as a result of veterinary consultations
- if you do not operate a retail outlet
- if you do not involve non-veterinary staff in sales transactions.

### Vets who need to apply for approval from ACVM

You need to apply to be a recognised/approved trader:

- if you operate retail outlets and/or involve non-veterinary staff

in sales transactions of restricted sale products

- if you offer or promote the selling/supply of restricted veterinary medicine products under a prescription or authorisation of another veterinarian.

### Operating plans required for recognition/approval

If you do have to be recognised/approved, you must supply information to ACVM in the form of an operating plan that documents how you meet the requirements of the ACVM Standard for Prescription Animal Remedy Veterinary Medicines and the conditions of registration of restricted sale products. It must also specify your trading sites and the person responsible for the trading activities. The plan will be reviewed as part of your recognition/approval.

### Next step if you are not recognised/approved

If you meet the criteria above and have not made an application for recognition/approval as a trader, please refer to <http://www.nzfsa.govt.nz/acvm/subject/approved-traders/index.htm> The current register of recognised/approved traders is on the ACVM website at <http://www.nzfsa.govt.nz/acvm/registers-lists/par-traders.htm>. If you are already recognised/approved, please check your details on the register and notify the ACVM Group of any changes.

# Illegal Practice

The Council reminds veterinarians that practising without an annual practising certificate (APC) or practising while unregistered is illegal. Registered veterinarians who practise without being registered or without holding a current practising certificate commit an offence and are liable on summary conviction to a fine up to \$10,000.

If you are not registered or are registered but do not hold an APC you are no longer able to practise as a veterinarian. This means that you:

- ~ cannot see clients/patients in a veterinary capacity, make referrals, provide diagnostic or other veterinary advice, report or treat etc
- ~ cannot sign certificates or official assurances in a veterinary capacity
- ~ cannot authorise, prescribe, dispense, recommend, sell or use restricted veterinary medicines
- ~ cannot officiate in a veterinary capacity at animal based events eg races, shows and competitions
- ~ cannot serve on any board, committee, association or organisation or act in any role, if appointment/membership expressly, or by implication, requires the person to be a registered veterinarian
- ~ cannot use the title veterinarian or use any words, titles, initials or abbreviations, that are intended to cause or that

may cause any person to believe that you are entitled to practise as a veterinarian eg discontinuing the use of existing letter head and business cards

- ~ cannot do anything as a registered veterinarian, or hold yourself out as still legally able to practise with respect to any of the Acts which refer to registered/practising veterinarians;

It is important that veterinarians take this matter very seriously given the significant consequences of not doing so. The Council is unlikely to pursue action in situations where a veterinarian has inadvertently overlooked the need to renew or take out a practising certificate and remedies this. However the Council will take action in situations where the veterinarian is aware (or should be aware) of the implications of not being registered or of not holding a practising certificate and these requirements are ignored. Each case will be considered on an individual basis taking into account the evidence but prosecution is likely where there is blatant disregard of the law.

The online Register of Veterinarians at [www.vetcouncil.org.nz/onlineReg.php](http://www.vetcouncil.org.nz/onlineReg.php) is the way to verify whether a veterinarian is legally able to practise. This is updated daily. If there is no entry for the person concerned this means that they are not registered or they do not hold a current APC. If there is an entry and the practising status is non practising the person concerned does not hold an APC and is not eligible to practise. Please advise the Council Registrar urgently in circumstances where it appears illegal practice may be occurring.

## Annual Practising Certificate (APC) Fees for 2010 – Your views sought

The Council is intending to increase the APC fee from \$275 to \$320 and is inviting comments from the profession before doing so.

The Council's statutory activities are funded by the practising certificate and registration application fees paid by veterinarians. Fees are set on a cost recovery basis while ensuring that an adequate reserve level is maintained to provide a buffer against unbudgeted events such as unforeseen court action or a spike in the number of complaint, competence assessment or disciplinary cases.

The APC fee was last increased nine years ago from \$208 to \$275. While the Council continues to carefully manage funds obtained from fees there have been substantial increases in the costs of goods and services over the last 9 years and more recently significant additional costs associated with developing and implementing the health and competence assurance provisions of the Veterinarians Act 2005 and conducting a major review of the Code of Professional Conduct.

The practising certificate fees veterinarians pay compare very favourably with those of other registered practitioners as seen in the table below:

Profession	APC \$	Number of practitioners
Pharmacists	495	3081
Social Workers	450	1964
Dentists	700	1863
Doctors	640	12,152
Nurses	96	45,000
Chiropractors	1100	384

In the last two years the Council has run a deficit budget and drawn down on reserves. At the same time we have signalled to the profession that a fee increase was likely in 2010. The projected deficit for the year ended 31 December 2009 is \$286,076 which will reduce reserves to \$517,925. The reduction in the level of reserves held is consistent with the direction from the Government for reserves held by entities such as VCNZ. The draft high level budget for 2010 is summarised below. This is based on current fee levels and will result in a further reduction of reserves to \$226,809.

## Annual Practising Certificate (APC) Fees for 2010 – Your views sought (cont.)

### VCNZ Draft 2010 Budget

#### Income

Annual Practising Fees	565,000
Registration Application Fees	47,500
Registration Examination Fees	65,000
Other income	31,500
<b>Total Income</b>	<b>709,000</b>

#### Expenditure

Employment Expenses	360,509
Operating Expenses	180,078
Registration Examination	65,000
AVBC fees and meetings	73,905
Council	91,700
Health	11,800
Complaints	73,500
Judicial Proceedings	39,220
Registration	32,270
Competence	22,500
Professional Standards	19,634
Communications	19,000
Liaison	11,000
<b>Total Expenditure</b>	<b>1,000,116</b>
<b>Net Profit (Loss)</b>	<b>(291,116)</b>
<b>Council funds at year end</b>	<b>226,809</b>

Going forward the Council needs to ensure that it has sufficient funding to meet its budgeted operational costs and unexpected discipline, competence and health cases. Council has previously agreed that a general reserve of \$400,000 should be held as a buffer against these unforeseen events that might otherwise cause the Council to become insolvent.

To maintain a reserve position of \$400,000 APC fees would need to increase by 45% to \$398 in 2010. Council is however unwilling to impose this level of increase at this time. It has been a difficult year financially for many and the economic outlook is still uncertain.

In recognition of this and following a review of its reserves policy and the Auditor General's guidelines the Council is intending to:

- reduce the level of its reserves
- increase the 2010/11 Annual Practising Certificate fee from \$275 to \$320 (rebated to \$300 for early payment)
- undertake a review of registration application and other fees to ensure they are set on a full cost recovery basis

A further increase in the APC fee may be required in 2011 but this will be examined in mid 2010 following the review of other fees.

The Council remains committed to ensuring that it operates in a cost effective manner while ensuring an appropriate balance is maintained between ensuring the effective discharge of its statutory responsibilities and affordability for veterinarians. Your views are very welcome. Please send any comments to the Council office by 31 October - preferably by email to janet.eden@vetcouncil.org.nz

## Veterinary Medicine Issues - Prohibited Substances

A recent case referred to a VCNZ Complaints Assessment Committee involved the use of a prohibited substance (chloramphenicol) in food producing animals.

The veterinarians involved knew that chloramphenicol was a prohibited substance but mistakenly believed that chloramphenicol eye ointment (Chlorsig) could be used in bovines and equines.

Eye ointments containing chloramphenicol are widely available and frequently used in human and small animal medicine but all products containing chloramphenicol are specifically banned from use in food producing animals.

Section 2.2.1 of the NZFSA Code of Practice on The Discretionary Use of Human and Veterinary Medicines

(Appendix 1 in the current VCNZ Code of Professional Conduct) specifically states that veterinarians must ensure that there is no specific ban precluding the medicine under consideration from being used on the intended species or in the intended way.

Veterinarians need to be familiar with this Code and the schedule of prohibited substances available on the NZFSA website at <http://www.nzfsa.govt.nz/acvm/topics/vet/prohibited.htm>

On the same site there is advice to veterinarians on prescribing policies to be followed when using the prohibited substance Phenylbutazone in equines. This is a prohibited substance but can be given to horses if the veterinarian is satisfied that the animal being treated is not going to enter the food chain.

## In brief.....what's Council been up to?

Meetings with NZFSA, NZVA and other affected parties to consider the future of the current ACVM Grooms Code of Practice	Trial tested proposed multi choice questions for the preliminary registration examination at the NZVA conference
Established a Preliminary Assessment Committee to consider concerns raised about veterinarians by those who do not wish to make a formal complaint	Norm Williamson, Deputy Chair participated in the accreditation visit to assess the Adelaide veterinary science degree course
Continued participation in meetings of the Agricultural Compounds and Veterinary Medicines Advisory Council (AVMAC)	Conducted an internal performance review using tools developed by the Queensland University of Technology
Appointed PKF Martin Jarvie as the new Council auditor	Discussions with Barry O'Neil Deputy Director General MAF Biosecurity and David Bayvel, Director Animal Welfare at the August Council meeting on issues of mutual interest
Meetings with Vet Nurses Association, Federated Farmers and AsureQuality to discuss proposal to regulate veterinary paraprofessionals	Established a second standing Complaints Assessment Committee comprised of Nick Twyford, Charlotte Cantley and Tania Turfrey (layperson)
Second meeting of the CPD working party which is developing proposals for compulsory professional development requirements for the issue of a practising certificate	Enhancements made to the public website to include a search function and the ability to identify veterinarians by practice

## Practising Cards to be Discontinued

In the last NewsBrief we sought your views on the proposal to discontinue issuing the current wallet sized annual practising certificate card. These cards are expensive to produce, vets lose them and the information on them can only be considered accurate on the day they were printed.

Seven responses were received with mixed feedback. Several vets advised they did not use the cards at all, while others wanted them to be retained as convenient proof of their veterinary registration –for example when purchasing restricted veterinary medicines or for audit purposes.

Council has concerns about external parties relying on the APC card as proof of a veterinarian's registration and practising status when the information on the card may not be current. Conditions may have been imposed on the veterinarian's practice during the year or registration or practising status may have been suspended or cancelled on request.

The only reliable source of accurate information about a veterinarian's registration and practising status is the online Register of Veterinarians at <http://www.vetcouncil.org.nz/onlineReg.php>. This is updated daily. Council office staff can also provide this information over the phone for those who are not near a computer.

Council has therefore agreed to discontinue issuing the cards. Instead veterinarians will receive an A4 certificate which will serve

as a GST tax receipt and acknowledgement of their recertification to practise. The certificate will state that the information printed on it was correct on the date of issue but that reference should be made to the online Register of Veterinarians for current practising status details.

At the same time we have amended the online practice search facility to enable the names and practising status details of the vets to be listed, and printed off, for each practice. This will assist with audit requirements.

We will also be advising veterinary medicine wholesalers that the wallet sized cards have been discontinued and reminding them of the need to check on the online Register of Veterinarians to confirm eligibility to purchase restricted veterinary medicines.

### Newly Registered Specialists

Congratulations to the following veterinarians who have recently gained specialist registration:

- ~ **Dr Peter Maguire**, Veterinary Neurology
- ~ **Dr Catherine Harvey**, Veterinary Anatomical Pathology
- ~ **Dr Robyn Gear**, Small Animal Medicine
- ~ **Dr Theresa McCann**, Small Animal Medicine

## Council reappointments

Three of the seven Council members are appointed by the Minister of Agriculture for terms of up to three years. These members may be reappointed but cannot serve on Council for more than 9 consecutive years.

The Minister has recently reappointed laymember Penny Mudford for a second term of three years and veterinarian Jim Edwards for a third term expiring on 7 April 2012

## Registration of Veterinary Paraprofessionals?

This article first appeared in the July issue of Vetscript and has been updated to include recent developments.

A consistent theme from NZVA conferences earlier in the year was strategic veterinary leadership and planning. Veterinarians leading to ensure good animal welfare outcomes. Veterinarians positioning themselves to provide clients with the expanded range of sophisticated and value added veterinary services they need to sustain and grow their businesses. These activities are compromised when the work focus is on reactive and task oriented activities.

New Zealand still has a rural veterinarian shortage. The latest annual workforce survey returns contain some alarming figures on the excessive hours some veterinarians are working. Young veterinarians are still becoming disillusioned and disengaged because of the long hours and routine technical nature of their work. Some are leaving the country or the profession.

In other industries, such as dentistry and pharmacy, para professionals play a major role in service provision by taking responsibility for the more routine and straightforward technical tasks. This frees dentists and pharmacists to concentrate on the more challenging work that their level of education equips them for. Trained and competent veterinary nurses and technicians can perform similar roles in the veterinary sector. Veterinary nurses are an established feature of companion animal practices, but the degree to which the full range of their skills and education is used varies considerably. Technicians are a more recent development but again the extent of the work they undertake varies. Some practices have been employing para professional staff to undertake a wider range of routine veterinary activities, but a significant untapped potential remains. For example appropriately trained para professionals could possibly perform valuable triage roles in the provision of after hours care and, with imminent changes to the classification of restricted veterinary medicines, be able to administer PAR II products under veterinary operating instructions.

Massey University has recognised the evolving nature of veterinary and para professional practice and the vital role veterinary nurses and technicians can play in complementing the work of veterinarians. Graduates of the new Bachelor of Veterinary Technology programme will be equipped with the skills for an expanded role in, for example, triage, advanced pain management, artificial insemination, Tb testing, imaging and ultrasound, herd synchronisation procedures and diagnostic sampling.

## Wine Winners

Many thanks to those attending the NZVA conference who helped test proposed multi choice questions for the National Veterinary Registration Examination.

*The winners of the wine were Jan Pape and Dan Schluter.*

Currently there is no requirement for any formal oversight of the work of veterinary para professionals. Although most veterinary nurses tend to work for veterinarians under supervision, some are running their own animal behaviour and grooming clinics. Veterinary technicians work within practices but also independently in their own right without any veterinary oversight.

There is significant potential for public confusion in identifying the differences between veterinary practices and businesses providing para veterinary services. Veterinary advice is likely being sought and given. Without any oversight by a veterinarian there is no mechanism for monitoring ongoing competence or formal provision for client's concerns to be addressed.

The trend for increasing numbers of independent businesses providing para professional veterinary services will continue. Currently there is no requirement for veterinary para professionals to hold any form of qualification. There is no clarity around what they can and cannot do which is exacerbated by a lack of consistency in training. The current unregulated situation poses risks to animal welfare and market access. There is evidence, for example, of inappropriate veterinary medicine administration and other techniques resulting in the death or significant harm to the animals concerned. There is increasing support for mitigating these risks by introducing registration for veterinary para professionals under an expanded Veterinary Council.

Registration mitigates risk by ensuring competence and fitness to practise at the point of registration and on an ongoing basis. It assures the public that the registered para professionals concerned are appropriately trained and competent and that there are accountability mechanisms in place to address concerns.

Registration of para professionals would provide clarity around the range of activities they can undertake through definition of scopes of practice. It would also promote greater delegation of routine veterinary tasks to para professionals whose training, competence and accountability would be certified via registration.

Internationally the trend is towards registration. The OIE – World Organisation for Animal Health – supports regulation and has introduced registration standards. OIE's position is that the tasks authorised for each category of veterinary para professional should be defined by the veterinary statutory body depending on qualifications and training and according to need.

Veterinary para professionals are already registered in a number of other countries including South Africa, Western Australia,

Ireland and some US States. RCVS has developed veterinary nursing standards and bylaws and maintains the “List of Veterinary Nurses’ while awaiting legislative changes to provide for statutory regulation.

The current Minister of Agriculture appears well disposed to the possibility of regulating veterinary nurses and technicians. The Veterinary Council has therefore been consulting with key affected parties with a view to gaining support for the development of a submission to the Minister seeking changes to the Veterinarians Act 2005 to provide for this.

The NZVA, along with its special interest branches has recently endorsed the proposal to amend the Veterinarians Act 2005 to

provide registration of veterinary technicians and nurses. The NZ Veterinary Nurses Council is supportive and discussions have also been held with Federated Farmers, MAF and AsureQuality on the proposals.

The Council is therefore proceeding to seek an amendment to the Act to provide the ability to make regulations to register specific para professional groups. This will enable a phased approach with initial priority being given to the regulation of technicians, including the new technology degree graduates and to veterinary nurses. Consideration of, and consultation over, the possible registration of other groups such as lay pregnancy scanners and those undertaking equine dentistry, laparoscopic AI and embryo transfer work can then follow.

## Key Themes from Complaints Assessment Committee Training

Members of the panel of veterinarians and laypersons who serve on Complaints Assessment Committees (CACs) attended a two day training programme in Wellington in early September.

CACs have a vital triage and screening role in considering complaints and concerns raised about the conduct, health and competence of individual veterinarians.

CACs consider complaints received about veterinarians, decide whether further investigation or referral to Council is indicated, and following any investigation decide on further action including:

- ~ recommending to Council that the veterinarian undergo a medical and/or competence assessment
- ~ recommending to Council, if the committee considers that the matter can be resolved with the agreement of the veterinarian, that conditions be placed on the veterinarian’s practice
- ~ instituting mediation between the veterinarian and complainant
- ~ providing recommendations to the veterinarian on ways to improve his or her practice
- ~ taking no further action
- ~ laying disciplinary charges in cases where the severity of the alleged breach of professional conduct standards indicates disciplinary sanction may be required

CAC activities must be conducted meticulously and diligently, with reference to the relevant statutory provisions and in accordance with the rules of natural justice. At all times the CAC must be aware that the decisions and recommendations it makes, affect people’s lives and livelihoods.

Robust and fair investigations carried out by CACs are an important part of professional self regulation and relate directly to the Council’s statutory purpose of protecting the public interest by ensuring that veterinarians are competent (and fit) to practise.

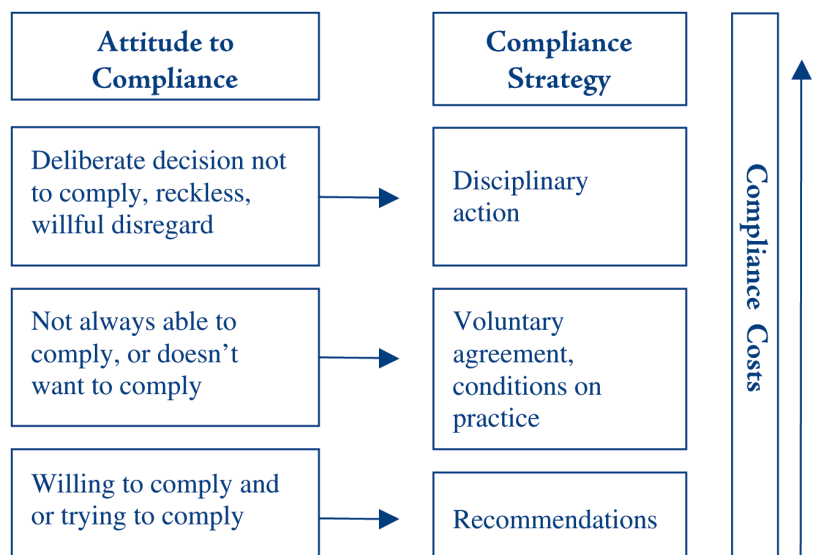
### Issues covered in the training included:

#### The alternatives to discipline to ensure a veterinarian’s competent practice

There is a growing recognition in New Zealand and internationally that protection of the public interest is best achieved by focusing on causes of adverse events, and learning from mistakes. Rather than seeking to ‘name, blame and shame’ individual practitioners through disciplinary proceedings the focus should generally be on attempting to resolve complainants’ concerns, identifying the causes of the behaviour or performance which led to the complaint and preventing recurrences through recommendations to the veterinarian, conditions on practice or referral to the Council’s competency and health processes. The training programme included presentations on the Council’s health and competency processes and on the Medical Council’s 13 years experience of competence provisions.

#### The approach to deciding outcome

Disciplinary processes should be reserved as a last resort measure for situations where there has been a serious departure from the required standard and where there is sufficient evidence to support laying disciplinary charges. The framework below, which is based on compliance theory, was presented at the training workshop.



# Key Themes from Complaints Assessment Committee Training (cont.)

## Natural Justice Principles

CACs must observe the rules of natural justice consistently and vigorously. Natural justice requires impartial adjudicators and fair hearings. CACs must consider and give due weight to all relevant information received, assess each case on an individual basis while ensuring consistency of decisions and balance the rights of the veterinarian to due process and the rights of actual and potential clients/animals to protections. CAC members need to satisfy themselves using the test of the balance of probabilities that they have sufficient evidence to assess the matter and have a sound basis for the decisions that they make.

## Legal requirements

As well as the statutory requirements of the Veterinarians Act the training programme included guidance on the identification and management of conflicts of interest, privacy and confidentiality considerations, disclosure requirements and timeliness issues

## Associated bodies

The programme included presentations on the role and functions of the Veterinary Protection Insurance Society, the NZFSA Compliance and Investigation Group and the VCNZ Judicial Committee.

## Recency of Practice Requirements

Veterinarians are required to seek Council approval before resuming practice after a five year break or commencing work in a veterinary field they have not practised in for five or more years.

The Council's focus is on assisting veterinarians who have not recently been in practice to return to the workforce, or switch disciplines, in a supported way, while at the same time protecting the public interest.

Each case is considered on an individual basis taking into account such factors as the extent of the applicant's veterinary experience, the length of time since they graduated, CPD activities and the level of supervision and collegial support available to assist re-entry.

**Council can place conditions on a veterinarian's practice to ensure a safe and supported re-entry. These include**

- ~ supervision - where another veterinarian/s monitors and reports on performance
- ~ oversight - where another veterinarian/s provides support and assistance for the purposes of professional development
- ~ practising in a stated capacity e.g. as an employee or in association with other veterinarians
- ~ auditing requirements
- ~ continuing professional development requirements, or a period of practical training or experience, or a formal course
- ~ (and in circumstances where the veterinarian has been away for practice for a significant period) requiring the person to sit and pass part or all of the registration examination.

## Should there be different requirements for recent graduates?

The current recency of practice requirements do not distinguish between new graduates and experienced veterinarians. This means that recent graduates who do not start practising for up to 5 years following graduation are able to commence practice without any formal support in place. Recent graduates can also switch from one area of practice to another, which they have never practised in, for up to 5 years following graduation.

The Council is uncomfortable with this situation. New graduates have important needs for support and oversight in making the transition from the university environment. They need early opportunities to cement the skills and knowledge gained in the university environment in practice. The Council has concerns about competence if this does not happen in the first year following graduation.

The Council is therefore intending to amend its recency of practice policy to ensure that sufficient measures are in place to protect the public interest and support new graduates who commence practice one or more years after graduation

The revised policy will require any recent graduate who has not practised for one or more years subsequent to graduation, or is seeking to practise in an area they have not practised in within one or more years subsequent to graduation, to seek the Council's approval before doing so.

**Please send any comments to the Registrar  
registrar@vetcouncil.org.nz by 31 October.**

## Grief Resources for Veterinarians

A number of the complaints received by the Council involve owners whose grief over the loss of an animal could have been handled more appropriately by the veterinarian concerned.

There are useful grief resources for veterinarians available at: [www.argusinstitute.colostate.edu/toc.htm](http://www.argusinstitute.colostate.edu/toc.htm)