



## **Policy on additional registered qualifications and the use of post nominal and courtesy titles**

### **1 Definition**

Additional qualifications are qualifications which have been approved by the Veterinary Council for entry on the Register of Veterinarians.

Post nominal titles are letters placed after the name of an individual to indicate that they hold qualifications, offices and honours or are members of organisations.

Courtesy titles are titles with no legal validity which are applied or assumed through custom, courtesy, or association, for example Mrs, Mr, Dr, Sir, Lady

### **2 Criteria for the inclusion of additional qualifications on the Register of Veterinarians**

A qualification will be approved for entry on the Register if:

- it has relevance to veterinary practice; and
- has been awarded following successful completion of a course of training or study by a body recognised by the Council

A wide interpretation of relevance to veterinary practice will be taken.

A pass in a licensing/registration examination is not considered an additional qualification and will only be included on the Register if this was the basis for New Zealand registration.

Civilian and military decorations will also be approved for inclusion on the Register of Veterinarians.

#### **2.1 Format for recording qualifications on the Register**

The Council's practice is to:

- record the abbreviated name of the qualification, the date of the award and issuing authority, together with any distinctions or honors gained, for the primary qualification by which registration has been gained eg BVSc Massey 2002 (Dist)
- record only the abbreviated name of any additional qualifications together with any distinctions or honors gained eg BSc (Hons)

### **3 Guidance on the use of post nominal titles**

The over use of post nominals can be confusing to the public and create an inflated view of a veterinarian's skills and knowledge.

As such the Council recommends to veterinarians when considering the public display of post nominal qualifications and honorary titles to limit these to:

- Undergraduate or postgraduate veterinary qualifications and New Zealand National Registration Examinations by virtue of which registration or specialist registration is awarded eg BVSc Massey 2004 or BVSc Belgrade 1993, NZNVE 2005
- Qualifications approved by the Veterinary Council as additional qualifications for inclusion on the Register of Veterinarians
- Membership of professional bodies (eg NZVA member).
- Civilian and military decorations

#### **4 Guidance on advertising particular interest areas**

Veterinarians may advertise their areas of particular interest, but, unless they are registered as a specialist should do so in conjunction with a common descriptor e.g. veterinarian with a particular interest in equine health.

Unless all veterinary practitioners working out of a practice are registered veterinary specialists or are undergoing a recognised specialist training programme under the direct supervision of a registered veterinary specialist, the trading name of the practice may not contain the word 'specialist' or an derivation of it. Such a practice may for instance be designated a Referral Centre.

#### **5 Use of courtesy title "Doctor"**

Use of the courtesy title 'Doctor' by veterinarians in New Zealand is optional. The legal requirement for the use of the title is that there must be no inference or suggestion that the user is a medical practitioner or qualified to practise general medicine unless registered as such under the Health Practitioners Competence Assurance Act (section 7, HPCA Act and section 20, Summary Offences Act 1981).

Further, the legal requirement is that, in the use of the courtesy title, the veterinarian must not purport to hold a doctorate or additional academic qualifications over and above those already held (section 20, Summary Offences Act 1981)

Veterinarians are entitled to use the courtesy title "Dr" provided that in doing so there is no inference or suggestion that they hold a PhD (when they do not) or are a medical practitioner.

Retired veterinarians are entitled to continue to use the courtesy title "Dr" provided they do so with the descriptor 'retired veterinarian'

#### **6 What this guidance means**

- Membership of professional bodies (such as MRCVS) will no longer be approved for inclusion on the register, unless achieved by examination.
- Veterinarians will not be prevented from advertising memberships, honorary titles and 'non approved' additional qualifications in their own material, but these will not appear on the public register of veterinarians.
- Veterinarians holding additional qualifications and titles which do not meet the new criteria for inclusion on the register will be encouraged to remove these from the register.
- Veterinarians are entitled to use the courtesy title "Dr" provided that in doing so there is no inference or suggestion that they hold a PhD (when they do not) or are a medical practitioner.
- Retired veterinarians can continue to use the courtesy title "Dr" provided they do so with the descriptor 'retired veterinarian'