



## Policy on Recency of Practice

### 1. Introduction

The principal purpose of the Veterinarians Act 2005 is to protect the public interest by ensuring that veterinarians are competent to practise. The Act provides the Council with mechanisms to ensure that practitioners are competent and fit to practise, not just at the point of registration but on an ongoing basis.

### 2. Legislation

Under the Veterinarians Act, 2005 applicants for registration and/or the issue of an annual practising certificate (APC) must satisfy the practising requirements of the Act before registration is approved or an APC issued.

The Council has prescribed minimum practising standards which include recency of practice requirements. All applicants for a practising certificate are required to provide the Council with information on their recency of practice. In the following situations, the Council, after consideration of the individual circumstances of the case, may propose to decline or place conditions upon the applicant's practising certificate (section 26(3)(c)):

- those who have not practised as a veterinarian for the last three consecutive years, or have not practised as a veterinarian for the last three consecutive years in the area in which they intend to practise
- those who hold a recognised qualification or a pass in a prescribed examination or assessment programme (section 6) but:
  - o have not practised as a veterinarian for one or more years subsequent to completing the course requirements for their primary veterinary qualification, or passing an approved registration examination or assessment programme; or
  - o have not practised for one or more years in the area in which they intend to practise, subsequent to completing the course requirements for their primary veterinary qualification or passing an approved registration examination or assessment programme”

### 3. Council approach to non recency of practice

Veterinarians are required to make declarations about their recency of practice when they apply for their annual practising certificate (APC).

However, with the exception of new graduate veterinarians and vets who have commenced practice within one year of passing an approved registration examination or assessment programme, veterinarians **must** contact the Council prior to taking up roles in a field of activity they have never practised in, or have not practised in during the previous three years. This requirement applies regardless of whether or not the veterinarian holds a current APC.<sup>1</sup>

Council considers recency of practice cases on an individual basis taking into account all relevant factors including but not limited to:

- the extent of work experience subsequent to completing the course requirements for their primary veterinary qualification, or passing an approved registration examination or assessment programme in the area/s the veterinarian is proposing to resume work in

---

<sup>1</sup> Note that this policy distinguishes between new graduates and experienced veterinarians. See Section 4 below

- the date the veterinarian ceased practice in the area/s they are proposing to resume (or start) practise in
- any relevant continuing professional development (CPD) the veterinarian has engaged in while not practising and the proposed CPD they intend to do to assist their return to practise (or practise in a new area/discipline)
- whether the veterinarian is proposing to resume work/switch to a different area of work in an environment where supervision and collegial support is available<sup>2</sup>
- whether the veterinarian is seeking to return to veterinary practice after a total break or is a practising veterinarian seeking to resume or commence practice in a non recent area

The Council's focus is on assisting veterinarians with non recent practice to return to the workforce, or switch to different areas of work, in a supported way, while at the same time protecting the public interest.

If the Council is not satisfied of the competence of the veterinarian, it considers whether their voluntary agreement to certain requirements or conditions on their practice would assure it that the public interest is protected. Dependent on the circumstances of the case, such requirements/conditions may include one or more of the following:

- supervision - where another veterinarian/s is required to monitor and report on performance
- oversight -where another veterinarian/s provides support and assistance for the purposes of professional development
- conditions that the veterinarian only practise in a stated capacity e.g. as an employee or in association with other veterinarians
- practice restrictions
- auditing requirements
- continuing professional development requirements, or a period of practical training or experience, or a formal course
- (and in circumstances where the practitioner has been away for practice for a significant period) requiring them to sit and pass an approved assessment or examination.

If it is intended that the conditions are publicly notified the veterinarian concerned has the right under the Act to make written comment or to meet with the Council before any final decisions are made.

Any conditions placed on practice make it clear that these relate to re-entry requirements and are not the result of any adverse disciplinary action.

#### **4. Specific requirements for new graduates and holders of a pass in an approved assessment programme**

This policy distinguishes between new graduates and experienced veterinarians.

New graduates from New Zealand and overseas and those who are seeking registration after having passed an approved assessment programme such as the National Veterinary Examination (NVE) have particular needs for support and oversight in making the transition from the university or overseas practising environment.

Sufficient measures need to be in place to protect the public interest and support those who do not commence practice upon graduating or passing an approved assessment programme such as NVE.

---

<sup>2</sup> Note Council's acceptance of the adequacy of the MPI Verification Services Induction Programme - see Section 6 below.

As such the requirements for individual Council consideration apply in circumstances where the person:

- has not practised within one year of graduating; or
- has not practised within one year of passing an approved registration examination or assessment programme.

#### **5. Switching to a new field of veterinary work**

This policy applies to those who have not practised at all **and** to those who are seeking to practise in a field of activity that they have never or not recently, practised in.

Council has noted that those seeking to switch to a new area of veterinary work are more likely to have maintained competence in the generic competencies required for veterinary practice than those who have not practised at all. Council will take this into account in deciding what, if any, voluntary agreements or conditions on practice might be required in circumstances where the veterinarian is:

- seeking to resume practise in an area they have not practised for three or more years; or
- seeking to practise in an area they have not practised in their first or subsequent years of practice

#### **6. Veterinarians taking up Ministry for Primary Industries Verification Services (MPI VS) roles**

Council is currently satisfied that the training programme provided by MPI Verification Services is sufficient to upskill and support veterinarians commencing verification roles and as such that the public interest is protected. On that basis veterinarians taking up verification roles with MPI are not required to provide Council with detailed information about the training they will receive, but are still required to submit other information in compliance with this policy, as set out above. Council will review the continued sufficiency of the MPIVS training programme every three years.

#### **Related documents**

- Supervision protocol template
- Supervision report template

Policy reviewed, amended and confirmed August 2014