



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. These state that *“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 gaining registration; or*
 - o *have not practised for one or more years in the area in which they intend to practise subsequent to gaining registration”*

3. Council approach to non recency of practice

Each application for a practising certificate, re - registration or to work in a new field of activity from an applicant who falls within the above criteria is considered by the Council on an individual basis¹. In considering each application the Council takes into account all relevant factors including but not limited to:

- The extent of the applicant’s veterinary experience
- The length of time since they graduated
- Any relevant continuing professional development (CPD) the applicant has engaged in while not practising and the proposed CPD they intend to do to assist in their return to practise (or practise in a new area/discipline)
- Whether the applicant is proposing to resume work/switch to a different area of work in an environment where supervision and collegial support is available

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 an applicant, it considers whether the applicant requires conditions on their practice. Dependent on the circumstances of the case, such conditions may include one or more of the following:

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

- 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 a person 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 the person to sit and pass part or all of the registration examination.

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 a person's practice make it clear that these relate to re-entry requirements and are not the result of any 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 New Zealand National Veterinary Examination (NZNVE) 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 NZNVE.

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, 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

Related documents

- Supervision protocol template
- Supervision report template