



Guidance on the 2012/13 Annual Practising Certificate (APC) Application and Workforce Survey

1. Who should complete the APC application form?

You need to complete the relevant sections of this APC application form, and return it to the Council by the due date, with the relevant fee, if you:

- are seeking to practise as a veterinarian in New Zealand from **1 April 2012** (fee required).
- wish to remain on the public Register of Veterinarians in a non practising capacity (fee required)
- are permanently retired from practice but wish to remain on the public Register of Veterinarians (no fee required)
- are seeking to have your registration put on hold (no fee required)

2. Who needs an APC?

If you are registered with the Veterinary Council and are seeking to practise from **1 April 2012** you must hold a practising certificate.

The Veterinary Council defines practice in this context as wider than clinical practice to include reporting or giving advice in a veterinary capacity, regulatory and compliance functions, teaching, consultancy, research and management roles, given that such roles influence clinical practice and impact on the public interest.

Note that if you are not seeking to return to practice in New Zealand until later in the year, you can delay renewing your practising certificate until that time – see Section 3 c) below.

It is illegal to practise without holding a current practising certificate. Those who do so are liable on summary conviction to a fine of up to \$10,000. Other consequences of not holding a current practising certificate are that you cannot carry out certification and prescribing activities or undertake significant surgical procedures. You are also unlikely to be covered by your indemnity insurer. If you are insured with VPIS we are aware that the policy does not provide cover for events which occurred when the veterinarian did not hold a current practising certificate.

Do not allow your practising certificate to expire before applying for a new one

3. Completing the APC form

a) Question 1: Contact details

The Council collects personal information from you to administer the provisions of the Veterinarians Act and to undertake an Annual Workforce Survey. In collecting and handling personal information the Council will comply with the Veterinarians Act 2005 and the Privacy Act 1993.

The Veterinarians Act and associated regulations require certain information about registered and practising veterinarians to be included on the Register of Veterinarians (the register) and made publicly available. This includes your name, registration status, and qualifications. The Act also requires veterinarians to provide the Council with current contact and practice addresses.

The register is made publicly available as an online searchable facility on the Council's website.

Please carefully check all of the information on the first page of the APC application form and mark changes where required.

Note that only one address can be shown on the public register. As such many veterinarians choose to use their practice address as their contact address.

b) Payment Section

The APC fee for the 2012/13 practising year has increased from \$420 to \$440. For background on the fee increase please refer to the October 2011 issue of VCNZ NewsBrief at: <http://www.vetcouncil.org.nz/news.php>

Incentive rebate for early payment along with receipt of completed APC application form

The fee for renewal of your practising certificate is \$440.00 (inc GST) and must be received by **28 March 2012** to ensure your legal right to practise from 1 April 2012. This payment can be rebated to \$420.00 (inc GST) only if we have received your completed form and the amount has been banked into the Council's bank account or has been deposited in the Council's post office box by the end of the business day on **29 February 2012**. Full payment (\$440.00) is required (no negotiation) if payment or completed form arrives at any point after 29 February 2012.

Direct Credit Option

We prefer veterinarians to pay by cheque or credit card as this ensures that the completed APC form and payment are matched. However the Council will accept direct credit payments to its BNZ bank account 02-0506-0072992-000 from those who cannot pay by cheque or credit card.

If paying by direct credit you must:

- fill in the relevant fields on the APC form
- include your registration number as the reference on the direct credit authorisation so that we know whose fee is being paid
- send the completed APC form to the Council at the same time as payment is made

Where direct payment is made for several veterinarians, we *require the completed APC forms to be sent to the Council at the same time payment is made* and an excel spreadsheet of names, registration numbers and amounts paid to be provided separately to vet@vetcouncil.org.nz or phone 04 4739600.

c) Question 2: Intentions for 2012/13

Please indicate your practice intentions for the 2012/13 practising year. If you intend practising in New Zealand from **1 April 2012** you must hold a current practising certificate. (Refer to section 2 above for the definition of practising)

If you are not intending to practise in New Zealand during the practising year ending 31 March 2013 or intend resuming practice later in the practising year please select one of the other options. Refer to the APC and fees section of the Council's website www.vetcouncil.org.nz for the APC application form and details of the prorated APC fees.

What is the difference between non practising, retired and on hold?

None of these categories entitle you to practise as defined in section 2 above. Practice includes treating animals and authorising restricted veterinary medicines.

However with non practising status:

- your details remain on the public (non practising) Register of Veterinarians and are updated on request
- you remain current on Council issues and requirements through receipt of regular Council publications and documents
- you continue to receive an annual practising certificate application

Those who have requested their registration to be placed on hold (with no fee) do not appear on the public Register or receive Council communications.

The other (retired) category is for permanently retired veterinarians. This allows their details to remain on the public (non practising) Register for no fee. However those who wish to receive Council communications must pay the non practising fee of \$58.

d) Question 3: Recency of Practice

To be issued with a practising certificate the Council must be satisfied that you meet the practising requirements of the Act. These include recency of practice requirements.

Please provide full details of your practice intentions, work history and CPD activities if:

- you are seeking to resume veterinary practice after a break of three or more years; or
- you have not practised within one year of graduation; or
- you have not practised within one year of passing an approved registration examination or assessment programme; or
- you have commenced work, since you were last issued with an APC, in a field of veterinary activity you have never practised in or have not practised in for three years or more; or
- you are seeking to commence work in a field of veterinary activity you have never practised in or have not practised in for three years or more

A detailed CV format is recommended.

Please refer to the APC section of the Council's website www.vetcouncil.org.nz for a copy of the Council's policy on recency of practice and feel free to contact the Council Registrar if you require further information.

e) Question 4: Overseas Practice

If you have been practising overseas since you were last issued with an APC, the Council needs to be satisfied that no issues arose in the overseas jurisdiction which might affect your eligibility for a New Zealand practising certificate.

If you have practised outside New Zealand or Australia during the year commencing 1 April 2011, and did not provide a letter of good standing (LGS) on your return to New Zealand, please immediately arrange for a LGS to be sent directly to the Veterinary Council from each overseas jurisdiction you practised in.

If you practised in Australia during the year commencing 1 April 2011, and did not provide a letter of good standing (LGS) on your return to New Zealand, the Council can verify your good standing status directly with the relevant Australian Board. If you do not agree to the Council contacting the Australian Board (s), please immediately arrange for a LGS to be sent directly to the Veterinary Council from each Australian jurisdiction you practised in.

This requirement also applies to those veterinarians who are currently practising overseas but wish to be issued with a New Zealand practising certificate. Note that you will also be required to provide a second (current) LGS on your return to New Zealand.

f) Question 5: Fitness to Practise

Before issuing you with an APC the Council needs to be satisfied that you are fit to practise. Matters that may bring a veterinarian's fitness to practise into question include mental or physical conditions (such as neurological, psychiatric, depressive or addictive disorders and physical deterioration

due to injury, disease or degeneration); adverse disciplinary findings; formal competence enquiries; criminal convictions and any investigations that may result in disciplinary or criminal proceedings.

If you answer yes to any of the questions in this section please provide full details in a separate sealed envelope marked confidential to the Registrar, with your name and registration number noted. Include copies of disciplinary findings and orders, competency findings, conviction notices and medical reports where relevant. All sensitive information disclosed will be dealt with very carefully, observing confidentiality and privacy principles.

Health Conditions

You must disclose any mental or physical condition **with the potential** to affect your fitness to practise. If you are in any doubt declare it or contact the Council Registrar for advice.

Please provide full details of the condition and its duration in a separate sealed envelope as set out above. You have the option of providing at this time, any discharge reports, together with the name and contact details of your treating practitioner. The application form asks for your consent to the Registrar contacting your treating practitioner(s) for further information regarding the declared condition. You may elect not to provide consent at this stage, preferring instead for the Registrar to contact you first. If you select this option there may be a delay in issuing your APC while advice is obtained from the Council's Health Committee.

Health declarations are managed by the Registrar and the Health Committee. The approach is non-judgemental, rehabilitative and confidential, except in extreme cases where the veterinarian refuses to co-operate and the public interest is threatened.

General experience is that no further action is required for the majority of APC health declarations. In a small number of cases a voluntary agreement may be put in place with this early intervention enabling veterinarians with a treatable illness to keep practising while receiving treatment.

Any correspondence with you concerning responses to the fitness to practise section will be sent to your contact address in envelopes marked "Private and Confidential." You may wish to nominate an alternative address for correspondence on any fitness to practise issues.

g) Question 6: Public Register information

The Council will only publish your contact address, the name of your practice or employing organisation, your phone, and e-mail details if you agree. As such Question 6 seeks your permission to publish these details. Please complete this question carefully bearing in mind that if you tick "yes" the relevant information will be available online to the public.

h) Question 7: Continuing Professional Development (CPD)

Participation in Continuing Professional Development (CPD) has been prescribed by Council (NZ Gazette 31/3/2011) as a minimum practising standard for the issue of an APC. The Council now requires all practising veterinarians to participate in relevant CPD activities. Detailed guidance on the requirements of the new CPD framework is available on our website at:

<http://www.vetcouncil.org.nz/documentation/CPDInformationforVets.pdf>

Under the new CPD framework that commenced 1 April 2011 vets are required to retain detailed records of their CPD activities which may be required for compliance monitoring at the end of the three year CPD cycle, in December 2013. As such, we no longer require veterinarians to submit a detailed CPD return with their APC application. However, information on the level and type of CPD undertaken is required.

i) Declaration (8)

We require all veterinarians to complete the APC application form carefully and honestly. False declarations or representations may be treated as a disciplinary matter.

A New Zealand resident veterinarian must sign and return the application form. The application form may be signed by proxy for a veterinarian currently residing overseas.

j) Workforce Survey (9)

The Council appreciates your co-operation and values your contribution in completing this survey. The information gained will be used to monitor workforce trends and provide a valuable contribution to workforce development and planning. It will not be published in a form that can identify individual respondents.

Complete relevant questions 9.2 – 9.7 only if you were engaged in veterinary practice (which includes non clinical work) in New Zealand during the year ended 31 December 2011 (Refer to section 2 above for the definition of practising)

Question 9.2: We need your physical workplace location in order to produce accurate data on the geographical distribution of the workforce. Please enter the physical address of the workplace you mostly practiced from in 2011 and include the post code.

Question 9.3: This asks for details on your employment type(s), role(s), work type(s) and the hours you work per week by work type.

- If you have difficulty identifying a typical week estimate the % of time spent over the year in each work type and apply this to the average hours worked per week.
- In each column record your employment type, role and work type and the hours worked by work type. If you have only one employment type, role and work type you will only need to fill in one column
- If you need more than the four columns provided record details for the work types you work the most hours in, and enter any additional hours worked per week in the box provided
- If you select OT (other) as a code please specify what this is in the relevant box.
- Please use the detailed work type codes. Only use the ‘collapsed’ categories of MX, PA and RG if it is not possible to record all your work types or if too difficult to assign hours worked to each work type.

Examples:

If you are a clinician working in a group private practice providing services for companion and life style block animals with some practice management duties and on call responsibilities one night a week (which in the previous week required 5 hours work while on call) you would fill in the form like this:

Employment code	PP	PP	PP		
Role Code	CL	CL	CL		
Work type code	CA	LI	PM		Additional hours worked per week in any other work types
Hours worked per week by work type	35	5	5		0
Total hours worked for the week =					45
Hours on-call but not doing work					9

If you are self employed providing policy advice services to a government agency you would fill in the form like this:

Employment code	SE				
Role Code	CO				
Work type code	OT – policy advice				Additional hours worked per week in any other work types
Hours worked per week by work type	35				0
Total hours worked for the week =					35
Hours on-call but not doing work					0

