



World Veterinary Association

WVA/doc/010/007

PRESIDENT:

Dr Tjeerd Jorna
(The Netherlands)

VICE-PRESIDENT

Dr Faouzi Kechrid
(Tunisia)

VICE-PRESIDENT

Dr Duane Landals
(Canada)

**IMMEDIATE PAST
PRESIDENT**

Prof Leon Russell
(USA)

COUNCILLORS:

Africa

Dr Yassir Yousif Alian
(Sudan)

Middle East/North Africa

Prof Nouredine Ben
Chehida (Tunisia)

America (North)

Dr John Drake
(Canada)
Dr Lyle P. Vogel
(USA)

America (Latin)

Dr Luis Zarco
(Mexico)

East Asia and Oceania

Dr Jakob Malmo
(Australia)
Dr Pratuang Sudsakorn
(Thailand)

Europe

Dr Heidemarie Coreth
(Austria)
Dr Marc Janssens
(Belgium)
Dr Robert M. Stevenson
(U.K.)
Dr Karin Östensson
(Sweden)

Associate Members

Dr Jean Hokayem
(EAVA)
Dr Patricia V. Turner
(IACLAM)

WVA Position on

GLOBAL VETERINARY DAY-ONE COMPETENCES

Tjeerd JORNAⁱ, Patricia V.TURNERⁱⁱ and Karin OSTENSSONⁱⁱⁱ.

KEYWORDS: World Veterinary Association, Veterinarian, Global Day-one-competence, Minimum-requirements, Curriculum,...

INTRODUCTION

The Day-One Competences are the combination of knowledge, skills and experience that new veterinary graduates need to possess for a safe start entering the veterinary profession and to enable them to perform most of the duties that they will encounter. World-wide, the profession as a whole has to define realistically which Day- One Competencies they expect new graduates to have. The World Veterinary Association [WVA] is best placed to take the lead in guiding this process.

The level of the global veterinary Day-One Competences will depend on the quality of the veterinary Education and Training offered by the veterinary Faculties or Schools. Currently many schools do not meet the requirements of adequate veterinary training.

In 1998 one of the objectives of WVA was to have a harmonized systems of evaluation/accreditation of Veterinary Education and Training throughout the world. However, such systems have only been implemented on two continents with a third to follow soon.

The WVA has recognized difficulties of achieving global evaluation/accreditation. Global evaluation/accreditation is only achievable with great financial and advisory support of many parties. An alternative approach for WVA that might be more practical would be the development of Day-One Competences.

World Veterinary Association (AISBL)

Rue Defacqz 1, 1000 Brussels, Belgium

Tel: +32 25337022 - Fax: +32 2537282828

E-mail: secretariat@worldvet.org - Internet: <http://www.worldvet.org>

THE ROLE OF VETERINARIANS

Veterinarians should be able to perform the responsibilities given to them by the Society. Obviously these duties may vary per region.

Veterinarians have to play a central role in the triangle formed by animals, animal owners and Society. This role is based on their in-depth comparative training in science, knowledge, skills, ethics and veterinary attitude and aptitude and it has to be objective, independent, and impartial. There should be a clear distinction between veterinarians and para-professionals/veterinary technicians, who fulfil an important but supportive role.

EVOLVING VETERINARY EDUCATION

In view of the role of veterinarians and in reference to the Conference “Evolving Veterinary Education for a safer world” WVA wishes to address the following three issues:

1. the minimum requirements for veterinary education for schools;
2. the expectation of the profession regarding veterinary training
3. the expectation of the Society for new graduates.

Why do we need Day- One Competence world-wide?

1. The minimum requirements

The WVA has drafted its vision on the minimum requirements for veterinary education and the process is still ongoing as part of a new Veterinary Education Policy Paper. The most important training-issues for graduates are to control the major diseases of domestic animals and to carry out food inspection, to ensure the safety of food of animal origin, to ensure animal health and welfare, to control zoonotic diseases, and to conduct research on important topics to animal health, animal welfare and public health, including issues related to environmental and eco-system health.

WVA believes it would be sensible and pragmatic to work with globally recognised Day-One Competences. Harmonized outcomes would offer transparency for the profession and increase societal confidence in veterinarians as a whole.

2. Expectations of the profession .

The veterinary profession requires a level of education and training provided by the schools that ensures solid Day-One Competences to new graduates for a real professional and independent start for the various duties required daily of veterinarians. For graduates taking employment within institutions there is often mentoring and guidance available by experienced colleagues. For new graduates going into practice this aspect of oversight may be often missing. Experienced practitioners often complain that the skill level of new graduates is insufficient. However Society expects a higher level of skills from veterinarians than undergraduate education can offer. Veterinary colleges must respond by providing graduates with both knowledge and applied skills.

Day-One Competence is a Start Competence: the beginning of a professional competence.

3. Expectation of the Society.

The role of the veterinarian in Society is to act as a link between animals, animal owners and Society, as a whole including consumers. Citizens should be able to rely on the high standard of veterinary education and professionalism. . Many people do not recognise the entire scope of veterinary responsibilities. They only know the practitioner for their animals. Veterinarians have a lot of duties particularly related to humans [public health] that we have to make known to the Society. Veterinarians should better communicate their contribution to the health and welfare of animals and people.

DAY-ONE COMPETENCES

Adequacy of the curriculum content should be assessed by objective outcomes both during and at the conclusion of the veterinary educational program. By the end of the program of education, veterinary students should understand and /or be able to apply:

- Biological principles and mechanisms underlying animal health and disease, from the molecular and cellular levels to organismal and populations manifestations.
- Normal physiologic function, homeostasis, pathophysiology, and the natural history and manifestations of important animal diseases, both domestic and foreign.
- To obtain adequate case histories, properly store and retrieve medical information
- To communicate effectively with clients, colleagues and authorities.
- Theory and practice of medicine and surgery applicable to a broad range of species. This must include disease prevention, the ability to apply and interpret physical and laboratory diagnostic methods including diagnostic imaging, diagnostic pathology, biosecurity, therapeutic intervention including surgery, and patient management and care involving individual animals and populations.
- Principles of epidemiology, zoonoses, food safety, the interrelationship of animals and the environment, and the contribution of the veterinarian to public health.
- An understanding of the animal husbandry systems in which they may work, along with a thorough understanding of the factors limiting animal health, welfare and production within these systems.
- Professional ethics and delivery of professional services to the public.
- Knowledge, skills, values, attitudes, aptitudes and behaviours necessary to address responsibly the health and well being of animals in the context of ever-changing societal expectations.
- An ability to use their knowledge to investigate animal health and production issues and to continually seek new knowledge to help improves their ability to provide high quality veterinary care. That is, the recognition of the need for life-long learning and improvement must be part of their training culture.

Even when the veterinary education fulfils these objectives new graduates will experience gaps in practical skills, day to day veterinary medicine, and experience in practice management. This can be reasons for a difficult transition from education to practice.

CONCLUSIONS.

The three main issues:

1. The minimum requirements for veterinary education for schools.
Veterinarians should graduate with most of the skills and knowledge that they will require to operate as new graduates. They will have undertaken most of the basic technical procedures and will have a high level of theoretical knowledge, but it should be recognised that they will need experience in practice to hone this knowledge and skills to a level required in the practising profession.
2. The expectation of the profession of the veterinary training. The profession has the right to expect that new graduates will have the basic skills and knowledge required to practice veterinary medicine in any form, but must also recognise as that they will need assistance and mentoring in the first months of their career. WVA agrees that Day-One Competences are the start competences which, if the new graduate is given reasonable support, will allow the graduate to rapidly develop into a veterinarian who will meet the needs of both profession and Society.
3. The expectations of Society for new graduates.
Society has the right to expect a high standard of veterinary care and expertise whether their animals are seen by a new graduate or a more experienced graduate. A new graduate, given appropriate mentoring and support, must be able to meet this requirement.

ⁱ World Veterinary Association, President, Sydwege 52, 9204 KG Drachten, Netherlands.

ⁱⁱ Dept of Pathobiology, Associate Professor, Ontario Veterinary College University of Guelph, ON N1G 2W1, Canada

ⁱⁱⁱ Dept of Clinical Sciences, Division of Reproduction, Associate Professor, Swedish University of Agricultural Sciences, p.o.Box 7054, SE-75007, Uppsala, Sweden.