

## Introduction

The object of the *Veterinary Practice Act 2003* (Act) (s 3) is to regulate the profession and thereby promote the welfare of animals, ensure consumers are aware of the competencies required of veterinary practitioners, ensure veterinary practitioners practise in accordance with current standards, and provide public health protection. The Act (s 33(e1)) also requires details of any continuing professional development undertaken by the veterinary practitioner to be reported in the Annual Return. The Board has determined that veterinary practitioners must attain 60 continuing professional development (CPD) points every 3 years including a minimum of 15 structured points.

## Purpose

The Board appreciates that veterinary practitioners may exit the profession for a variety of reasons. The purpose of this policy is to ensure that the objectives of the Act and *Veterinary Practice Regulation 2013* (Regulation) are achieved and that there is a consistent and equitable approach to the management of veterinary practitioners who have exited the profession for more than one year and seek to return to practice. Specifically, this policy is aligned with clause 19 of the Veterinary Practitioners Code of Professional Conduct (schedule 2 of the Regulation) which states that before undertaking practice in a particular area of veterinary science, a veterinary practitioner must ensure that he or she has the knowledge and competence necessary to practise in that area. Practice is defined as any role, whether remunerated or not, in which the individual uses their skills and knowledge as a veterinarian.

## Policy

The Board will consider applications for registration or for restoration to the Register from veterinarians who have been absent from the profession for more than one year based upon their length of absence from practice, their level of experience prior to the absence from practice, any continuing professional development (CPD) attained during their absence, and their intended role and field of practice.

## Procedure

- i. Veterinarians with 2 years or more prior experience and absent from practice for less than 3 years:
  - a. The veterinarian must complete the CPD requirements that would have been required had registration been maintained prior to the commencement of practice
  - b. CPD requirements are pro-rata (5 structured and 15 unstructured points per year of absence)
  - c. CPD must be completed in areas relevant to the intended role and field of practice
- ii. Veterinarians with 2 years or more prior experience and absent from practice for more than 3 years:
  - a. The veterinarian must complete the CPD requirements for one 3 year CPD cycle prior to the commencement of practice
  - b. CPD must be completed in areas relevant to the intended role and field of practice
  - c. The veterinarian must complete an additional 3 year CPD cycle within the next 12 months after which the veterinarian will enter the standard 3 year CPD cycle
  - d. The veterinarian may be required to work under the general supervision of another veterinarian with full registration for a period of up to 6 months
- iii. Veterinarians with less than 2 years prior experience:
  - a. The veterinarian must complete the CPD requirements prior to the commencement of practice as per points i. and ii. above depending upon the length of absence from practice
  - b. CPD must be completed in areas relevant to the intended role and field of practice
  - c. The veterinarian must work under the general supervision of another veterinarian with full registration for a period of up to 12 months
- iv. Veterinary practitioners supervising veterinarians under circumstances above must submit a report detailing the supervised veterinary practitioner's competence in the required areas for employment every 3 months. For the field of clinical practice these areas must include:
  - a. Medical and surgical case management
  - b. Communication skills with clients and colleagues
  - c. Compliance with record keeping requirements
  - d. Compliance with practice protocols

- v. Veterinary practitioners who are returning to practice in NSW after practising in a jurisdiction within the last 12 months without compulsory CPD will meet the requirements for registration or restoration through the submission of a satisfactory Letter of Professional Standing by the relevant Board.
- vi. The Board strongly recommends that veterinarians changing from one field of practice to another develop a plan for professional development to cover their first 3 years in this new field.

### Monitoring

- i. Applications for registration or restoration to the Register must be accompanied by a satisfactory Letter of Professional Standing from a current jurisdiction or written statement describing their circumstances covering the period of absence from practice.
- ii. All applications for registration or restoration to the Register from veterinarians who have been absent from practice for more than one year must be approved by the Board.

### Training and Communication

The Registrar is responsible for ensuring that all persons who are involved in making a decision in relation to returning to practice receive training in the implementation of this policy.

### Conflict of Interest

Members of the Board must comply with the Code of Conduct for Board Members in relation to decisions regarding returning to practice requirements.

### Review

This policy shall be reviewed annually or as required to ensure that it remains appropriate to the operations of the Board and compliant with the relevant legislation.