



Accreditation Standards Review

Day One
Competencies
Review:
Phase 1 Consultation
Report



1. Introduction

The Australasian Veterinary Boards Council (AVBC) began a review of the approved accreditation standards ('the standards') for entry-level programs in early 2022. The standards are used to evaluate veterinary education and training programs that lead to general registration as a veterinarian in Australia and New Zealand. In parallel to that project, a review of AVBC's Day One Competencies (D1Cs) (previously known as AVBC Attributes of Veterinary Graduates) also commenced. The review of the D1Cs is being conducted by a Task Group appointed by AVBC.

In Phase 1 of the D1Cs review, AVBC invited stakeholders of veterinary services and veterinary education across Australia and New Zealand, to comment on the first draft of new competencies that were created by the Task Group. The purpose of this document is to report on the outcomes of this first phase of consultation.

The review will now enter a second phase, with additional opportunities for consultation. Updates will be posted to the [AVBC website](#).

2. Background

- 2.1. D1Cs describe the knowledge, skills, values and attitudes veterinarians must possess on "Day One" to serve the interests of their patients and society, and to meet accreditation and the profession's requirements.
- 2.2. The AVBC has an essential role in determining the "standard of proficiency" for veterinary graduates practising in Australia and New Zealand. The standard for registration is a key benchmark that affects the approval of veterinary degree programs in Australasia and internationally. AVBC ensures accredited programs meet the standard for registration using the [Accreditation Standards](#). The D1Cs help inform these Accreditation Standards and provide guidance to students, schools, and the profession about what can reasonably be expected of a graduate at the start of their career.
- 2.3. To update AVBC's D1Cs, the Task Group began by methodically reviewing the current AVBC Attributes of Veterinary Graduates and evaluated the D1Cs established by other international veterinary organisations. Building upon the strong foundations of the Royal College of Veterinary Surgeons (RCVS) Day One Competences (2021), the American Association of Veterinary Medical College's (AAVMC) Competency-Based Veterinary Education (CBVE) Framework (2018), as well as European Association of Establishments for Veterinary Education (EAEVE) and World Organisation for Animal Health (WOAH, ex-OIE) Day One Competencies, the Group refined those competencies that were relevant to the Australasian veterinary graduate and added competencies in areas that were identified as deficient. To this end, the Task Group drafted 41 competencies that sit within 9 skills domains.

3. Phase One Consultation Process

- 3.1. The consultation was open for four weeks (6 July 2022 – 3 August 2022).
- 3.2. Respondents were invited to provide feedback via an online survey; emailed responses were also accepted.
- 3.3. Invitations to participate in the survey were sent out by email to a wide range of stakeholders in Australia and New Zealand, including, but not limited to, educational providers, students, professional associations, employers, government departments and accreditation assessors. Information was also published on the AVBC website.
- 3.4. Dr Cristy Secombe, Head of Public and Veterinary Affairs at the AVA, organised a teleconference with the Task Group. Representatives from AVA's Special Interest Groups (SIGs) had the opportunity to provide their perspectives on the draft competencies. Minutes taken by AVBC staff were added to the stakeholder feedback responses.

4. Review of feedback

- 4.1. Qualitative analysis was conducted on all feedback, including comments received in the consultation. Each response was carefully assessed and mapped to one of the following categories:
 - General feedback
 - Domain-specific feedback
 - Competency-specific feedback
- 4.2. Responses were reviewed in relation to arguments supporting and opposing the recommended competencies, or requests for further clarification or context, or suggestions on how the competency should be reworded.
- 4.3. In setting out the analysis in the report that follows, some quotations from stakeholders have been included where they succinctly illustrate recurrent themes that appeared.

5. Respondents

There were 162 survey responses were received. Two written submissions were provided from external stakeholders (AVA and RSPCA) and 5 survey respondents also provided additional comment via email or Zoom teleconference upon request.

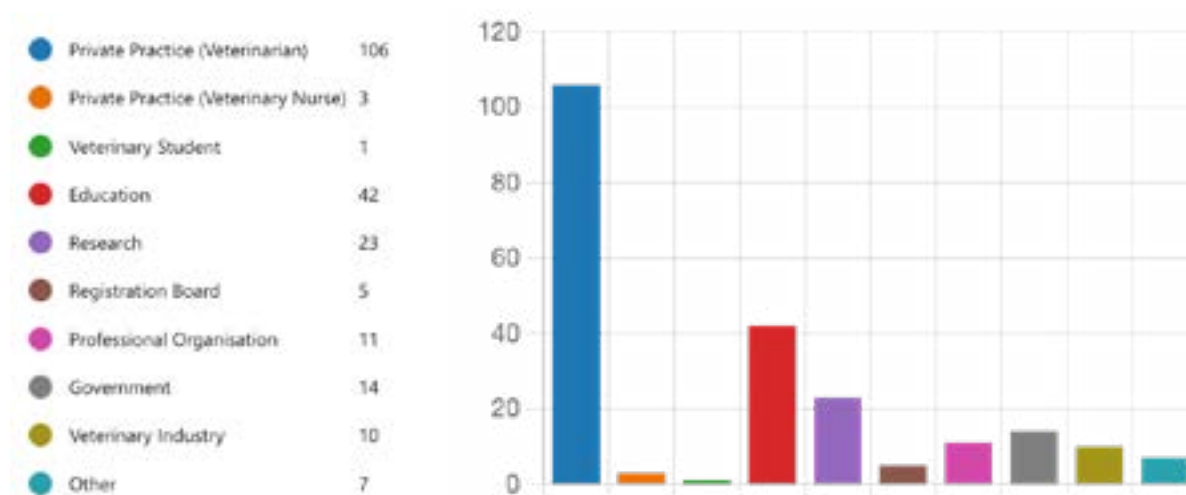


Figure 1: Consultation responses by respondent type

6. A threshold for consensus

- 6.1. Based on a modified Delphi approach, an overview of consensus for the D1Cs was sought using a yes/no design for each competency with the option for further input. The Task Group's cut-off for consensus was 70% or greater "Yes" responses.
- 6.2. In general, respondents were very supportive of all 41 of the new draft competencies. All competencies met the initial cut-off for agreement (70%), so, in the process of review, the consensus level was raised to 90%. Competencies with agreement less than 90% were evaluated carefully to determine if the competency required restructuring, rewording or the addition of a contextual description.

7. Results

The Yes/No percentage results for each competency follows. The values that were below the threshold for consensus (90%) are highlighted in **bold**. The Task Group focused on these competencies when developing the next draft.

Domain 1: Clinical Reasoning & Decision-making

Do you agree that the following competencies related to clinical reasoning and decision-making skills align with expectations of a Day-One graduate?

	PROPOSED COMPETENCY	% YES	% NO
1	Obtain an accurate and relevant history of the individual animal or animal group and its/their management and environment.	99	1
2	Handle, restrain and otherwise manage animal(s) safely and humanely, considering animal behaviour and welfare, and instruct others in helping the veterinarian perform these techniques.	99	1
3	Perform a complete clinical examination relevant to presentation and context.	100	0
4	Synthesise and prioritise problems to develop differential diagnoses and a diagnostic plan and interpret clinical evidence to establish a diagnosis.	94	6
5	Safely and effectively select and apply diagnostic techniques, including imaging modalities.	90	10
6	Safely collect, preserve and transport samples, select appropriate diagnostic tests, and account for the limitations of the test results.	90	10
7	Develop appropriate treatment plans and administer treatment in the interests of the patient and with regard to the resources available.	92	8
8	Consider animal welfare, client expectations, and economic considerations when providing veterinary services.	88	12
9	Utilise digital technologies and informatics to manage health information and inform patient-centred care.	79	21
10	Adapt and apply knowledge and skills to varied scenarios and contexts, including where information is incomplete.	82	18

Domain 2: Individual Animal Care & Management

Do you agree that the following competencies related to individual animal care and management align with expectations of a Day-One graduate?

	PROPOSED COMPETENCY	% YES	% NO
11	Safely perform sedation and general and regional anaesthesia; implement chemical methods of restraint.	89	11
12	Perform simple procedures, including surgeries, in an aseptic fashion, recognising associated indications and contraindications.	94	6
13	Assess and triage animals in an emergency situation and perform first aid or immediately refer to appropriate colleagues.	95	5
14	Assess and manage pain.	97	3
15	Recognise when euthanasia is appropriate and perform it humanely and safely.	94	6
16	Perform a systematic gross post-mortem examination, and report findings as appropriate.	76	24

Domain 3: Animal Population Care & Management

Do you agree that the following competencies related to animal population care and management align with expectations of a Day-One graduate?

	PROPOSED COMPETENCY	% YES	% NO
17	Assess and advise on the physical condition, welfare and nutritional status of an animal or group of animals.	90	10
18	Advise stakeholders on practices that promote animal welfare.	89	11
19	Recognise suspicious signs of possible reportable (endemic and exotic) and zoonotic diseases and take appropriate action, including notifying the relevant authorities.	92	8
20	Apply population principles in compliance with legal regulations and economic realities.	72	28
21	Advise on, and implement, preventative programs appropriate to the species and in line with accepted animal health, management, welfare, public health and environmental standards.	82	18

Domain 4: Public Health

Do you agree that the following competencies related to public health align with expectations of a Day-One graduate?

	PROPOSED COMPETENCY	% YES	% NO
22	Promote the health and safety of people and sustainability of the environment.	86	14
23	Recommend, evaluate and apply protocols for biosecurity and biosafety.	81	19
24	Perform antemortem inspection of animals and make appropriate decisions to protect the food chain and animal welfare at the point of slaughter.	75	25
25	Apply veterinary elements of food safety standards and practices throughout the production chain, on farm and during food processing.	71	29

Domain 5: Communication

Do you agree that the following competencies related to communication skills align with expectations of a Day-One graduate?

	PROPOSED COMPETENCY	% YES	% NO
26	Communicate effectively with clients, the public, professional colleagues, and responsible authorities, using language appropriate to the audience and context.	97	3
27	Maintain accurate, consistent, and contemporaneous records in a clinic database, which allows for case transfer and protects client privacy.	99	1

Domain 6: Collaboration

Do you agree that the following competencies related to collaboration align with expectations of a Day-One graduate?

	PROPOSED COMPETENCY	% YES	% NO
28	Demonstrate inclusivity and cultural competence and act to promote diversity in all elements of practice.	85	15
29	Work effectively as a member of a professional/inter-professional team, fully recognising the contribution of each professional, and acknowledging neurodiversity.	94	6
30	Collaborate with external referral, diagnostic and other professional services, including providing an appropriate history and clear communication.	97	3

Domain 7: Professionalism & Professional Identity

Do you agree that the following competencies related to professionalism and professional identity align with expectations of a Day-One graduate?

	PROPOSED COMPETENCY	% YES	% NO
31	Act professionally and ethically, compliant with legal and regulatory requirements of the relevant veterinary statutory body.	99	1
32	Apply principles of certification appropriate to the relevant veterinary statutory body.	96	4
33	Prescribe, dispense and use medicines correctly and responsibly, including reporting adverse reactions, in accordance with legislation and contemporary prescription guidelines.	98	2
34	Engage in self-directed learning and career planning.	92	8
35	Recognise limitations of knowledge, skills and resources, consulting with colleagues as needed, and identifying situations in which referral is warranted.	99	1
36	Reflect on personal actions, including inviting and responding to constructive feedback on performance.	95	5
37	Practice time management, including recognising the impact of time management on stakeholders and self.	85	15

Domain 8: Financial and Practice Management

Do you agree that the following competencies related to financial and practice management align with expectations of a Day-One graduate?

	PROPOSED COMPETENCY	% YES	% NO
38	Demonstrate basic knowledge of the organisation, management, business principles, and legislation related to a veterinary business(es).	99	1
39	Promote health and safety of patients, clients and colleagues in the veterinary setting, including applying risk management principles to practice.	98	2

Domain 9: Scholarship

Do you agree that the following competencies related to scholarship align with expectations of a Day-One graduate?

	PROPOSED COMPETENCY	% YES	% NO
40	Critically review and evaluate evidence from traditional and contemporary online resources, in support of practising evidence-based veterinary medicine.	92	8
41	Contribute as appropriate to the advancement and dissemination of veterinary knowledge, to improve the quality of animal care and public health.	86	14

8. Stakeholder Responses

From 164 submissions, 95 respondents provided comments (57.9%). Key themes that emerged included:

8.1. Support and mentoring. In order to help the new graduates build upon these competencies beyond Day One, they must receive adequate support:

"...these competencies are gained through experience in practice, and Day One graduates require significant help and support to learn and develop these skills." (Private Practitioner; Domain 1)

"... I would expect to provide significant support over time to develop them to a high standard, so I've chosen no for these." (Private practitioner; Domain 1)

"Day one is nerve-racking. I almost quit vet because I had no support in my first job ... You need a mentor and help to get you started." (Private Practitioner)

"...how are we supporting graduates to help them achieve these?" (Government Veterinarian)

8.2. Levels of competence expected. While the majority of respondents were supportive of the competencies as described, some expressed concern that not all the competencies were achievable on Day One:

"Many of these competencies assume a level of expertise that is simply not possible for a new graduate on Day One, and I think that establishing competencies such as these will contribute to the high dropout rate of vets due to excessive expectations. Day one graduates, and more experienced veterinarians are human and can't fulfill all these roles." (Private Practitioner/Educator; General comments)

"While I've ticked yes to most of these, I think that a Day 1 graduate is highly UNLIKELY to be able to do all of these without some oversight, gentle direction, and quality control." (Private Practitioner; Domain 1)

"These competencies are all within context. I would expect a higher level of critical thinking / problem solving from an experienced practitioner compared with a new graduate." (Private Practitioner – Equine; Domain 1)

8.3. Scope of species and procedures. Some stakeholders found that the competencies were too vague, particularly in relation to Domains 1 and 2. Further detail was requested regarding the scope of species and the types of procedures, in which new graduates are expected to be competent.

8.4. New graduates must be able to recognise their limitations:

"Recognising limitations, self-awareness and time management are high priorities." (Private Practitioner; Domain 7)

"Day one skills are about learning to traffic direct and understanding one's own limitations and being able to grow as a professional from that point without risking personal, staff, client and patient outcomes. It is important that graduates leave university with a clear understanding of HOW to grow." (Private Practitioner/ Education/Research)

8.5. Mental health. Some respondents recommended that mental health be explicitly included in the Day One Competencies:

"Our graduates should be prepared on graduation on how to ensure wellness/well-being and recognise when there are risks of physical, emotional and mental harm" (Education/Industry; Domain 7)

"...would add point on self-care, mental health knowledge and application - having these in the curriculum as a day one competency may force institutions to pay more attention and prepare students better for veterinary environment." (Private practitioner - equine)

"We would support an additional competency related to mental health awareness and management of mental health in self and others with strategies for promoting and maintaining resilience." (Veterinary organisation)

8.6. Animal behaviour. There were a few suggestions regarding the recognition of species-specific behavioural responses or body language.

8.7. Animal welfare. Some respondents requested further detail in regard to animal welfare, and specific reference to animal sentience as part of the D1Cs.

9. Concluding Comments

There was significant stakeholder engagement with the Phase 1 Consultation Phase and strong support was received for the first draft of AVBC's new Day One Competencies.

In the next phase of AVBC's Day One Competencies Review, the Task Group will:

- Review and incorporate stakeholder feedback
- Develop a revised set of AVBC Day One Competencies
- Invite stakeholder input into the next draft through a second round of consultation from late August 2022