Phase 2 Consultation

AVBC Accreditation Standards and Methodology

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 Phase 1 of the review, AVBC invited stakeholders of veterinary services and veterinary education, to take part in a short survey to help inform the early work of the Task Group. The outcomes of that consultation have been used to inform this second phase of consultation. A summary report can be found on the AVBC website together with additional information and a short introductory video about the review and this current consultation.

We are now seeking feedback on the first draft of the new AVBC Accreditation Standards and Methodology.

(Note that in addition to this Accreditation Standards and Methodology review, the AVBC Day One Competencies have also been revised and released for comment. Visit the AVBC website for further information).

HOW TO PROVIDE FEEDBACK:

We are seeking feedback by **Friday 2 September 2022.**

It would be preferred if your response could be provided by email, in a **Word document** using the **template** on the pages following. Please email you response to standardsreview@avbc.asn.au. If this is not possible, please provide a non-protected PDF.

The template provides questions against the documents for consultation, as follows:

    Part 1: AVBC Accreditation Standards

    Part 2: AVBC Accreditation Methodology

The template should be read in conjunction with the **AVBC Accreditation Standards: Draft for consultation July 2022** and the **AVBC Accreditation Methodology: Draft for Consultation July 2022.**

The questions are intended as guide; please feel free to provide additional comment in the spaces provided. We recognise that not all suggested questions below will apply to all stakeholders; please only respond to those that are of relevance to you.

Phase 2 Consultation: Feedback template

Your information

Organisation	
Name (optional)	
Role (optional)	
Location (State/Territory/Country)	
Email (optional)	

PART 1: AVBC ACCREDITATION STANDARDS			
Governance and Quality Enhancement			
1. Governance	1.4	Finances are assured for the current cohorts of students – is this sufficient duration?	
	1.6	Should student representation on relevant VEE committees, other than the curriculum and admissions committee, be prescribed further?	
	1.9	What level of responsibility should a VEE have for ensuring extramural sites provide safe and supportive learning experiences? What outcomes should the VEE demonstrate?	
3. Quality assurance and enhancement	3.2	Consumers of veterinary services are one group of stakeholders that are not often consulted on veterinary programs, other than livestock industry organisations. Should veterinary service consumers be part of external stakeholder input, and are there other stakeholders that should be consulted? How should a VEE communicate the outcomes of program review to stakeholders?	
4. Professional environment	4.1	Veterinary educators, students and the veterinary profession highlighted the importance of a positive learning and workplace culture, particularly during clinical placements, for graduate outcomes and professional sustainability. What methods should a VEE be using to demonstrate a positive culture? What evidence could be relevant here ?	
	4.4	What measures and outcomes should a VEE provide to demonstrate sustainable use of resources?	
	4.4	In particular, how could a VEE demonstrate a commitment to environmental sustainability ?	

		These standards address concerns that were raised. They require the VEE to provide pathways for students to report concerns, give feedback, convey their needs and wants, anonymously if they wish, including regarding compliance with the standards, and require that the VEE considers and takes actions. Any comments?
	4.5 4.6 4.7	
Other comments		Any other comments on this Domain ?

Learning Environment

		These standards accommodate the variety of ways that VEEs provide facilities and resources for student learning. These standards recognise the greater use of shared learning spaces, online learning resources, simulations and models and contracted external clinical learning sites, to name a few examples. Is the requirement that these facilities and resources meet high standards for student support and experience sufficiently clear?
5. Facilities. resources and equipment	5	
6. Animal resources	6	The ratios for animal numbers, species and cadavers have been removed, however student access to animals (normal and diseased of the major species) and cadavers for learning and assessment will be reported annually. Any comments?
Other comments		Any other comments on this Domain ?

Curriculum and Assessment

7. Governance, management	7.3	A committee or other organisational structure within the VEE has responsibility for oversight of all aspects of assessment in the program and ensuring its quality. Any comments?
8.Educational design	8.1	Stakeholder feedback noted the importance of ongoing curriculum innovation and development to adapt to societal, professional and educational advances. What evidence of process or outcome should a VEE provide for this?
	8.4	There were many comments confirming the importance of the VEE providing a learning environment enriched by scholarship and research, including active research and clinical postgraduate training programs. What outcomes should VEEs provide to demonstrate that these activities complement the veterinary program?
9. Duration and content	9.2	The AVBC D1Cs have been developed and released for comment (see AVBC website) in response to feedback. Do these competencies, along with the subject descriptions (Appendix 1), provide sufficient guidance for design of veterinary programs?
	9.3	The requirement that students complete sufficient training and experience with handling the main domestic species prior to undertaking WIL placements was included in feedback regarding safety and preparedness of some students for extramural learning experiences. Any comments?
	9.5	Feedback supported the requirement that all students have opportunities to observe and participate in research in their curriculum. How should VEEs evaluate these outcomes?

10. Clinical education	10.1	The requirements for students to achieve clinical competence across a range of settings provide for flexibility in VEE-controlled and contracted clinical training. Should the requirements for disciplinary and species clinical training be more specific?
	10.3	There was broad and strong support for this standard which requires the majority of clinical teaching to focus on common, entry level practice with the main domestic species. Do you support this?
	10.6	Students demonstrate relevant competency before providing patient care. What evidence should VEEs provide for this standard?
	10.7	This standard is intended to ensure students demonstrate skills in reflective practice and self-directed learning. What processes should VEEs have in place to ensure this?
	10.8	Students are directly supervised during patient care. This standard makes the supervision requirements explicit. Any comments?
	10.10	Students demonstrate proficiency in implementation of biosecurity procedures. This standard makes the requirements that students demonstrate practical competency explicit. Any comments?
11. Assessment	11.1	The requirements for training in assessment, staff expertise in assessment, and VEE implementation of an adequate assessment strategy have been clarified. Any comments?
	11.5 11.6	Additional requirements include management of appropriate student and staff assessment workload (11.5) and that moderation processes are in place (11.6). Do you support these?
12. WIL placements	12	See Appendix 2. The VEE responsibilities for academic oversight, placement management, staff training and quality enhancement during WIL have been clarified to address concerns raised by students and external stakeholders. Any comments?
Other comments		Any other comments on this Domain ?

Student and Staff Support

13. Student admission and progression	13.4 13.6 13.10	Further clarity was provided for the following: 13.4 Training is provided for those involved in the selection process. 13.6. Admissions strategies support diversity and widening participation. 13.10 Admissions and progression criteria are reviewed. Any comments?

14. Student welfare	14.3	Considerable feedback was received on student wellbeing, mental health, pressures experienced during their training, and their transition and longevity in practice after graduation. One concern related to students' experiences of learning in adverse, even hostile clinical settings, and the negative impacts of this "hidden" or unintended curriculum regarding professional behaviour. It was agreed that VEEs are responsible for ensuring students are learning in supportive settings. Stakeholders (veterinarians and students) sought this inclusion: *Students are not subject to behaviour which unnecessarily undermines their professional confidence, performance or self-esteem*. How would VEEs demonstrate achievement of this outcome?
Staff – academic, clinical, professional and support staff	15.2	On the basis of VSAAC experience, the teaching staff: student ratio was retained to ensure the VEE has sufficient staff to provide for continuity of program delivery and quality. Any comments ?
	15.3 15.4 15.5 15.6	These standards recognise the vital role of teaching staff in program delivery and address their needs for stability and opportunity in employment. What measures should VEEs use to demonstrate they provide a supportive environment for staff?
	15.9	All educators (not only academic staff, but all staff with a role in teaching and assessment) are required to receive training, ongoing professional development, and to demonstrate competence and effectiveness. Do you support these requirements?
Other comments ?		Any other comments on this Domain ?
Appendix 1: Core subjects	A1	This list is intended to provide guidance, not prescription, for design of the curriculum and program learning outcomes. Veterinary knowledge is rapidly expanding and curriculum design requires realistic choices, and selection of topics to explore in more or less depth, so that the curriculum breadth and depth do not overwhelm students. The consultation feedback suggested inclusion of more teaching and learning on; animal welfare, resilience, business understanding, financial decision making, animal handling competency, farm systems and management, biosecurity and communication skills (to name specific areas), and all these are included in the core subjects/D1Cs. Are there areas where emphasis could be reduced or should be changed?
Appendix 2: WIL	A2	These AVBC draft standards define the VEE-controlled or contracted WIL requirements. They intentionally provide VEE with flexibility in the mix of VEE-controlled or contracted and extramural clinical WIL. The minimum number of weeks of EMS required is less than the RCVS requirements. Both reflect differences in conditions and veterinary programs in Australia and New Zealand. Do the definitions and requirements for clinical WIL provide sufficient flexibility to encompass the diversity of models and educational partnerships which would serve the needs of VEEs and the veterinary profession in Australia and New Zealand?
Appendix 3: Glossary	A3	Are there other terms which require clarification?

General questions		
	G1	One significant concern to emerge through this review has been how to achieve a balance between promoting flexibility in veterinary program design and delivery, while maintaining the quality and sufficiency of veterinary clinical education. Stakeholders recognised that some input measures were still required, to set minimums, for the components that are most essential, but also the most costly, in veterinary education. These were considered to be; teaching staff to student ratios, supervised student access to animals and clinical learning resources, and the time spent in work-integrated clinical learning in veterinary practice. These elements have been incorporated. Any comments?
	G2	The requirement for graduates to achieve entry-level competence in common clinical conditions, procedures and common domestic species received very strong, broad support from educators, veterinarians, students and other stakeholders. Many stakeholders sought a review of the Day One Competencies, and feedback is now being sought (see AVBC website).
		While some veterinary interest groups proposed that VEEs should provide program options that allow students to focus on clinical training with limited species (e.g. equine, or livestock or small animals) in order that graduates would achieve higher level outcomes and be better prepared for immediate transition to practice with limited supervision, this proposal was not broadly supported.
	G3	For which standards might there be an opportunity to focus further on outcomes over inputs or process ?
	G4	Where standards relate to policy and process, how might the effectiveness of their implementation and outcomes be measured ?
	G5	Do you support the suggestion that AVBC access, collect and analyse national survey data from graduates and employers to provide for better outcomes data (as per RCVS)?

PART 2: AVBC ACCREDITATION METHODOLOGY		
Accreditation process and accreditation visit	2.1	The stakeholder feedback was strongly supportive of: outcomes focus, risk based assessment, a tailored focus for Accreditation Visits, and for management of evidence in a "living rubric" managed in an AVBC repository. VEEs encouraged the AVBC to align with the recent RCVS changes to standards and methodology, where possible and with the AVMA. Any comments ?
Accreditation Team expertise	2.2.1	Do you support the participation by a current veterinary student or recent graduate as a member of the Accreditation Team (voting or non-voting)?
	2.2.1	Are the team membership requirements to include at least one veterinarian who is working outside academia and one senior veterinary academic leader sufficient?
Observers and trainees	2.2.3	The existing and proposed AVBC processes do not require an Observer to be present at every visit. Should an AVBC Observer be present for AVBC quality assurance, with costs paid by the VEE, on all visits?
Evidence – repository, uploading, guidance	2.3	Do the requirements and process for the submission of evidence against the standards to the AVBC repository, by the VEE, and the forms of evidence acceptable require further clarification? If so, please describe guidance desired.

Review of all evidence by the Accreditation Team	2.3.5	Is it sufficiently clear that if the VEE is found to not yet be in full compliance with any standards during the pre-visit review of evidence, these standards will be evaluated during the Accreditation Visit?
Accreditation visit – scope, priority standards	2.4	The Accreditation Visit schedules will be developed to focus on those standards requiring review and adjusted based on findings, in consultation with the VEE. Are there any concerns about this process?
Published findings	2.6.4	The Executive Summary of the final report and accreditation decision on each VEE will be published on the AVBC website once finalised. Do you support this transparency regarding the outcomes of the accreditation process?
Other comments		Any other comments on the accreditation process and visit ?
Annual and interim monitoring	3	This section clarifies that program developments, including plans for increased student numbers, or substantial staff losses, or major curriculum change, are to be notified to VSAAC in advance, in annual or interim reports. Any comments?
Annual and interim reporting and monitoring processes	3.1	This clarifies that as a result of review of annual or interim data, VSAAC may recommend to the AVBC that the accreditation status for a VEE may change, including triggering an Accreditation Visit. Any comments?
	3.1	The veterinary profession has indicated they want to be able to monitor annual veterinary student numbers. Do you support reporting these as part of the AVBC Annual Report?
Other comments		Any other comments on annual and interim monitoring ?
Appendix 2: Annual monitoring data required	A2	Templates for data collection will be provided. Are there other VEE data that VSAAC should monitor annually?
Other comments		Any other comments on the appendices ?

Thank you for taking the time to provide your feedback. Please email this document to standardsreview@avbc.asn.au by **Friday 2 September 2022.**

The feedback provided will considered and incorporated where appropriate. A thematic analysis and response to the feedback will be available on the AVBC website later in 2022. AVBC will provide training on the new standards and methodology in 2023 for those participating in the accreditation process.

For further information please visit the Accreditation Standards Review page on the AVBC website or email standardsreview@avbc.asn.au.