

GUIDELINE 13

CONTINUING PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT (CPD)

Registered veterinary practitioners should ensure they are familiar with the contents of this Guideline. The Board considers this Guideline to be the minimum standard expected from a registered veterinary practitioner exercising reasonable skill and care in the course of providing treatment to animals.

Practitioners should read this Guideline in conjunction with the Definitions listed in the introductory pages.

13.1 PREAMBLE

13.1.1 The public has the right to expect that registered veterinary practitioners providing professional services do so in a competent and contemporary manner. Section 62(1)(e) of the Veterinary Practice Act 1997 (the Act) provides for the issuing of guidelines on the standards of veterinary practice.

13.1.2 Continuing Professional Development (CPD) is essential to maintain and enhance professional skills and knowledge. The following guidelines should be considered a necessary obligation to CPD.

13.2 POLICY

13.2.1 One of the primary responsibilities of the Veterinary Practitioners Registration Board of Victoria is to protect the public from sub-standard veterinary services by registered veterinary practitioners.

13.2.2 The Board uses two approaches to achieve this aim. The first approach is to take action retrospectively, and either counsel, caution, reprimand, impose conditions on registration or conditions of further education, fine, suspend or de-register veterinary practitioners who are found guilty of unprofessional veterinary conduct. The adequacy of CPD is considered as a contributing factor when making determinations about Unprofessional Conduct. The second approach is to establish appropriate mechanisms to ensure that registered veterinary practitioners undertake sufficient post-graduate continuing education to enable the provision of highly competent professional veterinary services. These two approaches are not mutually exclusive and are exercised simultaneously.

13.3 DEFINITION

CPD is an interactive process by which registered veterinary practitioners enhance the skills and knowledge they had at the time of graduation. It covers a continuous lifelong learning programme of both structured and unstructured activities which contribute directly to the professional competence of the registered veterinary practitioner.

13.4 LEVEL OF PARTICIPATION

13.4.1 Practising Registered Veterinary Practitioners

The level of participation in CPD programmes should be sufficient to maintain the individual's competency in their chosen field of work.

13.4.2 Registered Veterinary Specialists

Registered veterinary specialists are expected to maintain a superior knowledge of current veterinary practice in their area of speciality, by any or all of the following means:

- publications in international and local referred journals
- presentations at international or local veterinary conferences
- supervision and training of registered veterinary practitioners undergoing training programmes or for general skills updating.

Guideline 14 elaborates responsibilities relating to registered veterinary specialists.

13.4.3 Non-practising Registered Veterinary Practitioners

Non-practising veterinarians will not be required to comply with CPD requirements. However, CPD must be current and compliant with the guidelines prior to recommencement of any veterinary pursuit, whether paid or honorary.

13.5 ACCEPTABLE LEARNING ACTIVITIES AND DEFINITION

A large variety of learning activities may contribute to the professional development of an individual. It is important to define what are acceptable learning activities and to quantify these for the purposes of claiming CPD units. Acceptable CPD activities have been divided into two broad categories "structured" and "unstructured" activities.

13.6 STRUCTURED ACTIVITIES

At least 15 units over each triennium.

13.6.1 University Continuing Education Courses

It is obviously impossible to fully assess the quality of post-graduate education courses offered by Universities and Post-Graduate institutions on a worldwide basis. However, for the purposes of CPD, they are considered to be fully acceptable and equivalent.¹

¹ The quality of undergraduate training and facilities at the veterinary schools in Australia and New Zealand are accredited at regular intervals by the Veterinary Schools Accreditation Advisory Committee. Similarly, the American, British and some European veterinary schools are accredited by their relevant professional bodies.

- 13.6.2 Courses run by professional veterinary associations or recognised private providers**
- CPD courses and conferences are also run by non-academic organisations on a worldwide basis. Such courses tend to be of a high standard and presented at a level commensurate with the contemporary requirements of the profession. They are considered to be of equal value to those continuing education courses held by the Universities.
- 13.6.3 Acquisition of recognised post-graduate qualifications in veterinary science related to the chosen field of work**
- The registered veterinary practitioner, who is currently undergoing formal post-graduate training with a view to the acquisition of a higher qualification in their chosen field of work or a related area of veterinary science, is considered to be fulfilling all the requirements for continuing education. Such individuals would be exempt from any other requirements for CPD while undergoing such training.
- 13.6.4 Preparation, and publication, refereeing or presentation of scientific papers, related to the chosen field of work**
- This discipline requires considerable study and would constitute ample proof of CPD. This area is an obvious avenue for holders of specialist endorsement to demonstrate their continuing professional development. Four units have been allocated to the presentation of a one hour lecture. Credit is allowed for the first presentation only.
- 13.6.6 Distance Learning Courses**
- Distance learning courses offered by recognised training institutions and organisations in 13.6.1 and 13.6.2.
- 13.6.7 Written Assessment Tests**
- Written tests on veterinary literature articles.
- 13.6.8 Assessed Audio/Video Tapes / Information Technology**
- Audio/Video tapes and Information Technology accessed via printed or electronic medium (such as CD ROM, Internet etc.), with some form of critical assessment, used either privately by individuals or in a discussion group.
- 13.6.9 Completion of APAV (Accreditation Programme for Australian Veterinarians)**
Acquisition of APAV accreditation.
- 13.6.10 Completion of Trial Testing**
Completion of MCQ trial tests conducted by the Australasian Veterinary Boards Council (AVBC)

13.7 UNSTRUCTURED ACTIVITIES

At least 45 units over each triennium.

13.7.1 Internal or In-house Training and Instruction from Professional Colleagues and Specialists

Both the instructor and the student will receive credits. (Restricted to twenty units in each triennium).

The most common forms of in-house training are:

- i. The type of training given to a new graduate for the first one or two years post-graduation by the more experienced members of the profession. This training is considered essential to re-enforce and enhance the basic training given to undergraduate veterinary students and to impart the additional skills peculiar to the registrant's chosen field of professional activity. Recent graduates should be encouraged to participate fully at conferences and seminars wherever possible.
- ii. The training given to an experienced veterinary practitioner moving from one type of veterinary practice to another by their colleagues in the new field of work. This training is analogous to that given to new graduates and should be supplemented where possible by other more formal forms of CPD related to the new field of work.
- iii. The training given to veterinarians by other more experienced veterinarians - for example specialists in a particular field. This training need not necessarily be for the purposes of acquiring a higher qualification and may be for self-development only. However where utilised as part of the CPD requirement, it should be fully documented.
- iv. Documented discussion between professional colleagues. This form of discussion could include formal case presentations, medical or surgical rounds, journal article discussions or meetings to share knowledge gained at conferences, courses, seminars or workshops as well as time spent with registered veterinary specialists.
- v. The training given to foreign graduates seeking to sit the National Veterinary Examination.
- vi. Undergraduate veterinary supervision.

13.7.2 Reading of books and journals related to the chosen field of work

Reading veterinary literature. The date, time spent and literature read to be noted in logbook.

13.7.3 Audio Video Tapes / Information Technology

Non-assessed Audio/Videotapes and Information Technology accessed via printed or electronic medium (such as CD ROM, Internet etc.) either used privately by individuals or in a discussion group.

13.8 REQUIREMENTS FOR CPD

CPD needs to be of relevance to the veterinary profession, achievable and useful to the registered veterinary practitioner.

A formal, structured one week conference usually has a minimum of twenty hours lectures. It was determined that a basic unit, equivalent to a one hour formal structured lecture be chosen as the benchmark unit of CPD against which all other types of CPD may be ranked. Over a period of three years (triennium), sixty units of CPD will be considered a reasonable requirement, of which at least fifteen units will be structured activities.

13.9 DOCUMENTATION (EVIDENCE) of CPD

Registered veterinary practitioners should retain fully documented evidence of attendance at formal courses. For the informal and less structured forms of CPD, it is recommended that the practitioner keeps a log book/sheet of activities undertaken. See the example at the end of this guideline. Documentation should be maintained for a minimum of three years.

Practitioners are expected to complete the question on the total number of units claimed for the preceding twelve months when applying for renewal of registration.

13.10 MECHANISMS FOR THE ASSESSMENT OF CPD

13.10.1 Over a triennium the requirement is sixty units of CPD for all registered veterinary practitioners, of which at least fifteen units are to be structured activities.

13.10.2 In the case of a complaint being received by the Board which may be considered unprofessional conduct, and which may call into question the professional competency of the registered veterinary practitioner concerned, the onus will be on the registered veterinary practitioner to provide the Board with documented evidence of compliance with the CPD requirements in their defence. The Board has the power to investigate the professional conduct and fitness to practise of registered veterinary practitioners and impose sanctions where necessary.

CPD UNIT SUMMARY			
ACTIVITY		UNIT	
		60 units per triennium	
Structured			
(15 units in each triennium)			
University CE courses		1 hour	1 unit
Postgraduate courses etc.		1 hour	1 unit
Conferences, Seminars etc.		1 hour	1 unit
Presentation of papers		1 hr lecture	4 units
Preparation of published paper		1 hour	1 unit
Other professional presentations		1 hour	1 unit
Distance learning		1 hour	1 unit
Written assessment tests		1 test	1 unit
Assessed audio/video tapes/Information Technology		2 hours	1 unit
APAV Course (completed)		each chapter	1 unit
AVBC MCQ Trial Test (completed)		each test	1 unit
Unstructured			
(45 units in each triennium)			
In-practice training & instruction	13.7.1 (i)	2 hours	1 unit
(restricted to 20 units per triennium)	13.7.1 (ii)	2 hours	1 unit
	13.7.1 (iii)	2 hours	1 unit
	13.7.1 (iv)	2 hours	1 unit
	13.7.1 (v)	2 hours	1 unit
	13.7.1 (vi)	2 hours	1 unit
Reading		2 hours	1 unit
Non-assessed audio/video tapes/Information Technology		2 hours	1 unit

