



## Presentation at **BVA Congress**

24 – 26 September 2009

Cardiff, UK

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**Royal College of Veterinary Surgeons**

**Extra Mural Studies  
Consultation 2009**

**Dr J B Johnson**

Chairman of the RCVS EMS working party

## Time for a review...

1995/96 – last major review of EMS

2000-2002 – RCVS Education Strategy  
Steering Group – no change to EMS  
proposed

2005 – RCVS updated EMS guidelines -  
more flexibility encouraged

2009 – RCVS sets up working party to  
review whether EMS policy &  
guidance still in tune with needs



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## EMS Review Working Party

### Members:

Dr. Barry Johnson – chairman

Prof. Ed Hall (Bristol University)

Prof. Bill Reilly (BVA President Elect)

Mr. Paul Mahoney (RVC EMS coordinator)

Dr. Bob Moore (RCVS Council)

Mr. David Wadsworth (Practitioner)

Miss Karmen Watson (AVS rep)

Miss Emma Sinclair (alternate AVS rep)



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## Timescale for consultation

- December 2008 - Working party first met
- January 2009 - Open-ended invitation for comments to all BVA Divisions, recent graduates, vet schools
- April 2009 - Evidence gathering sessions & round table discussions held over 4 days
- June – Sept 2009 - Consultation on WP's proposals
- 15 October 2009 - Final proposals to RCVS Education Policy & Specialisation Committee –



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## Some of the issues

- A lot has changed in the last 10 years:
  - Introduction of student loans
  - Increase in student numbers
  - Emphasis on widening participation
  - Investment in clinical facilities in vet schools & development of university first opinion practices
  - Development of “distributed” clinical teaching in some schools
- Declining number of large animal practices
- Access to some placements difficult – eg. abattoirs
- Anecdotal reports of variability in quality & effectiveness; costs to practices? students? universities?



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## What we mean by “EMS”

- Time spent outside the protected environment of the veterinary school so students can
  - experience the breadth of the veterinary role
  - experience how veterinary medicine & science operates in “real-life” and commercial environments
- An integral and important part of undergraduate course, that complements learning in the vet school
- EMS should not be a replacement for training by the vet school – but an extension of it



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## Aims of EMS

Placements should enable students to:

- gain an understanding of the practice & economics of animal management systems, of practice economics and practice management
- develop understanding of medical and surgical treatments in a variety of species
- develop communication skills for all aspects of veterinary work
- expand their experience to disciplines and species not covered in depth by the university
- appreciate the importance of animal welfare in animal production and in practice
- gain experience to appreciate ethical responsibilities in relation to clients, animals, the community and society.



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## The working party's draft proposals

- EMS is the “jewel in the crown” of UK veterinary education – strong consensus to retain it
- But needs some improvement
  - universities, students, practices/placements and RCVS – we all need to do more!
- Animal husbandry EMS - 12 weeks still seems about right
- Flexibility: universities to allow more choice of placement to match student's learning needs, interests, and to complement the curriculum
- Clinical EMS – 26 weeks structured in 2 phases
  - Phase 1 = “observational” across range of placements – about 6 weeks
  - Phase 2 = “practical” – about 20 weeks  
*(nb. terminology may not be quite right yet!)*
  - Phase 2 to centre on a “base practice” to allow a longer relationship to develop between student & practice



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## Draft proposals (continued)

- Clarify that universities have primary responsibility for delivering Day 1 competences in the core curriculum – either through quality assured external placements (the “distributed model”) – or intra-mural rotations.
- This is not EMS
- Initial abattoir & other VPH practical teaching should be part of core curriculum – not left to *ad hoc* EMS placements
- Practical VPH can be supplemented by further EMS to meet student interest & learning needs as required
- Not a reduction in VPH practical placements – but a strengthening of arrangements
- Will require cooperation between universities & other agencies



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## Draft proposals (continued)

### For Students:

- Students must take responsibility for own learning
- Prepare well before each placement – set objectives
- Ensure EMS provider has copy of all relevant guidance
- Keep their EMS logs up to date & reflect on learning
- Discuss objectives and progress with clinical tutors
- Treat all their EMS as integral part of their learning



## Draft proposals (continued)

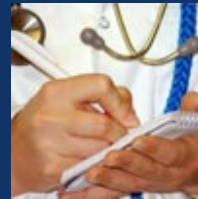
### For Universities:

- Make a clear distinction between teaching core curriculum D1 competences & EMS which extends that competence
- Ensure there's an effective recording system for students to log/reflect on EMS experience – part of their formative assessment
- Define part of degree course as a “long course” to enable students to access extended means tested student loans covering time on EMS
- Put adequate resources into supporting EMS – admin, coordinators & clinical tutors
- Consider offering EMS providers ‘benefits in kind’ – eg. discounted CPD or other services



**Draft proposals (continued)**  
**For Practices & other placement providers:**

- Check you have the latest guidance from the university, RCVS, BVA (student/university can supply copy/weblink)
- Identify named individuals for the student/university to contact
- Set aside a little time for entry & exit interview with student – discuss their objectives
- Give honest & constructive feedback to student and university



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**Draft proposals (continued)**  
**For RCVS:**

- Adopt audit-based approach to monitoring EMS during university visitations – eg. checking student records; university's response to feedback from a practice etc.
- Consider annual reports from universities on how they are developing EMS programmes & delivering Day One Competences – important to maintain the momentum
- Take lead in developing single "PDP style" recording system for students
- Communicate recommendations to veterinary schools & the profession to ensure all parties understand the guidance and their respective roles



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**For further information and to  
download the consultation  
document:**

[www.rcvs.org.uk/ems](http://www.rcvs.org.uk/ems)



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