

BVA policy position on UK undergraduate veterinary education

Executive summary

BVA supports well-structured and adequately resourced veterinary education programmes in order to produce a well-respected, adaptable veterinary workforce who are able to take the lead in improving animal health and welfare and public health for the benefit of society.

This document is intended to set out the BVA position on UK undergraduate veterinary education in the context of [the overarching Vet Futures ambition to ensure diverse and rewarding veterinary careers](#), recognising a professional landscape in considerable flux, as well as setting out the BVA position in relation to relevant proposals included in [the ongoing RCVS Graduate Outcomes review](#).

Currently UK veterinary undergraduate programmes are held in high esteem for the high-quality, omnicompetent veterinary surgeons they produce, and UK veterinary schools are internationally recognised for their global excellence in teaching and veterinary research.¹

To sustain and develop the UK's high-quality veterinary education and build long-term capability and capacity in the veterinary workforce, all stakeholders should work together to achieve:

- Selection of students who are most likely to thrive in the workplace and deliver improvements in animal health and welfare;
- Recognition of the full breadth of career pathways available to veterinary graduates with curricula that adequately prepares graduates to enter into diverse areas of work;
- Skilled graduates who receive appropriate opportunities to undertake core and elective areas of study and develop clinical and non-clinical knowledge and skills;
- A wide range of rewarding and well-communicated career pathways (both clinical and non-clinical) to attract and retain the best applicants from diverse backgrounds and socio-economic groups;
- Resilient and confident graduates who are aware of, and can navigate, career options through the support networks available to them;
- Graduates who are better supported during the transition from students to the world of work; and
- Graduates who are equipped to [enact a range of roles as part of multidisciplinary, vet-led teams](#).

As part of this, it is important to emphasise that any efforts to further develop veterinary education must recognise the pluripotential of the veterinary degree and the full breadth of veterinary graduates entering the workforce across wide ranging career paths, **both clinical and non-clinical**.

Whilst the veterinary profession is relatively small, its reach and impact are significant, with veterinary surgeons being vital to the UK economy and in our communities. Veterinary surgeons work in myriad settings, including in clinical practice providing preventive healthcare and treatment for livestock, pets and leisure/sport animals, carrying out surveillance, and advancing standards of animal welfare; in research advancing our scientific understanding and ensuring the welfare of animals used in research; in abattoirs and throughout the food chain to secure public health, food safety and animal welfare; in industry and technology ensuring the UK remains competitive; in government providing veterinary

¹RCVS, 2019. Outstanding performance of UK veterinary schools on world stage <https://www.rcvs.org.uk/news-and-views/news/outstanding-performance-of-uk-veterinary-schools-on-world-stage/>

expertise to public policy making; delivering control measures to protect public health and animal health; regulation of veterinary medicines and roles in the armed forces.

Coupled with the breadth of career pathways available to trained veterinary surgeons, the veterinary profession has also experienced rapid change in the environment within which it operates and there has been a shift in the expectations of clients, stakeholders and beneficiaries of veterinary services. The list of clients, stakeholders and beneficiaries of the services the veterinary profession delivers spans pet owners, farmers, industry, Government and other allied professionals [who form part of the vet-led team](#).

Developments within veterinary education should therefore be mindful of the evolving needs and expectations of the veterinary profession from wider society, as well as capacity and capability complexities within the professional landscape.

With this in mind, BVA has set out 50 recommendations pertaining to key areas across the trajectory of veterinary education:

- **Communicating the breadth of veterinary careers through a whole-system approach**
- **Selection and widening participation**
- **Delivery and quality of veterinary undergraduate programmes**
- **Retaining UK veterinary graduates as part of the domestic workforce**
- **Extra-mural studies (EMS), tracking and methods of assessment**
- **Graduate Outcomes: Day One Competences and the Professional Development Phase**
- **Supporting equality and diversity in the workplace and educational settings**

Our specific recommendations are:

Communicating the breadth of veterinary careers through a whole-system approach

Recommendation 1: There should be a whole-system approach to promoting veterinary careers. This should span from primary school to veterinary undergraduate education and beyond.

Recommendation 2: To support a whole-system approach to promoting veterinary careers, there should be accurate, transparent information available for careers advisors, teachers and lecturers so that they can inform prospective veterinary students and graduates about entry requirements across UK veterinary schools and the diversity of uses of the veterinary degree.

Recommendation 3: BVA has a role to play in ensuring access to transparent information about veterinary careers by engaging with the [National Careers Service](#) to encourage signposting to [My Vet Future](#) as a 'one-stop-shop' resource for veterinary education and careers information.

Recommendation 4: Species/sector-specific veterinary associations should be encouraged to provide easily accessible information about career pathways in their sectors, including non-traditional career routes and post-graduate education opportunities.

Selection and widening participation

Recommendation 5: UK veterinary schools should continue to use a range of selection methods to ensure that the most suitable students are selected to enter the veterinary workforce, whatever their background.

Recommendation 6: Further research should be undertaken to explore the predictive validity of selection methods in veterinary education, both in terms of future performance, resilience, job satisfaction and in terms of widening participation.

Recommendation 7: BVA has a role to play in working with the UK veterinary schools and [My Vet Future](#) to formally collate accessible information about graduate entry to veterinary medicine, fast track courses and potential sources of funding.

Recommendation 8: As part of their pre-entry requirements, UK veterinary schools should continue to adopt an outcomes-based approach to work experience, focusing on what is learnt and how this is reflected upon as opposed to prescribed durations of placements alone.

Recommendation 9: UK veterinary schools should continue to work collaboratively to share best practice and effective strategies to widen participation in veterinary education. This should include considering the best ways to raise awareness of available widening access routes and gateway programmes.

Recommendation 10: BVA has a role to play in terms of working collaboratively with the British Veterinary Ethnicity and Diversity Society (BVEDS), British Veterinary LGBT+ (BVLGBT+) and RCVS Diversity, Equality and Inclusion Working Group to develop an engagement strategy and resources to raise awareness amongst underrepresented and minority groups of veterinary career paths and the different routes into veterinary education.

Recommendation 11: BVA should work collaboratively with the British Veterinary Ethnicity and Diversity Society (BVEDS), British Veterinary LGBT+ (BVLGBT+) and RCVS Diversity, Equality and Inclusion Working Group to facilitate 'diversity ambassadors' within the profession to act as role models for prospective students from underrepresented and minority backgrounds.

Delivery and quality of veterinary undergraduate programmes

Recommendation 12: There should be additional government funding from UK funding bodies for veterinary education by increasing the unit of resource per student in order to maintain quality and standards in veterinary education and contribute to retaining capacity in the veterinary workforce.

Recommendation 13: Any increase in the number of vet students must duly consider potential unintended consequences on the quality and standards of veterinary education.

Recommendation 14: Any increase in the number of vet students to address workforce shortages must be supported by additional Government funding in order to safeguard existing quality and standards in veterinary education.

Retaining UK veterinary graduates as part of the domestic workforce

Recommendation 15: The UK Government should add veterinary surgeons to the Shortage Occupation List² or its equivalent and extend/continue to recognise existing MRPQ legislation through a transitional arrangement.

Recommendation 16: Consideration should be given as to how to support international graduates who are taking the RCVS Statutory Examination for Membership, as well as support their transition into different roles within the UK veterinary workforce.

Recommendation 17: Overseas nationals graduating from UK veterinary schools should be allowed to live and work in the UK to help address the shortage of veterinary surgeons, this could be facilitated through the implementation of a post-study work visa.

² Since agreement of this document at BVA Council (April 2019), and following successful campaigning from BVA and RCVS, the UK Government has announced its intention to restore veterinary surgeons to the Shortage Occupation List.

Recommendation 18: UK veterinary students studying in EU and non-EU countries should be encouraged and supported to return to the UK to pursue diverse and fulfilling career pathways within the UK veterinary workforce.

Extra-mural studies (EMS), tracking and methods of assessment

Recommendation 19: EMS should be underpinned by a commitment to maintain exposure to different sectors, career routes and overseas opportunities, as well as recognition of the importance of exposure to general practice as a cornerstone of veterinary education.

Recommendation 20: There should be increased communication between veterinary schools and EMS providers about the aims of EMS, both in general and for individual students.

Recommendation 21: EMS providers should be encouraged to use a formal structure to communicate the aims and objectives of EMS placements with students, such as the [AVS Pre-EMS objective setting templates for small animal, farm animal and equine practice](#).

Recommendation 22: There should be increased provision of mentorship and education-based training of staff in workplaces providing EMS placements.

Recommendation 23: BVA has a role to play in supporting the delivery of EMS for both providers and students across clinical and non-clinical settings by reviewing and updating its EMS guides for [providers](#) and [students](#).

Recommendation 24: Students, along with their tutors, should take responsibility to ensure that their EMS meets their own personal development objectives.

Recommendation 25: The delivery of EMS should involve the whole veterinary profession, with each organisation(s) being responsible and accountable for different aspects of delivery. For example, RCVS should have overall oversight, define minimum requirements and provide guidance on objectives and standards for delivery. Individual veterinary schools should be able to determine the details of the amount and type of EMS to achieve their own curricula and student outcomes.

Recommendation 26: Consideration should be given to the ways in which veterinary schools and professional associations can further support EMS providers in their delivery of placements.

Recommendation 27: Consideration should be given to establishing a system for EMS, which enables veterinary students to undertake EMS in wide range of settings including clinical, non-clinical and non-traditional settings.

Recommendation 28: BVA has a role to play in supporting species/sector-specific divisions to better showcase and signpost to the wide range of EMS opportunities that are on offer across sectors.

Recommendation 29: BVA supports a degree of partial tracking where students are able to 'track' and/or undertake an elective in one or a limited number of species or disciplines. As part of this students should maintain a broad exposure to different species so that they are able to maintain their omnipotential or change their minds as to their preferred area of practice or work during the undergraduate degree.

Recommendation 30: Without evidence to suggest otherwise, there should not be a move towards standardised methods of assessment at this time.

Graduate Outcomes: Day One Competences and the Professional Development Phase (PDP)

Recommendation 31: Veterinary students should be exposed to a range of learning environments and given the opportunity to select work-based placements that enable them to develop their Day One Competences, meet their individual learning objectives and explore diverse career pathways.

Recommendation 32: As well as clinical competences, veterinary graduates should have the opportunity to develop a range of non-clinical competences and be prepared to navigate the decision-making processes they will be expected to undertake as part of their first role.

Recommendation 33: Day One Competences and guidance must pay due regard to veterinary surgeons who embark on varied, including non-clinical, career paths.

Recommendation 34: Awareness and training in animal welfare, science, ethics and law (AWSEL) should be integrated across undergraduate curricula.

Recommendation 35: For the veterinary profession to position itself as animal welfare focussed, awareness and training in animal welfare advocacy at undergraduate level should be strengthened.

Recommendation 36: Species/sector-specific veterinary associations should develop guidance on what the 'Day One Competences' look like in their sectors.

Recommendation 37: BVA supports the provision of continued and post-graduate education throughout the veterinary career to enable varied career choices at any stage of professional life.

Recommendation 38: Animal health and welfare should be at the heart of any review of the Day One Competences or any proposed models of competence.

Recommendation 39: RCVS should develop enhanced guidance detailing the standard expected from new graduates for Day One Competences areas identified as having low competency scores.

Recommendation 40: It should be recognised that PDP is not only for new graduates but is also an appropriate way to support veterinary surgeons changing their area of practice or returning to work after a career break.

Recommendation 41: PDP must be applicable and relevant for veterinary surgeons in non-clinical roles.

Recommendation 42: The PDP should provide opportunities for the development of clinical and professional skills; confidence in different areas of work (both clinical and non-clinical); opportunities to apply moral reasoning and ethical decision-making and mentorship.

Recommendation 43: There should be a move away from an input-based process for PDP towards an outcomes-based approach, focussed on the outcomes that the graduate is expected to achieve by the end of their PDP, rather than focusing on the number of cases that have been treated.

Recommendation 44: Further support, guidance and resources should be developed to support graduates completing the PDP, as well as employers providing PDP.

Recommendation 45: BVA has a role to play in supporting the delivery and completion of PDP guides for [employers](#) and [employees](#).

Recommendation 46: Consideration should be given to developing appropriate CPD to support the role of PDP mentors or supervisors.

Recommendation 47: BVA supports the inclusion of enhanced standards relating to the provision of PDP within the current Practice Standards Scheme and consideration could be given to the RCVS accreditation of existing graduate schemes outside of the PDP.

Recommendation 48: BVA supports a different system of recording the PDP that includes the facility to record professional skills alongside clinical skills and a system into which both the graduate and a mentor can contribute.

Recommendation 49: As part of the RCVS Graduate Outcomes review, consideration should also be given as to whether it is possible to develop an integrated system to record experience and competence for students, graduates and post-graduates.

Supporting equality and diversity in the workplace and educational settings

Recommendation 50: BVA has a role to play in working collaboratively with organisations such as the British Veterinary Ethnicity and Diversity Society (BVEDS), British Veterinary LGBT+ (BVLGBT+) to develop guidance and resources to support equality and diversity in the workplace and educational settings.

BVA Policy position on UK undergraduate veterinary education

Introduction

BVA supports well-structured and adequately resourced veterinary education programmes in order to produce a well-respected, adaptable veterinary workforce who are able to take the lead in improving animal health and welfare and public health for the benefit of society.

This document is intended to set out the BVA position on UK undergraduate veterinary education in the context of [the overarching Vet Futures ambition to ensure diverse and rewarding veterinary careers](#), recognising a professional landscape in considerable flux, as well as setting out the BVA position in relation to relevant proposals included in [the ongoing RCVS Graduate Outcomes review](#).

Currently UK veterinary undergraduate programmes are held in high esteem for the high-quality, omniscient veterinary surgeons they produce, and UK veterinary schools are internationally recognised for their global excellence in teaching and veterinary research.³

To sustain and develop the UK's high-quality veterinary education and build long-term capability and capacity in the veterinary workforce, all stakeholders should work together to achieve:

- Selection of students who are most likely to thrive in the workplace and deliver improvements in animal health and welfare;
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- Graduates who are equipped [to enact a range of roles as part of multidisciplinary, vet-led teams](#).

As part of this, it is important to emphasise that any efforts to further develop veterinary education must recognise the pluripotential of the veterinary degree and the full breadth of veterinary graduates entering the workforce across wide ranging career paths, **both clinical and non-clinical**.

Whilst the veterinary profession is relatively small, its reach and impact are significant, with veterinary surgeons being vital to the UK economy and our communities. Veterinary surgeons work in myriad settings, including in clinical practice providing preventive healthcare and treatment for livestock, pets and leisure/sport animals, carrying out surveillance, and advancing standards of animal welfare; in research advancing our scientific understanding; in abattoirs and throughout the food chain to secure

³RCVS, 2019. Outstanding performance of UK veterinary schools on world stage <https://www.rcvs.org.uk/news-and-views/news/outstanding-performance-of-uk-veterinary-schools-on-world-stage/>

public health, food safety and animal welfare; in industry and technology ensuring the UK remains competitive; and in government providing veterinary expertise to public policy making.

Coupled with the breadth of career pathways available to trained veterinary surgeons, the veterinary profession has also experienced rapid change in the environment within which it operates, and there has been a shift in the expectations of clients, stakeholders and beneficiaries of veterinary services. The list of clients, stakeholders and beneficiaries of the services delivered by the veterinary profession spans pet owners, farmers, industry, Government, and [other allied professionals who form part of the vet-led team](#).

Developments within veterinary education should therefore be mindful of the evolving needs and expectations of the veterinary profession from wider society, as well as capacity and capability complexities within the professional landscape.

A professional landscape in flux

Recruitment and retention

There is general recognition that the veterinary profession is facing a recruitment and retention crisis, with mounting efforts from a range of stakeholders to address the 'leaky bucket' and workforce shortages.⁴⁵⁶⁷⁸⁹ As the [Vet Futures Action Plan](#) sets out, there is a need for veterinary stakeholders to review student recruitment, selection and support, as well as graduate outcomes, in order to encourage a well-supported, healthy workforce that is able to successfully navigate the breadth of opportunities presented by the veterinary undergraduate degree, as well as dealing with the challenging realities of the world of work.

However, several years ago there were serious concerns about the overproduction of veterinary surgeons¹⁰, as well as concerns that there were not enough jobs to meet demand.¹¹ Such concerns were considered in [the 2013 BVA position on veterinary graduate numbers and new veterinary schools in the UK](#), which unpacked the opportunities and risks to the profession as a result of the increasing number of veterinary undergraduate places. It is therefore important to be mindful that this landscape can change rapidly in an ever-evolving and diverse marketplace for veterinary surgeons.

Exiting the EU

Before the EU referendum, UK veterinary practices were reporting difficulties in recruiting, with a BVA Voice of the Veterinary Profession (Voice) survey in early 2015 revealing that 40% of practices with vacancies had taken more than three months to recruit in the last year, or had withdrawn the vacancy due to a lack of suitable candidates.¹² However, whilst workforce concerns within the veterinary profession predated the UK's decision to leave the EU, these concerns have intensified subsequent to it.¹³ The numbers of non-UK EU graduates registering with the Royal College of Veterinary Surgeons

⁴ British Veterinary Association (BVA), 2017. [Brexit and the Veterinary Profession](#).

⁵ British Veterinary Association (BVA), 2018. ["No-deal" Brexit and the Veterinary Profession](#).

⁶ British Veterinary Association (BVA), and Royal College of Veterinary Surgeons (RCVS), 2019. Migration Advisory Committee: Call for evidence Shortage Occupation List review 2018. Available at: https://www.bva.co.uk/uploadedFiles/Content/News_campaigns_and_policies/Get_involved/Consultation_archive/Migration%20Advisory%20Committee%20SQL%202019%20BVA%20RCVS%20Submission%20FINAL.pdf

⁷ British Veterinary Association (BVA), 2018. [Motivation, Satisfaction and Retention: Understanding the importance of vets' day-to-day work experiences](#).

⁸ British Veterinary Association (BVA), 2018. [Gender discrimination in the veterinary profession A brief report of the BVA Employers' Study 2018](#)

¹⁰ Everitt, S., 2013. Are we producing too many vets?: Consultation on training BSAVA Companion, Volume 2013, Issue 6, Jun 2013, p. 4 – 6. Available at: <https://www.bsavalibrary.com/content/journals/10.22233/20412495.0613.4>

¹¹ Institute of Employment, 2016. IES Graduate Jobs Survey Summary. Available at: <https://www.rcvs.org.uk/document-library/ies-graduate-jobs-survey-summary/>

¹² British Veterinary Association, Voice of the Veterinary Profession (Voice) survey, 2015

¹³ For example, before the referendum UK veterinary practices were reporting difficulties in recruiting. In early 2015, in a

(RCVS) increased each year from 2010-2016, accounting for around 50% of veterinary surgeons registering in the UK (approximately 1,000 veterinary surgeons in 2015 and 2016 in total).¹⁴ Any reduction in the number of veterinary surgeons migrating to the UK, or an increase in the number leaving the UK because of its exit from the EU, will have a destabilising effect on the veterinary workforce, potentially impacting on the already over stretched staffing levels across the profession and increasing demand for veterinary graduates. There are also reports that applicant numbers from the EU for UK clinical veterinary positions have fallen dramatically in the past two years.

Further, 22% of the current veterinary teaching and research workforce are EU nationals.¹⁵ Restrictions on EU immigration would therefore limit the ability of UK veterinary schools to sustain sufficient academic staff to promote innovation and global excellence in teaching standards and veterinary research.¹⁶

Wider context of higher education reform

Veterinary education must be considered within the context of higher education provision and how the government responds to the [Post-18 Review of Education and Funding. The review has recommended that the government should reduce the fee cap chargeable to Higher Education students to £7,500, and that the government should replace the lost income to higher education institutions by increasing the teaching grant.](#) The report also recommends that the government should adjust the teaching grant attached to each subject to reflect more accurately the subject's reasonable costs and its social and economic value to students and taxpayers.¹⁷

At present, it is estimated that the full of cost of veterinary education is well in excess of £20,000 per student, per year of study.¹⁸ Despite existing funding mechanisms, the cost of providing undergraduate veterinary education exceeds current direct income streams.¹⁹ Should funding, or the student tuition fees that supplement this funding, be reduced, this could destabilise the provision of veterinary education risking a dilution in terms of quality and standards, or a reduction in the number of veterinary graduates being produced.

Holistic approach to veterinary education

Needless to say, the veterinary profession has been proactive in its attempts to address these complex issues. Together, BVA and RCVS launched the report [Vet Futures – Taking charge of our future](#) in November 2015. The Vet Futures project aims to improve retention of the existing veterinary workforce by ensuring veterinary professionals are confident, resilient, healthy and well supported, and benefit from exceptional leadership. In July 2016, [the Vet Futures Action Plan](#) was launched with a series of actions to make this vision a reality. These actions are ongoing, including the RCVS Graduate Outcomes Review and its consultation on graduate and professional development phase outcomes

BVA Voice of the Veterinary Profession survey, 40% of practices with vacancies had taken more than three months to recruit or had withdrawn the vacancy due to a lack of suitable candidates. A review undertaken by the veterinary Major Employers Group (MEG) in July 2017 of members providing first opinion clinical services direct to the public found over 600 vacancies open for veterinary surgeons in the UK. Based on MEG's combined employment at the time of the survey, this represents a workforce shortage of around 11%. A subsequent survey was conducted in November 2018 and showed 890 vacancies in member practices employing over 7700 veterinary surgeons, representing a veterinary workforce shortage of approximately 11.5%. A survey of veterinary nursing vacancies 475 vacancies in practices employing over 6200 veterinary nurses representing a shortage of approximately 7.6%.

¹⁴ RCVS Facts 2016

¹⁵ Veterinary Policy Research Foundation, 2016. Brexit - Veterinary Fact File. Available at: <https://vprf.files.wordpress.com/2016/10/brexit-impacts-for-website.pdf>

¹⁶ British Veterinary Association (BVA), 2017. [Brexit and the Veterinary Profession.](#)

¹⁷ House of Common Library, 2019. The forthcoming review of post-18 education and funding. Available at: <https://researchbriefings.parliament.uk/ResearchBriefing/Summary/CBP-8490>

¹⁸ Veterinary Schools Council, 2017. [Maintaining excellence and sustainability in UK veterinary education and research post-Brexit](#)

¹⁹ Ibid.

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proposals. In addition, the number of veterinary undergraduate places has increased with the expansion of capacity in a number of existing veterinary schools²⁰ and the establishment of new veterinary schools and partnerships: [University of Surrey School of Veterinary Medicine \(due to produce its first graduates in 2019\)](#), [Harper and Keele Veterinary School \(first intake in 2020\)](#) and the [University of Aberystwyth/Royal Veterinary College training hub](#).

With a professional landscape in considerable flux as explained above, it is increasingly evident that approaching veterinary education with an inputs-based approach alone (ie. increasing the number of veterinary graduates to meet workforce demand) will not provide a holistic, long-term approach to ensuring capacity and capability in the veterinary workforce.

As such, BVA has set out 50 recommendations pertaining to key areas across the trajectory of veterinary education:

- **Communicating the breadth of veterinary careers through a whole-system approach**
- **Selection and widening participation**
- **Delivery and quality of veterinary undergraduate programmes**
- **Retaining UK veterinary graduates as part of the domestic workforce**
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- **Supporting equality and diversity in the workplace and educational settings**

²⁰ [RCVS Facts 2017](#) demonstrates an increase in veterinary undergraduate student numbers from 804 in 2006-2007 to 1011 in 2016-2017.

Communicating the breadth of veterinary careers through a whole-system approach

In order to attract and retain applicants from a diverse range of backgrounds and socio-economic groups, it is important to provide information on the wide range of career opportunities available to those with a veterinary degree. This should span primary and secondary education and be reinforced during the veterinary undergraduate degree and beyond. A whole-system approach to promoting veterinary careers would enable potential applicants to choose appropriate school subjects, navigate appropriate entry routes and provide sufficient time for applicants to fulfil entry pre-requisites. It is crucial that the different routes of entry into the veterinary undergraduate degree, and the diverse range of veterinary career pathways available to graduates, are accurately and transparently communicated to pupils.

Furthermore, exploring the breadth of career pathways that the veterinary degree presents throughout the undergraduate programme itself would enable veterinary students to fully consider the diversity of career paths that are open to them at appropriate points, both before and after graduation.

Recommendation 1: There should be a whole-system approach to promoting veterinary careers. This should span from primary school to veterinary undergraduate education and beyond.

As part of this, it is paramount to ensure that there is accurate, transparent information available for careers advisors, teachers and lecturers. The provision of such information will ensure that educators are able to inform prospective and current veterinary students accurately and objectively about entry requirements across UK veterinary schools, and the breadth of careers and post-graduate education opportunities available.

Similarly, it is equally important that accurate, transparent information regarding the breadth of career pathways available to the profession is signposted to veterinary surgeons after graduation and accessible to veterinary surgeons at differing stages of their careers. Access to such information will facilitate changes in career pathway should there be changes in personal circumstances or changing demands for veterinary services.

To address this need, BVA and *Vet Record* have been proactive in their development of [My Vet Future](#), an online careers hub of diverse careers content, spanning the full career of a veterinary surgeon, from secondary school to retirement. There is therefore an opportunity for BVA and *Vet Record* to embed [My Vet Future](#) as a 'one-stop-shop' for veterinary education and careers information at a national level, by engaging with the National Careers Service to encourage signposting to [My Vet Future](#) as the first digital destination for prospective veterinary students, and qualified veterinary surgeons at any age or stage.

Recommendation 2: To support a whole-system approach to promoting veterinary careers, there should be accurate, transparent information available for careers advisors, teachers and lecturers so that they can inform prospective veterinary students and graduates about entry requirements across UK veterinary schools and the diversity of uses of the veterinary degree.

Recommendation 3: BVA has a role to play in ensuring access to transparent information about veterinary careers by engaging with the [National Careers Service](#) to encourage signposting to [My Vet Future](#) as a 'one-stop-shop' resource for veterinary education and careers information.

Better defining alternative career pathways

It is important that prospective students, undergraduates, graduates and those in the wider veterinary profession are able to access clear information about the full breadth of career pathways available to them, including pathways outside of traditional clinical practice eg. public health, laboratory animal medicine and science, research, government, pharmaceuticals. With this in mind, we consider that there is the opportunity for the species/sector-specific veterinary associations to help to provide information about career pathways in their sectors. This would help to better define and increase understanding of

the range of careers, increase awareness of career pathways that may not have been otherwise explored, and provide information on how to gain employment in the chosen area. BVA also has a role in supporting the species/sector-specific veterinary associations to collate and present this information.

Recommendation 4: Species/sector-specific veterinary associations should be encouraged to provide easily accessible information about career pathways in their sectors, including non-traditional career routes and post-graduate education opportunities.

Selection and widening participation

The purpose of selection methods should be to select those students who will most benefit from veterinary education and go on to have fulfilling careers in the veterinary workforce, taking the lead in improving animal health and welfare and public health for the benefit of society.

The demographics of those admitted to veterinary school largely reflect the applications received.²¹ Therefore, more work needs to be done to encourage applications from a diverse range of students.²²

Whilst it is important to recognise that widening participation is a complex socio-economic issue, with demographics of those admitted to vet school largely reflective of applications received²³, further efforts should be undertaken by stakeholders across veterinary education to attract students from underrepresented and minority groups.

Selection methods

BVA recognises the progress that the UK's veterinary schools have made to apply a variety of approaches to student admissions, and we support the further encouragement of UK veterinary schools to develop admission approaches that select for both undergraduate and postgraduate success.

UK veterinary schools use a range of selection methods²⁴ to select veterinary students, including academic records, interviews, situational judgement tests and aptitude tests. The undertaking of these selection methods is inevitably costly for universities; however, we note that there is a need to generate additional evidence to assess how these selection methods influence undergraduate and graduate outcomes.

UK veterinary school admission processes and entry requirements traditionally centre on core components with different weightings and durations depending on the veterinary school in question. These components include, but are not limited to:

- Work experience (comprising animal husbandry and/or clinical experience with a veterinary surgeon for varying lengths of time ranging 1-6 weeks depending on the veterinary school)
- Tests and questionnaires before interview
- Interviews (both traditional and multiple mini interviews dependent on the veterinary school)
- Conditional academic grade offer (dependent on the applicant and the veterinary school)

More information on the requirements is available in the Veterinary Schools Council [Admissions processes and entry requirements for UK veterinary school report \(2019\)](#).

²¹ [Selecting for Excellence Final Report](#)

²² Boag, A., 2019. RCVS President, Amanda Boag, responds *Veterinary Record* **184**, 193-194. Available at: <https://veterinaryrecord.bmj.com/content/184/6/193.3>

²³ D Robinson, M Munro, S Baldwin, E Pollard, 2007. Gateways to the Veterinary Profession: Perceptions of Veterinary Careers. *Institute for Employment Studies*. Available at: <https://www.employment-studies.co.uk/system/files/resources/files/443.pdf>

²⁴ Veterinary Schools Council, 2019. [Admissions processes and entry requirements for UK veterinary school report \(2019\)](#)

Evidence clearly shows that structured interviews, multiple mini interviews (MMIs), aptitude tests and situational judgement tests (SJTs) are more effective and generally fairer selection methods than more traditional methods, such as academic records, traditional interviews and personal statements.²⁵ Based on this evidence, veterinary schools have adapted their selection processes to employ selection methods that are more effective in promoting widening access, such as multiple mini interviews (MMIs) and situational judgement tests (SJTs). However, it was found that individual achievement across these selection methods may differentially predict performance and resilience through the various stages of healthcare education and clinical practice after graduation.²⁶

With this in mind, it would be useful to conduct further research into the predictive validity of selection methods in veterinary education, both in terms of widening participation, as well as future performance, resilience and job satisfaction.

Recommendation 5: UK veterinary schools should continue to use a range of selection methods to ensure that the most suitable students are selected to enter the veterinary workforce, whatever their background.

Recommendation 6: Further research should be undertaken to explore the predictive validity of selection methods in veterinary education, both in terms of future performance, resilience, job satisfaction and in terms of widening participation.

Widening participation

All of the UK's veterinary schools have widening participation policies for prospective students from non-traditional academic backgrounds (eg. those with qualifications other than A-levels or who did not study science, those for whom neither parent attended university or those who come from areas where young people do not access higher education in high numbers). As part of this, veterinary schools make adjustments to admissions for those accessing veterinary education through a widening access route. Several of the UK veterinary schools also offer gateway programmes.^{27, 28}

Further, as set out in the Veterinary Schools Council [Admissions processes and entry requirements for UK veterinary school report \(2019\)](#), each of the UK's veterinary schools will have common policies on the following areas:

- **Disability** - It is often possible to make reasonable adjustments so that students with disabilities are able to participate in veterinary courses to completion. Prospective students are advised to contact their preferred veterinary schools to discuss options further.
- **Contextual data** - All UK veterinary schools take account of contextual data when making their admissions decisions. These data allow schools to assess candidates' applications in the light of the educational opportunities they have had eg. if schools or colleges do not provide the relevant subjects to meet veterinary medicine entry requirements or if students have undertaken their secondary education in another language eg. Welsh language.
- **Personal statements** - Veterinary schools are aware that the amount and quality of advice and assistance applicants receive when writing their personal statement varies greatly – and that this could potentially advantage or disadvantage certain applicants. Because of this, no UK

²⁵ Patterson, F. et al, 2016. How effective are selection methods in medical education? A systematic review. *Med Educ.* 2016 Jan;50(1):36-60. Available at: <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/26695465>

²⁶ Ibid.

²⁷ BVA is aware of the widening participation and gateway programmes set out at **Annex A**. This list is not exhaustive. For more information please contact the individual veterinary school admission office.

²⁸ BVA also notes [RVC's previous efforts to widen participation through the VETNET LLN \(Lifelong Learning Network\)](#). The network aimed to encourage further education students, and animal welfare practitioners, into studying veterinary related subjects at higher education level by creating progression packages with courses and personal development plans.

veterinary school assesses the quality of the personal statement during their selection processes. Some veterinary schools have partially or completely replaced the use of the personal statement by introducing their own applicant questionnaires.

- **School examination systems** - All UK veterinary schools are experienced in considering a wide variety of public examination systems from around the world.

Additional efforts to attract students from underrepresented and minority groups to veterinary education

However, despite proactive efforts to widen participation across UK veterinary schools, veterinary science has one of the lowest proportions of black and minority ethnic (BAME) students when compared to other areas of study (4.9%)²⁹ and veterinary medicine is under-represented as a degree choice for widening access or 'Gateway' Students.³⁰

Graduate entry to veterinary medicine

According to undergraduate student numbers in 2016-2017, there were 303 students admitted to the UK vet schools with a prior degree (out of a total of 1,011 general admissions).³¹ It is important to recognise that cost can be a prohibitive factor for those wishing to access veterinary medicine as a second undergraduate degree. Second-degree students are not entitled to a tuition fee loan from the government and will need to pay all five years of tuition fees themselves. With no government financial support for students seeking to do a second degree and the closure of the Professional and Career Development Loan scheme, the burden of financing a high cost veterinary medicine degree can act as a barrier to access, and prevent potentially valuable additions to the veterinary workforce entering the profession at different stages of their lives.

Further, we note that there is little collated information across the UK vet schools regarding graduate entry to veterinary medicine, fast track courses and potential sources of funding. The Veterinary Schools Council [Admissions processes and entry requirements for UK veterinary school report \(2019\)](#) does, however, set out graduate entry pathways across the UK vet schools.

Recommendation 7: BVA has a role to play in working with the UK vet schools and [My Vet Future](#) to formally collate accessible information about graduate entry to veterinary medicine, fast track courses and potential sources of funding.

Pre-entry requirements

Pre-entry requirements for UK veterinary schools³², in particular set periods of animal-related work experience, can act as barriers to accessing veterinary education for those from inner city or deprived socio-economic backgrounds where such placements may not be readily available, or require financial expense/access to private transport to travel to work experience providers outside of the local area. In addition, requirements for set periods of animal-related work experience across UK veterinary schools can act as a disincentive for 'late-deciders', who would meet the academic entry requirements for the veterinary undergraduate degree but may not have sufficient time to successfully undertake the required work experience.

Consequently, we would support that entry requirements across UK veterinary schools place more emphasis on an outcomes-based approach to work experience, focusing on what is learnt and how this is reflected upon, as opposed to focusing on prescribed durations of placements. We are aware that some of the UK veterinary schools are already adopting this approach.

²⁹ Universities UK., 2018. [Patterns and trends in UK Higher Education 2018](#)

³⁰ Woodfield, R., 2014. [Undergraduate retention and attainment across the disciplines](#)

³¹ [RCVS Facts 2017](#)

³² Veterinary Schools Council, 2019. [Admissions processes and entry requirements for UK veterinary school report \(2019\)](#)

Recommendation 8: As part of their pre-entry requirements, UK veterinary schools should continue to adopt an outcomes-based approach to work experience, focusing on what is learnt and how this is reflected upon as opposed to prescribed durations of placements alone.

Recommendation 9: UK veterinary schools should continue to work collaboratively to share best practice and effective strategies to widen participation in veterinary education. This should include considering the best ways to raise awareness of available widening access routes and gateway programmes.

Diversity

Further, BVA has a role to play in terms of increasing the exposure of underrepresented or minority groups to veterinary careers.

This could be achieved by working collaboratively with organisations such as the British Veterinary Ethnicity and Diversity Society (BVEDS), British Veterinary LGBT+ (BVLGBT+) and RCVS Diversity, Equality and Inclusion Working Group to develop an engagement strategy and resources to raise awareness amongst underrepresented and minority groups of veterinary career paths, and the different routes into veterinary education. BVA also has a role in increasing the visibility of members of the profession from underrepresented or minority backgrounds and facilitating 'diversity ambassadors' who can act as role models to prospective students.

Recommendation 10: BVA has a role to play in terms of working collaboratively with organisations such as the British Veterinary Ethnicity and Diversity Society (BVEDS), British Veterinary LGBT+ (BVLGBT+) and RCVS Diversity, Equality and Inclusion Working Group to develop an engagement strategy and resources to raise awareness amongst underrepresented and minority groups of veterinary career paths and the different routes into veterinary education.

Recommendation 11: BVA should work collaboratively with organisations such as the British Veterinary Ethnicity and Diversity Society (BVEDS), British Veterinary LGBT+ (BVLGBT+) and RCVS Diversity, Equality and Inclusion Working Group to facilitate 'diversity ambassadors' within the profession to act as role models for prospective students from underrepresented and minority backgrounds.

Delivery and quality of veterinary undergraduate programmes

Current funding landscape

The costs per student for veterinary education are high compared to other taught subjects due to the wide range of clinical and professional skills graduates need to be equipped with upon graduation, as set out in the RCVS Day One Competences (See Figure 2).

At present, the UK's eight veterinary schools are situated in England (Royal Veterinary College and Universities of Cambridge, Bristol, Nottingham, Liverpool, Surrey³³) and Scotland (University of Glasgow and University of Edinburgh). Government funding for the delivery of teaching in these institutions is a devolved issue.

In England, veterinary schools currently receive a finite sum of government funding from Price Group A of the [Office for Students](#) funding allocation and in Scotland, veterinary schools receive funding from Group 1 of the [Scottish Funding Council gross price funding](#) for higher education subjects. Both of these government allocations fund high-cost, high-resource clinical courses, including medicine and dentistry. Based on 2019/2020 prices, this equates to around £10,250 per student FTE in England (supplemented to varying degrees by student tuition fees as shown in Figure 1)³⁴ and £16,875 per student FTE in

³³ Harper and Keele Veterinary School due to take its first intake of veterinary students in September 2020

³⁴ The University of Cambridge offers a 6-year course in veterinary medicine, with the university receiving £1537.50 per

Scotland. Fees for those taking second degrees vary between UK veterinary schools, and non-EU students are required to pay the full course fee stipulated by the individual university.

Figure 1 illustrates the break down of funding received per UK and EU students for veterinary education as per 2019/2020 prices:

Figure 1: Breakdown of funding received per UK and EU students for veterinary education as per 2019/2020 prices				
	Total funding received	Government funding	Student tuition fees	
Veterinary schools in England	£19,500	The Office for Students ringfences a finite amount of funding for veterinary education from Price Group A of the Office for Students funding allocation, which funds for high-cost, high-resource clinical courses, including medicine and dentistry. For the year 2019-2020, funding was £10,250 per student FTE . This funding can be spent however the vet school deems fit to achieve its desired curricula outcomes.	£9,250 per year (UK and EU students)	
Veterinary schools in Scotland	£16,875	The Scottish Funding Council allocates six teaching subject gross prices ³⁵ . Alongside Clinical Medicine and Clinical Dentistry, Veterinary is Price Group 1. ³⁶ For the 2019-2020-year, funding was £16,875 per student FTE (for Scotland nationals and EU students this total includes the tuition fee paid directly to the university) . This funding can be spent however the vet school deems fit to achieve its desired curricula outcomes.	Scotland nationals and EU students £1,820 per student per year (fee paid direct to the university by Student Awards Agency Scotland (SAAS))	Rest of the UK £9,250 per year

At present, however, it is estimated that the full of cost of delivering veterinary education is well in excess of £20,000 per student, per year of study.³⁷ Despite existing funding mechanisms, the cost of providing undergraduate veterinary education exceeds current direct income streams.³⁸ Figure 2 demonstrates the difference between student fee income and overall cost to deliver the veterinary undergraduate programme in England, alongside other high-cost subjects. This figure does not include

FTE (from Price Group B) in year one of the degree programme, and £10,250 per FTE (from Price Group A) from years 2-6 (as per 2019/2020 funding prices).

³⁵ Scottish Funding Council (2019) SFC Announcement [Online] Available: http://www.sfc.ac.uk/web/FILES/announcements_sfc092019/SFCAN092019_final_allocations_for_2019-20.pdf

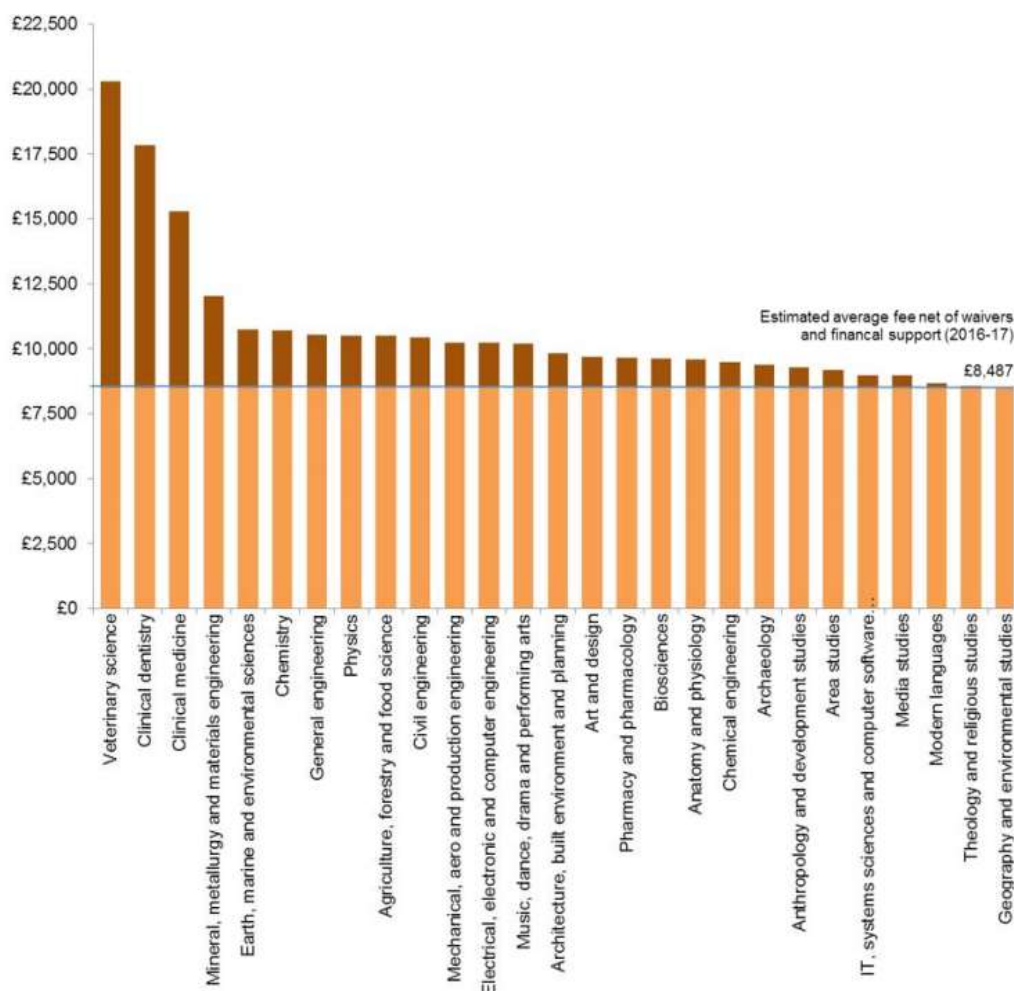
³⁶ University of Glasgow (2018) SFC Price Groups [Online] Available from: <https://www.gla.ac.uk/myglasgow/planning/sfc/sfcpg/> (Accessed: 18/09/2018)

³⁷ Veterinary Schools Council, 2017. [Maintaining excellence and sustainability in UK veterinary education and research post-Brexit](#)

³⁸ Ibid.

the additional costs of Extra-mural Studies (EMS), clinical inputs from vet school owned businesses or various indirect costs.

Figure 2: Identifying high-cost subjects: Difference between fee income and costs Source: Adapted from Universities UK analysis of Higher Education Funding Council for England TRACT(T) and Office for Fair Access data



Given the high-cost of delivering the veterinary undergraduate degree, a reduction in tuition fees in the context of current funding mechanisms has the potential to negatively impact on teaching standards and quality - removing a large proportion of the funds needed to successfully deliver the veterinary undergraduate degree as it is currently structured. This is a particularly pertinent consideration in context of the [Post-18 Review of Education and Funding, which has recommended that that the government should reduce the fee cap chargeable to Higher Education students to £7,500 and that the government should replace the lost income to institutions by increasing the teaching grant. The report also recommends that the government](#) should adjust the teaching grant attached to each subject to reflect more accurately the subject's reasonable costs and its social and economic value to students and taxpayers. Given the valuable contribution that veterinary graduates make to society and the high

cost of delivering the veterinary undergraduate degree, we strongly support the recommendation to increase the teaching grant for high-cost subjects if the student fee cap is reduced.

Further, the economic reality of veterinary education is that student tuition fees and government funding do not meet the costs of producing qualified veterinary surgeons. We would therefore support additional government funding for veterinary education by increasing the unit of resource per student to safeguard the quality of graduates and ensure a consistent supply of qualified veterinary surgeons.

Recommendation 12: There should be additional government funding from UK funding bodies for veterinary education by increasing the unit of resource per student in order to maintain quality and standards in veterinary education and contribute to retaining capacity in the veterinary workforce.

Safeguarding quality and standards of veterinary education

With growth in the provision of veterinary services (including both the first opinion and specialist referral market) estimated at 5% per annum³⁹, meeting the growing demand for veterinary surgeons will require steady continued growth in the size of the veterinary workforce. This is further compounded by the UK's exit from the EU which continues to exacerbate existing concerns regarding workforce shortages.⁴⁰

A possible approach to address workforce shortages could be to increase the number of UK graduates that are being produced. However, it is important to outline that as the number of veterinary places is not capped and Government funding for education is not calculated per capita, Government funding for veterinary education does not automatically increase if a new vet school is created or if the intake of vet students at existing UK schools increases. Further, for European Association of Establishments for Veterinary Education (EAEVE) accredited veterinary schools, there are specific staff:student ratios that universities must adhere to⁴¹, meaning that any increase in students would also require additional funding for staff and could impact on teaching capacity and teaching facilities.

Therefore, when creating additional places for veterinary students, at new or existing veterinary schools, serious consideration must be given as to how this could impact on teaching standards and quality of education, as well as the potential unintended consequences on the number of students that other veterinary schools are able to admit.

With this in mind, efforts to address the capacity crisis in the veterinary profession must avoid oversimplification and reliance on an inputs-based approach alone.

Recommendation 13: Any increase in the number of vet students must duly consider potential unintended consequences on the quality and standards of veterinary education.

Recommendation 14: Any increase in the number of vet students to address workforce shortages must be supported by additional Government funding in order to safeguard existing quality and standards in veterinary education.

³⁹ Pets at Home Group Plc

Annual Report and Accounts 2018. Available at: <https://investors.petsathome.com/investors/annual-reports/annual-report-2018>

⁴⁰ Before the EU referendum, UK veterinary practices were reporting difficulties in recruiting, with a BVA Voice of the Veterinary Profession (Voice) survey in early 2015 revealing that 40% of practices with vacancies had taken more than three months to recruit in the last year, or had withdrawn the vacancy due to a lack of suitable candidates.

⁴¹ RCVS. Criteria and guidance for RCVS approval of veterinary degree courses in the UK and overseas. Available at: <https://www.rcvs.org.uk/document-library/criteria-and-guidance-for-visitations/>

Retaining UK veterinary graduates as part of the domestic workforce

Maximising the potential of overseas graduates in the veterinary workforce

According to the RCVS, across UK veterinary schools there were 5,295 veterinary undergraduate students in 2017 (over a five-year course). Of these, 129 were from the EU and 1,016 were from third countries.⁴²

Under existing arrangements EU-qualified veterinary surgeons have the freedom to live and work in the UK. Under the Mutual Recognition of Professional Qualifications Directive (MRPQ) European Economic Area (EEA) qualified veterinary surgeons have the automatic right to register with the Royal College of Veterinary Surgeons (RCVS) to practise in the UK. As the UK leaves the EU, in February 2019 the House of Lords passed a Statutory Instrument to allow the RCVS to continue to register veterinary surgeons from the EEA after the UK leaves the European Union. The Veterinary Surgeons and Animal Welfare (Amendment) (EU Exit) Regulations 2019 ends the preferential access that veterinary surgeons with qualifications from EEA countries have when registering in the UK. Consequently, the RCVS will be able to introduce the RCVS Statutory Examination for Membership for EEA and Swiss nationals where they hold a degree that does not meet RCVS educational requirements and standards. However, no further assessment of skill or knowledge will be required where the RCVS is satisfied that the degree the applicant holds meets this requirement and is equivalent to one from a UK veterinary school.

We also note that, RCVS statistics indicate that there has been a fall in non-EEA registrants with 173 in the 2015/2016 period to 161 in 2016/2017.⁴³

With this in mind, recognise existing MRPQ legislation through a transitional arrangement to mitigate against a sudden reduction in the veterinary workforce.

Consideration should also be given as to how to support international graduates who are taking the RCVS Statutory Examination for Membership, as well as support their transition into different roles within the UK veterinary workforce.

Recommendation 15: The UK Government should add veterinary surgeons to the Shortage Occupation List* and extend/continue to recognise existing MRPQ legislation through a transitional arrangement.

Recommendation 16: Consideration should be given as to how to support international graduates who are taking the RCVS Statutory Examination for Membership, as well as support their transition into different roles within the UK veterinary workforce.

In addition, alongside considerations to increase current student numbers to meet workforce demand, consideration should be given to facilitating existing overseas graduates to remain and work in the UK after graduation. This could be achieved by amending current student visas or introducing a post-study work visa where there is a grace period after graduation for overseas graduates to secure work.

Recommendation 17: Overseas nationals graduating from UK veterinary schools should be allowed to live and work in the UK to help address the shortage of veterinary surgeons, this could be facilitated through the implementation of a post-study work visa.

Encouraging UK veterinary students studying abroad to return to the UK

⁴² Royal College of Veterinary Surgeons, 2017. RCVS Facts 2016. Available at: <https://www.rcvs.org.uk/news-andviews/publications/rcvs-facts-2016/>

⁴³ Royal College of Veterinary Surgeons, 2018. RCVS Facts 2017. Available at: <https://www.rcvs.org.uk/news-andviews/publications/rcvs-facts-2017/rcvs-facts-2017-final.pdf>

*Since agreement of this document at BVA Council (April 2019), and following successful campaigning from BVA and RCVS, the UK Government has announced its intention to restore veterinary surgeons to the Shortage Occupation List.

As part of this, it is also important to ensure that UK veterinary students studying in EU and non-EEA countries are encouraged to return to the UK to pursue diverse and fulfilling career pathways within the UK veterinary workforce.

Recommendation 18: UK veterinary students studying in EU and non-EU countries should be encouraged and supported to return to the UK to pursue diverse and fulfilling career pathways within the UK veterinary workforce.

Extra-mural Studies (EMS), tracking, methods of assessment

BVA recognises that the provision of accessible, high-quality and appropriately funded extra-mural studies (EMS) is an important part of veterinary education. EMS enables exposure to a wide range of working environments, both clinical and non-clinical, as well as all aspects of the veterinary team. As such, EMS should be underpinned by a commitment to maintain exposure to different sectors, career routes and overseas opportunities, as well as recognition of the importance of exposure to general practice as a cornerstone of veterinary education.

Recommendation 19: EMS should be underpinned by a commitment to maintain exposure to different sectors, career routes and overseas opportunities, as well as recognition of the importance of exposure to general practice as a cornerstone of veterinary education.

Extra-mural studies (EMS): Student experience and support

The [2018 AVS EMS Experience survey](#) highlights the range of benefits of EMS as perceived by current students and recent graduates. Respondents frequently commented that EMS provides an opportunity to:

- Gain a hands-on, realistic experience which cannot be provided in lectures;
- Watch, learn and improve skills in a range of situations, giving more breadth than university scenarios;
- Understand the types of environments which vets work in, and which [the respondent] prefers;
- Put theory into practice, broaden knowledge, increase confidence and reduce nerves after graduation; and
- Make professional contacts and build relationships with potential employers.

However, while the [2018 AVS EMS Experience survey](#) reported that respondents were highly positive about the ability of EMS to better prepare them for careers in practice than their degree rotations alone (96.7% agreed), we are also aware of concerns expressed around the variable quality of the EMS experience and the financial costs to students (both direct and indirect) of undertaking EMS eg. costs of travel, accommodation, time taken away from other earning opportunities or paid work outside of term time.

With this in mind, workplace learning could be better supported by increasing the communication between veterinary schools and EMS providers about the aims of EMS, both in general and individual students. EMS providers should have a clear idea of the objectives that the student has for their placement, as well as their current level of knowledge and skills. The use of a formal structure to communicate this information, such as the [AVS Pre-EMS objective setting templates for small animal, farm animal and equine practice](#), can optimise the experience for both students and providers. Ideally this information should be communicated at the time the EMS placement is booked to ensure that the practice feels able to support the student in meeting their learning objectives.

In addition, increased provision of mentorship and education-based training of staff in workplaces providing EMS placements would help staff to be able to confidently support and mentor students to develop both clinical and non-clinical skills, as well as supporting insights into opportunities for different career paths. However, any training should not place an increased burden on practices that could potentially result in fewer places for EMS being available.

As part of this, it is important to emphasise that students, along with their tutors, should take responsibility to ensure that their EMS meets their own personal development objectives.

Recommendation 20: There should be increased communication between veterinary schools and EMS providers about the aims of EMS, both in general and for individual students.

Recommendation 21: EMS providers should be encouraged to use a formal structure to communicate the aims and objectives of EMS placements with students, such as the [AVS Pre-EMS objective setting templates for small animal, farm animal and equine practice](#).

Recommendation 22: There should be increased provision of mentorship and education-based training of staff in workplaces providing EMS placements.

Recommendation 23: BVA has a role to play in supporting the delivery of EMS for both providers and students across clinical and non-clinical settings by reviewing and updating its EMS guides for [providers](#) and [students](#).

Recommendation 24: Students, along with their tutors, should take responsibility to ensure that their EMS meets their own personal development objectives.

Extra-mural studies (EMS): Delivery

As part of its Graduate Outcomes Review, RCVS has engaged with the wider veterinary profession to consider various options that could improve the way in which EMS is currently delivered. These include:

- Early clinical exposure
- Block placement at the end of the undergraduate programme
- Parallel Animal Husbandry Extra-mural Studies (AHEMS) and Clinical EMS
- Incorporation into the curriculum

[BVA set out its full considerations on each of these proposed models of delivery in its response to the RCVS consultation on graduate and professional development phase outcomes.](#)

As an overarching principle, however, specifying the model of delivery for EMS placements becomes less important when objectives and outcomes of the placement are clearly defined, measured and reflected upon. It is important to recognise that individual students will come with different experiences and have different objectives. It is therefore unlikely that one method of delivery will fit all circumstances. Whichever way EMS is delivered, it should enable exposure to different veterinary environments and areas of work (both clinical and non-clinical). The offering should remain as varied as possible in order to allow students to gain experience in a wide range of work settings. There should be increased awareness amongst students and EMS co-ordinators about the variety of EMS placements available and breadth of career pathways that can be pursued.

The delivery of EMS requires the involvement of the whole profession. Each organisation(s) should be responsible and accountable for different aspects of the delivery of EMS. For example, RCVS should have overall oversight, define minimum requirements and provide guidance on objectives and standards for delivery. Individual veterinary schools should be able to determine the details of the amount and type of EMS to achieve their own curricula and student outcomes. Students, with their tutors, should take responsibility to ensure that their EMS meets their own personal development objectives. However, the veterinary schools should also share knowledge of placements in order to meet the needs of individual students who develop a particular interest in a specialist area.

In addition, as part of considerations around the delivery of EMS it is important to recognise the time and effort required by EMS providers to deliver high quality EMS placements, as well as considering ways in which veterinary schools and professional associations can further support EMS providers in

their delivery of placements. As highlighted in [the EMS Recommendations, Policy & Guidance as approved by RCVS Council in November 2009](#):

Bearing in mind that practices receive no financial remuneration for their contribution to the training of veterinary students, universities should consider offering EMS providers discounted and/or preferential access to some services, facilities and/or CPD provided by the university. This will help to strengthen links between practices and universities, bringing benefits to both sides. Whilst these recommendations have financial implications for the universities, it should be recognised that it could cost them considerably more to try and replace EMS completely by in-house or university-owned provision, if indeed it ever could be replicated.

Recommendation 25: The delivery of EMS should involve the whole veterinary profession, with each organisation(s) being responsible and accountable for different aspects of delivery. For example, RCVS should have overall oversight, define minimum requirements and provide guidance on objectives and standards for delivery. Individual veterinary schools should be able to determine the details of the amount and type of EMS to achieve their own curricula and student outcomes.

Recommendation 26: Consideration should be given to the ways in which veterinary schools and professional associations can further support EMS providers in their delivery of placements.

In addition, in order to effectively showcase the breadth of non-clinical and non-traditional roles that are available to the veterinary graduate, it would be useful to consider a system which requires veterinary students to undertake EMS in clinical, non-clinical and non-traditional settings.

Recommendation 27: Consideration should be given to establishing a system for EMS which enables veterinary students to undertake EMS in wide range of settings including clinical, non-clinical and non-traditional settings.

As part of this, there should be increased awareness amongst students and EMS co-ordinators about the variety of EMS placements available and breadth of career pathways that can be pursued. There is therefore an opportunity for BVA to work the species/sector-specific veterinary associations to showcase the wide range of EMS opportunities that are on offer to veterinary students across sectors.

Recommendation 28: BVA has a role to play in supporting species/sector-specific divisions to better showcase and signpost to the wide range of EMS opportunities that are on offer across sectors.

Tracking

In terms of tracking⁴⁴, BVA supports the principle that students should gain exposure to all species and graduate able to work and further develop in all areas. We also recognise that partial tracking is currently occurring within the UK veterinary schools to differing extents. At present we would therefore not support a move to a system of limited licensure. We recognise that increased tracking provides both advantages and disadvantages to individual students and the wider workforce as identified in the [Crowther et al \(2014\) Stakeholder consultation on tracking in UK veterinary degrees](#).

It is paramount that students are able to change their minds as to their preferred area of practice or work during the veterinary undergraduate degree, as both their preferences and the opportunities for employment may change. This will prevent limiting graduate options at an early stage and the potential need to retrain students.

Consequently, BVA supports a degree of partial tracking where students are able to 'track' and/or undertake an elective in one or a limited number of species or disciplines in order to develop increased knowledge and competence in the area that they are hoping to work in. We also see an opportunity for partial tracking⁴⁵ to allow students to select the EMS placements that most closely match their career aspirations, reducing the requirement for students to undertake EMS in areas in which they have little interest.

Recommendation 29: BVA supports a degree of partial tracking where students are able to 'track' and/or undertake an elective in one or a limited number of species or disciplines. As part of this students should maintain a broad exposure to different species so that they are able to maintain their omnipotential or change their minds as to their preferred area of practice or work during the undergraduate degree.

Methods of assessment

We note that RCVS accreditation does not prescribe any specific assessment method across veterinary schools. Instead, veterinary schools are required to demonstrate that students meet curricula outcomes and the [Day One Competences](#) through different styles and combinations of assessments. We recognise that recent research demonstrates general positive attitude towards a national standardised assessment from veterinary educators and opportunities to improve quality, standards and employability of veterinary surgeons.⁴⁶ However, we are not aware of any evidence that suggests that, at present, there is a need to move from current methods of assessment towards a standardised method of assessment. Consequently, at this time BVA does not support any moves towards standardised methods of assessment.

Recommendation 30: Without evidence to suggest otherwise, there should not be a move towards standardised methods of assessment at this time.

Graduate Outcomes: Day One Competences and the Professional Development Phase

To ensure capacity and capability within the veterinary workforce, there must be clarity around the outcomes required by graduates for their future veterinary careers.⁴⁷

The [2018 VetSet2G0 report 'Interpreting employability in the veterinary context', funded by the Australian government](#), has characterised veterinary surgeons as team-based professionals who must balance stakeholder needs in the face of complexity. The report also noted that the profession is challenged by economic and societal change, requiring new and diverse capabilities in veterinary graduates.

Similarly, research conducted on veterinary professional identity found that:

⁴⁵ **Definition and types of tracking:** (Adapted from [Crowther, E., Hughes, K., Handel, I., Whittington, R., Pryce, M., Warman, S., Rhind, S., Baillie, S. \(2014\) Stakeholder consultation on tracking in UK veterinary degrees: part 1 *Veterinary Record* 175, 86](#))

- **Partial tracking** - Students are trained across all species, but are able to 'track' and/or undertake an elective in one or a limited number of species or disciplines. Students continue to undertake a multispecies final examination and still qualify to practise in all species.
- **Full tracking** - No longer teaching all areas of veterinary medicine during the undergraduate course. In 'full tracking', the students' studies are directed to a 'track' of one or a limited number of species. Students would undertake a species-specific final examination, and qualify to practise in this area only. This would be a new concept in the UK and would require changes to RCVS regulations.

⁴⁶ Pooley and Wapenaar, 2018. [Barriers and motivators towards a national final year assessment in the United Kingdom and the Republic of Ireland for veterinary undergraduates](#)

⁴⁷ [Vet Futures Action Plan](#)

*"[...] the veterinary surgeon is understood to be an interprofessional team member, who makes clinical decisions in the face of competing stakeholder needs and works in a complex environment comprising multiple and diverse challenges (stress, high emotions, financial issues, work–life balance)."*⁴⁸

There is therefore a need to ensure that both the RCVS Day One Competences and support programmes to facilitate the transition into working life eg. the Professional Development Phase (PDP), enable new graduates to understand the needs and expectations of multiple stakeholders, and assume the role of the professional veterinary surgeon with confidence.

Day One Competences:

Clinical education throughout the undergraduate programme

In terms of providing veterinary students with the knowledge and skills to prepare new graduates for the world of work, veterinary schools are responsible for developing the Day One Competences of their students and ensuring that they have met the competences by the time they graduate. However, we are aware that concerns have been raised that university and referral practice teaching is not always preparing students for the cases and decision making that they will encounter in first opinion practice⁴⁹⁵⁰. In addition, it is important that clinical education develops alongside the evolving societal expectations of the veterinary profession. BVA therefore supports the principle that students should be exposed to a range of learning environments and given the opportunity to select work-based placements that enable them to develop their Day One Competences, meet their individual learning objectives, and explore diverse career pathways. Across all veterinary graduates there should therefore be a good understanding of the breadth of veterinary professional responsibilities when interfacing with the wider veterinary profession and colleagues in both clinical and non-clinical roles. However, as the majority of graduates will at least initially enter primary care practice, it is important that they have the opportunity to undertake work-based placements that enable them to understand how the Day One Competences apply in this setting.

Recommendation 31: Veterinary students should be exposed to a range of learning environments and given the opportunity to select work-based placements that enable them to develop their Day One Competences, meet their individual learning objectives and explore diverse career pathways.

As well as clinical competences, it is also important to ensure that veterinary graduates have the opportunity to develop a range of non-clinical competences and are prepared to navigate the range and complexity of decisions they will be expected to undertake as part of their first clinical roles (eg. communication, resilience and emotional intelligence).⁵¹ This will also serve to prepare them for the many different career pathways and opportunities that the veterinary degree presents, both clinical and non-clinical.

As a competence that spans both clinical and non-clinical skills, ethical reasoning is also an integral part of the veterinary surgeon's role in navigating the ethical challenges arising from a vet's duty to animals, clients and their employers. It is therefore important that awareness and training in animal welfare, science, ethics and law (AWSEL) is integrated across undergraduate curricula. Similarly, for the veterinary profession to position itself as animal welfare focussed, awareness and training in animal welfare advocacy at undergraduate level should be strengthened.

⁴⁸ Armitage-Chan, E., Maddison, J., May, SA., 2016. What is the veterinary professional identity? Preliminary findings from web-based continuing professional development in veterinary professionalism *Veterinary Record* 178, 318.

Available at: <https://veterinaryrecord.bmj.com/content/178/13/318>

⁴⁹ [AVS Student Experience Survey](#)

⁵⁰ 2017 [Vet School Council Employer Survey](#)

⁵¹ British Veterinary Association, 2016. [Euthanasia of animals guide](#).

Recommendation 32: As well as clinical competences, veterinary graduates should have the opportunity to develop a range of non-clinical competences and be prepared to navigate the decision-making processes they will be expected to undertake as part of their first role

Recommendation 33: Day One Competences and guidance must pay due regard to veterinary surgeons who embark on varied, including non-clinical, career paths.

Recommendation 34: Awareness and training in animal welfare, science, ethics and law (AWSEL) should be integrated across undergraduate curricula.

Recommendation 35: For the veterinary profession to position itself as animal welfare focussed, awareness and training in animal welfare advocacy at undergraduate level should be strengthened.

BVA understands that the Day One Competences are designed to apply to a wide range of contexts but would recommend the provision of guidance regarding the expected species/sector-specific skills expected at graduation. This could be beneficial in aligning expectations of employers and new graduates, as well as supporting individuals who wish to move into other areas of the profession at different stages of their career with appropriate guidance. It is important to note that embarking on a career path in general practice and then specialising is not the only viable post-graduate route for veterinary surgeons, and that the Day One Competences and guidance must properly acknowledge non-clinical veterinary surgeons and career paths. Therefore species/sector specific guidance could be used to show how the competences are relevant for those working in specialist fields such as aquaculture, pig or poultry practice, laboratory animal medicine and science, and non-clinical areas such as public health.

Here, there is an opportunity for the species/sector-specific veterinary associations to help to develop guidance on what the 'Day One Competences' look like in their sectors. This information could help to align the expectations of employers, students and educators by showing how these competences apply and map against the realities of the world of work. For example, the [BVZS Day One Competences resource](#) and the [BCVA Day One Skills List](#).

Recommendation 36: Species/sector-specific veterinary associations should develop guidance on what the 'Day One Competences' look like in their sectors.

As part of this, it is important to recognise the importance of, and opportunities for, continuing education and post-graduate qualifications throughout a veterinary career. These should use the Day One Competences as a foundation set of transferable skills that can be used and developed in a variety of workplace settings as careers develop, and different career choices that are made by individuals over time and/or as different life circumstances present themselves.

Recommendation 37: BVA supports the provision of continued and post-graduate education throughout the veterinary career to enable varied career choices at any stage of professional life.

Review of Day One Competences

As part of its Graduate Outcomes Review, the RCVS has engaged with the wider veterinary profession to review the Day One Competences to ensure they are fit for purpose and fully represent the skills and attributes required of veterinary graduates to work safely and independently upon entering the profession.

BVA considers that the current Day One Competences are broadly relevant and useful. However, we recognise that it is important to review the current Day One Competences to ensure that they meet the needs of veterinary graduates at the start of their career as well as the broader needs of employers,

animal owners and society. BVA would like to see animal health and welfare at the heart of any review or proposed models of competence.⁵²

According to the 2017 [Veterinary Schools Council Employer Survey](#) the following areas received the lowest competency scores and therefore may benefit from enhanced guidance regarding the standard expected from the new graduate:

- Can perform a systematic post-mortem examination, including recording their observations
- Demonstrates an understanding of the economic context of the veterinary profession
- Is aware of the legislation affecting veterinary businesses (eg disposal of clinical waste and safety of medicines)
- Demonstrates knowledge of systems of quality assurance (eg knowledge and explanation of the procedure for reporting adverse incidents)
- Remains calm and appears comfortable working in pressurised situations
- Shows an awareness of expenditures involved in running a veterinary business

In addition, in the [BVA position on veterinary scanning surveillance \(animal health and disease monitoring\)](#), BVA identified that the Day One Competences should be further developed to include specific reference to practical skills in surveillance activities (contributing to and using surveillance reports and understanding the value of doing so), which are consolidated by veterinary graduates throughout their Professional Development Phase.⁵³

Recommendation 38: Animal health and welfare should be at the heart of any review of the Day One Competences or any proposed models of competence.

Recommendation 39: RCVS should develop enhanced guidance detailing the standard expected from new graduates for Day One Competences areas identified as having low competency scores.

Professional Development Phase (PDP)

BVA recognises the importance of having a structured process to support new veterinary graduates during the transition from the structured environment of veterinary education to the world of work.

In order to help retain veterinary surgeons within the profession and in order to adapt to future changes in the requirements for veterinary surgeons, it is important to stress that the PDP is not only for new graduates but is also an appropriate way to support veterinary surgeons changing their area of practice or returning to work after a career break. Similarly, it is important to note that embarking on a career path in general practice and then specialising is not the only viable post-graduate route for veterinary surgeons. The PDP must therefore be applicable and useful for veterinary surgeons in non-clinical roles.

Recommendation 40: It should be recognised that PDP is not only for new graduates but is also an appropriate way to support veterinary surgeons changing their area of practice or returning to work after a career break.

⁵² British Veterinary Association, 2019. [BVA, AGV, AVI, AVS, BCVA, BEVA, BSAVA, BVPA, GVS, LAVA, PVS, SVS, SPVS and VPHA response to RCVS consultation on graduate and professional development phase outcomes](#)

⁵³ British Veterinary Association, 2018. BVA position on veterinary scanning surveillance (animal health and disease monitoring). Available at:

https://www.bva.co.uk/uploadedFiles/Content/News_campaigns_and_policy/Policy/Animal_disease_surveillance/BVA%20position%20on%20veterinary%20scanning%20surveillance.pdf

Recommendation 41: PDP must be applicable and relevant for veterinary surgeons in non-clinical roles.

Focus of the PDP

The PDP should provide opportunities for the development of clinical and professional skills; confidence in different areas of work (both clinical and non-clinical); opportunities to apply moral reasoning and ethical decision-making and, importantly, mentorship to develop in each of these areas according to individual need and circumstances in which the individual is working.

The [Student Minds Graduate Mental Wellbeing in the Workplace Report](#) (although not specific to veterinary graduates) highlights a number of factors associated with the transition into the workplace. Addressing these factors could be emphasised within the PDP:

- The graduate has a manager who is interested in their personal development;
- The graduate has someone they feel confident contacting if they are struggling with their wellbeing;
- The graduate feels comfortable taking breaks during the workday, for example, taking a break for lunch;
- The graduate finds the work they are doing interesting;
- The graduate feels able to keep up with financial pressures;
- The graduate feels that their organisation is proactive about promoting wellbeing;
- The graduate feels included in work-related social activities.

Recommendation 42: The PDP should provide opportunities for the development of clinical and professional skills; confidence in different areas of work (both clinical and non-clinical); opportunities to apply moral reasoning and ethical decision-making and mentorship.

Structure, delivery and recording of the PDP

BVA supports the way in which the current PDP competences largely mirror the Day One Competences. However, as competence is relative to the expected standard, both in terms of task and fluency, greater clarity is needed, for both graduates and those supporting them on the expected level of competence on completion of the PDP.

PDP can often be seen as a tick box exercise with the emphasis more on the number of cases treated than on the learning that has taken place and the development of competence.⁵⁴ This approach also creates problems for those who, for whatever reason, do not have access to particular clinical cases. We therefore support a move away from an input-based process for PDP towards an outcomes-based approach, focussed on the outcomes that the graduate is expected to achieve by the end of their PDP, rather than focusing on the number of cases that have been treated.

Recommendation 43: There should be a move away from an input-based process for PDP towards an outcomes-based approach, focussed on the outcomes that the graduate is expected to achieve by the end of their PDP, rather than focusing on the number of cases that have been treated.

The [RCVS/ BSAVA 2017 evaluation of the PDP for veterinary graduates](#) highlights particular challenges for graduates, such as the disparity between what students were being taught in veterinary school and how applicable this is to real life cases, and around non-clinical skills, including making decisions independently and adapting communication styles for different clients. These are also the areas that employers find most challenging to support. It would therefore be helpful to provide support and resources not only to recent graduates completing the PDP, but also to their employers so that they are able to effectively support and mentor their employees and understand the benefit of doing so. With this

⁵⁴ [RCVS/ BSAVA 2017 evaluation of the PDP for veterinary graduates](#)

in mind, we would support the development of appropriate CPD to support the role of PDP mentors and supervisors.

Recommendation 44: Further support, guidance and resources should be developed to support graduates completing the PDP, as well as employers providing PDP.

Recommendation 45: BVA has a role to play in supporting the delivery and completion of PDP guides for [employers](#) and [employees](#).

Recommendation 46: Consideration should be given to developing appropriate CPD to support the role of PDP mentors or supervisors.

In principle, BVA supports the introduction of quality assurance of PDP. At this time, however, we are concerned that this could have the unintended consequence of acting as a disincentive for smaller practices employing new graduates due to the financial and time burden of meeting these standards. However, we would support voluntary inspection of PDP provision through the Practice Standards Scheme where additional emphasis could be given to specific standards relating to PDP, developing staff, providing support for new graduates and mentor training for supervisory staff. Consideration could also be given to the RCVS accreditation of existing graduate schemes outside of the PDP.

Recommendation 47: BVA supports the inclusion of enhanced standards relating to the provision of PDP within the current Practice Standards Scheme and consideration could be given to the RCVS accreditation of existing graduate schemes outside of the PDP.

We support a system of recording the PDP that includes the facility to record professional skills alongside clinical skills and a system into which both the graduate and a mentor can contribute. It is also important that the recording system is easy to use and focuses more on outcomes (progression and building confidence) rather than just recording number of cases treated.

Consideration should also be given as to whether it is possible to develop an integrated system to record experience and competence for students, graduates and post-graduates so that students and graduates have one system in which to record and reflect upon their professional development.

Recommendation 48: BVA supports a different system of recording the PDP that includes the facility to record professional skills alongside clinical skills and a system into which both the graduate and a mentor can contribute.

Recommendation 49: As part of the RCVS Graduate Outcomes review, consideration should also be given as to whether it is possible to develop an integrated system to record experience and competence for students, graduates and post-graduates.

Supporting equality and diversity in the workplace and educational settings

As part of supporting new veterinary graduates during the transition from the structured environment of veterinary education to the world of work, it is paramount that workplaces and educational settings support diversity in all of its forms.⁵⁵

It is important to note that in the RCVS Code of Conduct supporting guidance on [Veterinary teams and leaderships](#) it states that:

17.5 Veterinary surgeons and veterinary nurses should be aware of and adhere to all of their responsibilities as set out in the [relevant equalities legislation](#) and should take steps to challenge unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation where it arises.

⁵⁵ [Equality Act 2010](#)

BVA has a role to play in facilitating its members to support equality and diversity in the workplace and educational settings. This could be achieved through working collaboratively with organisations such as the British Veterinary Ethnicity and Diversity Society (BVEDS) and British Veterinary LGBT+ (BVLGBT+) to:

- Develop guidance for employees and students who may be victims of discrimination in its varying forms (eg. racism, sexism, xenophobia). This guidance should detail how to challenge these kind of behaviours, formal reporting processes and how to report instances anonymously to BVA;
- Develop guidance for employers detailing how to handle reports of discrimination in its varying forms (eg. racism, sexism, xenophobia). This guidance should include advice on how to navigate relationships with clients and provide appropriate support for staff;
- Promote unconscious bias CPD and training; and
- Develop template equality and diversity policies for workplaces.

Recommendation 50: BVA has a role to play in working collaboratively with organisations such as the British Veterinary Ethnicity and Diversity Society (BVEDS), British Veterinary LGBT+ (BVLGBT+) to develop guidance and resources to support equality and diversity in the workplace and educational settings.

Annex A – Widening participation and gateway programmes offered by UK vet schools

BVA is aware of the widening participation and gateway programmes set out below. This list is not exhaustive. For more information please contact the individual veterinary school admission office.

University	Overview
The Royal Veterinary College (RVC)	The Royal Veterinary College offers The Veterinary Gateway programme, which integrates an additional preparatory year designed to equip widening participation students with the appropriate knowledge and skills to undertake a veterinary medicine degree.
The University of Nottingham	The University of Nottingham offers a 6-year Veterinary Medicine and Surgery programme including a gateway year
The University of Bristol	The University of Bristol offer a BVSc Gateway Veterinary Science programme , which, upon successful completion, allows students to join the BVSc veterinary science course.
	The University of Bristol also offer an Insight into Bristol residential summer school programme, with a Veterinary Sciences stream, that aims to encourage and support students from a Black, Asian or Minority Ethnic background into university.
The University of Liverpool	The University of Liverpool offer Destination Veterinary Summer School one-day event for Year 12 widening participation students.
	The Liverpool Scholars programme offers Year 12 students the chance to take part in a range of activities aimed at supporting their entry into higher education and preparing them for university, such as application guidance masterclasses, lectures and academic key skills workshops. Scholars students applying to Medicine, Dentistry and Veterinary Science at the University of Liverpool may not be required to meet the strict GCSE entry requirements outlined in the University's guidelines.
The University of Surrey	In2Surrey is part of the University's widening participation programme. It aims to support eligible students to achieve their goal of studying at the University of Surrey, regardless of their background or personal circumstances.
The University of Edinburgh Royal (Dick) School of Veterinary Studies	University of Edinburgh offers ' Access to the Professions ' project for secondary state school students in the south east of Scotland who are interested in studying law, medicine or veterinary medicine at university.
The University of Glasgow	The Reach programme at the University of Glasgow, Reach works with S4-S6 pupils with an interest in and ability to study a professional degree, including Veterinary Medicine and Surgery. Participants gain an understanding of career pathways, experiences of university learning and teaching, support with every aspect of the application process and advice from staff and students on becoming a vet.

Annex B – Extract and table taken from in the Veterinary Schools Council Admissions processes and entry requirements for UK veterinary school report (2019)

How the UK veterinary schools widen participation in their courses and the profession

It is important that access to veterinary training is available to as many people as possible, and this table is a summary of how the UK veterinary schools promote admissions of applicants from disadvantaged and under-represented groups. Please be aware that this table is just a brief summary, and much more detail is available on individual vet school and university websites.

The activities, funding and special arrangements listed below are available to applicants and students whose circumstances indicate they are from a disadvantaged or under-represented group. This is determined according to a range of parameters - such as nationally-recognised postcode-based databases of educational disadvantage or low participation in higher education, eligibility for free schools meals, declared household income, or a history of having been in care.

In addition, each higher education institution in the UK has agreed, with the Office for Students, an Access and Participation Plan, which details how it promotes equality of opportunity for under-represented groups. These plans are available at www.officeforstudents.org.uk/advice-and-guidance.

	Bristol	Cambridge	Edinburgh	Glasgow	Liverpool	Royal Veterinary College	Nottingham
Recruitment							
Dedicated recruitment and information events	•	•	•	•	•	•	
"Ringfenced" places on other recruitment and information events	•	•		•	•		
Additional support - e.g. subject 'masterclasses'	•	•	•	•		•	•
Funding for travel to events	•	•			•	¹	
Bursaries to attend any events for which there is a fee	•	•			n/a ²	•	
Admissions Process							
Funding for travel to attend interviews	¹	•		•			
Contextual information considered throughout the admissions process	•	•	•	•	•	•	•
Reduced requirements for work experience			n/a ⁴		•	⁵	
Reduced conditional offer levels	•	•	•	•	•	•	•
Once on the course							
Foundation 'Gateway' course lasting a full university year	•				•	•	•
Shorter 'booster' courses, e.g. a few weeks in the summer before starting the main course		•		•			
Annual bursaries for students from low-income households	•	•	•			•	•
One-off bursaries for students from low-income households	•				•	•	•
Student Voice panels					•		•
Notes (see numbers in table)							
1. Funds available to support attendance of Gateway students at offer holder days.							
2. There are no events for which there is a fee.							
3. Only Gateway applicants are called for interview.							
4. There are no minimum requirements for work experience.							
5. No requirements for work experience for Gateway students.							

BVA policy position on UK undergraduate veterinary education

Glossary of terms	
Term	Explanation
Extra-mural studies (EMS)	<p>Extra-mural studies refer work-based placements that veterinary undergraduate students must undertake to gain experience across a breadth of veterinary workplace settings.</p> <p>Currently, students must complete a minimum of 38 weeks EMS during their course, which should normally consist of 12 weeks pre-clinical and 26 weeks of clinical placements.</p>
Extra-mural studies (EMS) provider	Extra-mural studies providers refer to the veterinary work places and staff (both clinical and non-clinical) that provide EMS placements to students.
Day One Competences	The “Day One Competences” describe the knowledge, skills and attributes required of veterinary graduates so that they are able to work safely and independently upon entering the profession. It is understood that competence is a relative term, with Day One Competences describing the expected standard for a new graduate at the start of their career and the foundation on which further competence will be built.
Competence	The ability to perform the ability to perform roles and tasks required by one’s job to the expected standard. Competences can be both clinical and non-clinical. (Adapted from Eraut, M. and B. du Boulay, 2000. Developing the attributes of medical professional judgement and Competence). As set out by the RCVS, the standard of competence expected at any given time will vary with experience and responsibility and take into account the need to keep up to date with changes in practice.
<u>Professional Development Phase (PDP)</u>	<p>The aim of the Professional Development Phase is to help newly qualified veterinary graduates make the transition from life as a veterinary student to working as a professional veterinary surgeon. The PDP provides a link between under graduate and further postgraduate development.</p> <p>It provides a structure whereby new graduates, with the support of their employer and new colleagues, can continue to develop their professional and clinical skills, reflect on their progress and plan their future professional development.</p>
Partial tracking	<p>Students are trained across all species, but are able to ‘track’ and/or undertake an elective in one or a limited number of species or disciplines. Students continue to undertake a multispecies final examination and still qualify to practise in all species.</p> <p>Adapted from Crowther, E., Hughes, K., Handel, I., Whittington, R., Pryce, M., Warman, S., Rhind, S., Baillie, S. (2014) Stakeholder consultation on tracking in UK veterinary degrees: part 1 Veterinary Record 175, 86)</p>
Full tracking	<p>No longer teaching all areas of veterinary medicine during the undergraduate course. In ‘full tracking’, the students’ studies are directed to a ‘track’ of one or a limited number of species. Students would undertake a species-specific final examination, and qualify to practise in this area only. This would be a new concept in the UK and would require changes to RCVS regulations</p> <p>Adapted from Crowther, E., Hughes, K., Handel, I., Whittington, R., Pryce, M., Warman, S., Rhind, S., Baillie, S. (2014) Stakeholder consultation on tracking in UK veterinary degrees: part 1 Veterinary Record 175, 86)</p>