

Policy Committee

Terms of reference

AUTHORITY

1. The Policy Committee is a committee of Council under Article 94 of the Articles of Association: “Committees of Council may be appointed and dissolved by the Board.”

TITLE AND OBJECT

2. A standing committee shall be created called ‘Policy Committee’ (PC) and it shall exist to advise Council on all veterinary policy matters, including animal health and welfare, public health, and veterinary professional issues.

ROLE

3. The role of the PC shall be to:
 - develop proactive and reactive policy positions for the Association and advise Council
 - convene working groups for proactive policy work to support BVA priority issues
 - convene virtual groups (via Glasscubes) for reactive policy work
 - ensure policy positions have been developed in association with relevant divisions and Branches, and taking account of the available evidence

COMPOSITION

4. The PC shall be composed of:
 - 2 Officers (including the Junior Vice President)*
 - 8 independent members appointed via the Nominations and Awards Group (NAG), including at least one recent graduate (up to 8 years qualified) – see paragraph 7 (criteria for independent members)
 - Chair of the Ethics and Welfare Advisory Panel (EWAP) or his/her alternate

*All Officers are entitled to attend PC meetings but only two are full members, and at least one full member must be present at each meeting

EXPERT ADVICE

5. It is expected that the PC will take advice from appropriate external sources and may co-opt experts as required.

ELECTION OF INDEPENDENT MEMBERS

6. The appointment of eight independent members is by application to the NAG, which selects from the applications in accordance with the criteria and balance of skills required for the PC and submits those names to Council for approval.

CRITERIA FOR INDEPENDENT MEMBERS

7. All independent members of the PC must be MRCVS. NAG will be tasked with selecting members for the PC that meet as many of the following criteria as possible:

Knowledge, skills and experience

Not all of these are essential for each individual but across the whole committee we require a mix of:

- Committee experience
- Policy development skills and experience
- Strategic thinking
- Evidence gathering and research
- Analysis and evaluation
- Excellent oral communication skills and ability to engage positively in debate and discussion
- Decision making
- Team work
- Problem solving
- Understanding of the political and cultural climate in which BVA seeks to influence policy makers
- Understanding of the current veterinary landscape

Veterinary expertise and experience

Across the whole committee we are looking for a mix of experience and expertise within the range of veterinary work, including:

- Large animal practice
- Small animal practice
- Equine practice
- Other species specialisms
- Public health
- Government
- Industry
- Academia
- Research
- International
- Wildlife/conservation
- Charity

Other

Across the committee we are looking to ensure a range of expertise, interests, and backgrounds.

ELECTION OF CHAIR

8. A BVA Officer shall chair the meeting until a Chair is elected from amongst the independent members. The election shall be carried out by way of candidate's statements (written and/or oral) and a ballot of all members of the PC to a simple majority. In the event of a tie the Officer in the chair shall have an additional casting vote. The Chair will normally be elected for a term of three years, regardless of their remaining term of office as a committee member.

ROLE OF CHAIR

9. The Chair will set the meeting agendas in collaboration with the BVA secretariat. They will chair debates and summarise decisions. The Chair is a member of BVA Council and reports PC advice to Council, takes questions, and receives feedback and direction from Council.
10. In the absence of the Chair, an Officer will carry out the functions of the Chair, including chairing meetings of the PC and reporting advice to Council.

ACCOUNTABILITY

11. Members of the PC are accountable to the Chair for their work for the PC and the Chair is accountable to Council for the work of the PC. On a day-to-day basis the Chair, BVA Officers and BVA secretariat are delegated by Council to give advice and guidance on behalf of the Association. The Chair should refer to Council any matter on which further advice is required.
12. All committees of Council are ultimately financially accountable to the Board.

TENURE

13. All members of the PC shall nominally serve for a term of up to three years. Members will have the option of serving for a second term of up to three years (subject to NAG recommendation and Council approval) but may not serve for three successive terms. Members may seek re-election for a third term following a break in service of at least one year.

PC MEETINGS

14. The PC shall normally meet four times per year (usually three meetings in London and one via teleconference) spaced whenever possible at times to ensure its advice can be effectively incorporated into Council debate.

PROTOCOL

15. All members of the PC are expected to contribute to the work of the committee, both in and outside meetings, including reading papers, contributing to discussions in person and via Glasscubes.
16. Members of the PC are not permitted to represent or present the Association's views on any veterinary policy matters to the media or the general public (for example at events) without prior approval of the Chair and Officers.
17. Where advice is provided to Council and/or a steer provided to working groups it shall be the agreed advice of the committee determined by a simple majority.

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