

Student-led Work Placements: a new vision for sustainable Extra Mural Studies

1. Introduction

1. Extra-mural studies (EMS) are placements taken throughout the veterinary medicine degree which prepare students for working in a clinical environment. EMS consists of two distinct phases:
 - Pre-clinical or animal husbandry EMS (AHEMS), which comprises a total of 12 weeks.
 - Clinical EMS, which comprises 26 weeks. Clinical EMS can include time in abattoirs, laboratories, and with the government veterinary services, as well as in clinical practices. Students can also spend time working on research projects or attending research summer schools as part of EMS.
2. EMS has been one of the foundations of UK veterinary education since 1932.¹ This longevity has been possible because of the goodwill of the veterinary professions and others, such as farmers, who provide first-hand experience to students.
3. We know that students value EMS and how it supports their development. According to AVS survey data, the vast majority of students “were highly positive about the ability of EMS to better prepare them for careers in practice than their degree rotations alone.”² In turn, providers of EMS gain from their interactions with students.
4. While there have been reviews and revisions since 1932, the overarching structure of EMS has remained largely unchanged. Significant societal, technological, and professional shifts have emerged since 1932 and never has change occurred as quickly as it has in this digital age. As the Vet Futures Report notes,³ “we see drivers for change for the profession everywhere, from population growth and climate change to the increased global movement of people and animals and changing social behaviours of successive generations. As a profession, we must make plans based on what we know now, the trends we observe, and what we believe is possible.”⁴

BVA Extra-mural studies working group

5. As priority for 2021-22, BVA committed to developing a new vision for EMS, and in 2021, the BVA Extra-mural studies working group (EMSWG)⁵ was convened. It was chaired by Professor Liz Mossop, a vet who is currently deputy vice-chancellor for student development and engagement at the University of Lincoln, and included representation from across the profession, from students, recent graduates, employers, and academics.
6. Central to the working group’s discussions was the need to ensure that any recommendations must consider the needs of everyone who is involved in EMS. As a result, EMSWG took a unique approach to its meetings, holding a series of roundtables to dig deep into the perspectives of a range of students, vet schools and EMS providers. We also learned from the experience of human medicine education. We would like to thank all those who gave their time to provide their valuable personal experiences and expertise.
7. From the outset, the working group committed to absolute transparency, agreeing to publish the minutes of their meetings in full on the BVA website,⁶ along with an open invitation to the profession to provide input, via a blog by the BVA President, Malcolm Morley that was shared with all BVA members.⁷

¹ Catriona Bell et al Preparing Veterinary Students for Extramural Clinical Placement Training: Issues Identified and a Possible Solution

² The Association of Veterinary Students Extra Mural Studies (EMS) Experience Survey Results 2018

³ Vet Futures Project Board (2015) Taking charge of our future: A vision for the veterinary profession for 2030, <https://www.vetfutures.org.uk/resource/vet-futures-report/>

⁴ Ibid page 8

⁵ <https://www.bva.co.uk/about-us/our-structure/working-groups/extra-mural-studies-working-group/>

⁶ <https://www.bva.co.uk/about-us/our-structure/working-groups/extra-mural-studies-working-group/>

⁷ <https://www.bva.co.uk/news-and-blog/blog-article/testing-the-foundations-of-ems/>

The sudden impact of the coronavirus pandemic

8. Coronavirus restrictions in the UK had a profound and sudden effect on access to and completion of EMS placements. The pandemic highlighted weaknesses, but it also revealed a strength in our ability, as a profession, to act decisively when we need to.
9. Responding to Coronavirus restrictions, Royal College of Veterinary Surgeons (RCVS) revised the EMS requirements for 2021, 2022, 2023 and 2024 undergraduates⁸. The impact of the reduction in EMS requirements has been evaluated in research by *Thompson et al*⁹. Almost all students (95%) were concerned that the Coronavirus pandemic and resulting lockdowns had a negative impact on their ability to gain clinical experience and on their overall surgical skill development. There was also disruption to all aspects of teaching which will have had an effect, making it impossible to isolate the impact of the changes to EMS in isolation.
10. It is likely that the unplanned nature of these changes to EMS will have played a part in reducing the sense of confidence instilled in students. Therefore, it will be vital that further reforms of EMS are done in a carefully considered way that builds confidence in all participants.

The longer-term need for change

11. What became clear, as the EMSWG delved into its work, is that Coronavirus pandemic had exposed pre-existing short, medium, and long-term trends which have, over time, generated the need for significant reform to make the system more effective, accessible, and sustainable for the future.
12. While the format of EMS has remained largely unchanged for decades, significant change has happened around it. Currently in the UK there are growing numbers of vet schools, and places, with greater numbers of students requiring AHEMS and clinical EMS placements. This growth in demand has coincided with growing workforce constraints which has limited supply. Consequently, the future sustainability of the system is in doubt.
13. We are also mindful that an increasing number of veterinary workplaces are engaged in delivery of programs which can draw resource away from providing EMS. Increased public expectation of the veterinary profession, and the modernisation of clinical education in general, have led to better-designed, more integrated curricula with increased attention to communication, other professional skills and to elements of individual specialisation.¹⁰
14. Beyond the content of curricula, there has also been a shift in how veterinary education is delivered, regarding intra-mural studies (IMR). More vet schools utilise a distributed model, where IMR is provided to students within private veterinary practices with vet school oversight and quality assurance. This means that exposure to real world settings is more integrated within the degree course itself, potentially changing the need for that exposure to be found supplemental to the course.
15. There has been little meaningful reform of EMS to reflect its role within a changing educational and professional landscape. As such, its purpose has become less clear as other aspects of veterinary education has increasingly delivered outcomes that were once unique to EMS. Without a clear set of objectives that are understood by all stakeholders, it is impossible to have an effective system which is providing outcomes to a consistent standard.
16. We believe there is a need to review and update the EMS requirement to ensure it is effective, accessible, safe and sustainable for the future. It is also important that it meets each of these principles for all stakeholders - students, EMS providers, universities, the RCVS, veterinary professionals, the wider vet-led team, animal owners and others. There was agreement that EMS needed profound reform, and that this was needed urgently to ensure its future viability.

RCVS proposals

17. On 31 October 2022, RCVS launched proposals for a significant reform of EMS, aiming for implementation late in 2024.¹¹ The RCVS plan focused on four key areas:
 - An enhanced approach to EMS achieved through additional quality assurance measures, enabling the number of weeks of EMS required by students to be reduced.

⁸ <https://www.rcvs.org.uk/lifelong-learning/students/veterinary-students/extra-mural-studies-ems/temporary-ems-requirements/>

⁹ Veterinary students' views on surgical entrustable professional activities and the impact of COVID-19 on clinical competence development <https://bvajournals.onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/pdf/10.1002/vetr.1978>

¹⁰ Stephen Anthony May, Royal Veterinary College Modern Veterinary Graduates Are Outstanding, But Can They Get Better? February 2008 *Journal of Veterinary Medical Education* 35(4):573-80

¹¹ RCVS, Extra-Mural Studies fit for the future: improving learning, flexibility and opportunity <https://www.rcvs.org.uk/lifelong-learning/students/veterinary-students/extra-mural-studies-ems/rcvs-proposals-for-ems-policy-from-2024/>

- Greater flexibility and a more outcomes-based approach, allowing students to identify their own learning outcomes for EMS in areas most relevant and of interest to them, and achieve the experience in different ways.
- Clear information for students on what specific EMS placements can offer, in terms of experience and support.
- Measures to increase the accessibility and availability of EMS placements across the profession, through improved guidance, promotion and recognition of the benefits to all parties and incentives for providers.

18. These proposals have been examined in detail by the BVA EMS Working Group.

2. An effective system

Does EMS have value?

19. The stated aim of EMS, according to the RCVS,¹² is to enable students to gain practical experience in as many aspects of veterinary work as possible, build proficiency, and obtain first-hand experience which will help them to develop as professionals. Specifically, EMS should enable students to:
- develop their animal handling skills across a range of common domestic species.
 - develop their understanding of the practice and economics of animal management systems and animal industries.
 - appreciate the importance of herd health and the epidemiological approach to production animal work.
 - develop their understanding of practice economics and practice management.
 - develop their understanding and gain further experience of medical and surgical treatments in a variety of species.
 - develop communication skills for all aspects of veterinary work.
 - expand their experience to those disciplines and species with less representation within the degree programme.
 - appreciate the importance of animal welfare in animal production and in the practice of veterinary medicine.
 - gain experience to help them appreciate the ethical and legal responsibilities of the veterinary surgeon in relation to individual clients, animals, the community, and society.
 - gain experience of a variety of veterinary working environments.
20. We believe the outcomes listed above are all worthwhile and should continue to be embedded within veterinary education. However, achieving these outcomes is not currently always measured in EMS. Furthermore, evidence heard by the working group suggested that these outcomes could often be obtained by means other than just EMS, through other elements of the veterinary curriculum. As such, there is a need to evaluate what EMS is seeking to achieve, and how best to meet these aims.
21. There is no substitute for the kind of hands-on, real-world exposure that is offered by being embedded within a veterinary workplace, on farm, or other environment where vets perform their professional duties. EMS provides real world experiences that are different to IMR or classroom learning, giving greater exposure to a variety of sectors and types of organisations within sectors. Students gain knowledge by interacting as part of a team. EMS placements allow students to experience the realities of practice. They can gain more experience of how the personal and financial circumstances of clients can have an impact on treatment decisions.

Developing professional identity

22. We believe that student placements have clear value, with survey data¹³ showing that students and recent graduates agree. However, it is also clear, that with evolving professional and educational norms, there is a growing misunderstanding amongst the wider profession as to the purpose of EMS.
23. Professional identity - how professionals perceive themselves as professionals - has implications for behaviour, the ethical principles vets ascribe to, and the way they interact with the world.
24. We believe that the central purpose of EMS is supporting the development of each student's professional identity. Academic knowledge alone, without the ability to fit in and work with the norms and values held by others in the profession and society, and observe expected standards of professional behaviour, would leave veterinary graduates ill-equipped for professional life.¹⁴ Professional identity development also incorporates a consolidation of the skills needed to work as a vet. Professional identity development should see students build their confidence and competence in clinical skills as well as the wider interpersonal skills needed for a veterinary role.
25. Veterinary professional identities are complex as vets are expected to be interprofessional team members, who make clinical decisions in the face of competing stakeholder needs and work in a complex environment

¹² <https://www.rcvs.org.uk/lifelong-learning/students/veterinary-students/extra-mural-studies-ems/>

¹³ AVS/BVA Student Market Research Results 2020 <https://www.bva.co.uk/media/3359/avsbva-research.pdf>

¹⁴ https://www.researchgate.net/publication/275356208_Questions_of_identity

comprising multiple and diverse challenges (stress, high emotions, financial issues, work-life balance).¹⁵ A professional identity is not a day one competence - but something that develops throughout a career. In fact, our understanding is that vets do not identify as vets at the point of graduation but only once are able to work independently.¹⁶ EMS provides a vital opportunity to begin to develop this identity, with Perrin's 2016 study of veterinary identity showing how important EMS placements are for role modelling and opportunities to rehearse veterinary roles.¹⁷

26. EMS offers a unique opportunity for students to engage with the “understandings, customs, rituals and take-it-for-granted aspects of what goes on in the live space” of being a vet. Fred Hafferty, professor of medical education describes these building blocks of a professional identity as the “hidden curriculum”.¹⁸ The concept can feel intangible, but it is something that has been experienced by all vets. Professor Liz Mossop illustrates the concept by posing the below set of questions in her RCVS Fellowship presentation:

“What did you learn without actually realising it? What did you learn without sitting in a classroom? What did you pick up from your peers, from others around you, from the institution you were existing in?”¹⁹

27. By its very nature it is impossible to codify the “hidden curriculum” and therefore to provide the specific outcomes that each student should be expected to achieve and therefore the amount of time that would be required to meet it. It is more valuable to consider the opportunities EMS should support which are critical to the development of a professional identity:

- Observe practical procedures and apply clinical knowledge in “real world” situations.
- The transition from student to new graduate.
- The development of clinical skills.
- The development of case management skills.
- The development of non-clinical skills including communication and teamworking.
- The development of confidence as well as capability.
- Teamworking alongside vets and other professionals.
- The identification of role models.
- Exposure to clients and their needs.
- Exposure to a diversity of career paths.
- Support career decision making.
- Understanding of animal handling and safety, across all species.
- Understanding the realities of farms, stables, and other settings where vets perform their roles.
- Understanding of the wider role the veterinary profession occupies in society and political and policy discussions.

28. We are mindful that veterinary students need to have sufficient time and space outside their degree and work-based placements to develop a wider identity. It is also important for students to have personal time, where they can rest, recharge and have fun.

29. Indeed, many of the skills, values and attributes needed to be a successful vet can be developed outside of veterinary practice. These include part time jobs, roles in university societies, sport and other social activities, and extra-curricular research projects. These roles outside of veterinary education are valued by future employers. This is because, these activities allow students to develop skills such as teamwork and communication as well as developing an identity outside of work, which is crucial for the next generation of well-rounded vets.

¹⁵ What is the veterinary professional identity? Preliminary findings from web-based continuing professional development in veterinary professionalism E Armitage-Chan 1, J Maddison 1, S A May 1
<https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/26857071/>

¹⁶ R Allister, Veterinary Transition Study - investigating the transition from veterinary student to practising veterinary surgeon: prospective cohort study <https://era.ed.ac.uk/handle/1842/37264>

¹⁷ Perrin, H. 2016. Rhetoric and reality: the development of professional identity in uk veterinary medicine. ProQuest Dissertations Publishing.

¹⁸ <https://www.rcvs.org.uk/fellowship/fellows-in-focus/the-hidden-curriculum-why-it-matters/>

¹⁹ Ibid

Student-led Work Placements (SWPs)

30. We propose a new system of Student-led Work Placements (SWPs) to succeed EMS. SWPs would offer a clear objective-based framework. This system which would seek to empower students, vet schools and providers to support the continued development of professional veterinary identities.
31. SWPs should offer an individualised experience as part of personalised learning, recognising that everyone's starting point and ultimate goals will be different, and we welcome the focus on an individualised experience in the RCVS policy. Crucially, SWPs should offer appropriate flexibility, and be directed by the student with support from appropriate university staff. For example, students will have different experiences on farm or in stables, and those with less experience may require a longer time in these settings to develop confidence. It will also be important for students to have a personalised experience which offers a variety of placements, exposing them to areas that can inspire unexpected careers and challenge preconceived ideas about areas of veterinary life.
32. An outcomes-based approach, as opposed to a weeks-based approach, would also offer students greater flexibility. Many activities that would prove beneficial to the professional development of a future vet cannot be measured in weeks.
33. RCVS Standards and Procedures for the Accreditation of Veterinary Degrees²⁰, sets out the standards expected for the delivery of EMS²¹. Currently, under this accreditation scheme, the way we measure whether a student has achieved the outcomes of EMS, is by determining if they have completed 38 weeks across AHMS and clinical EMS. The RCVS future policy for EMS will be for students to complete ten weeks' AHMS and 20 weeks of clinical EMS - a reduction of eight weeks.²² Accreditation standards expect students to achieve overall competency but the contribution of EMS to this competency is not measured specifically.
34. This rigid requirement of number of weeks is an anomaly in the otherwise outcome focused approach of the veterinary degree course. However, we recognise that, while there is a strict time commitment, there is flexibility for universities to stipulate how that time should be allocated to align with the needs of their curriculum e.g., requiring a certain number of weeks in specific settings. The RCVS Accreditation Standards also note the importance of meeting the personal needs of students within this system by encouraging them to select "placements that match their areas of interest as well as the university's curriculum."²³
35. The lack of an outcomes-based approach within the current EMS system also stands in contrast with Entrustable Professional Activities (EPA) for the Veterinary Graduate Development Programme (VetGDP).²⁴ VetGDP is a structured programme to support new or returning vets in the workplace. Each vet enrolled onto the VetGDP receives support from a trained VetGDP Adviser within their workplace, who will help guide their professional development through regular discussion, observation, and feedback. EPAs provide the framework for the VetGDP, as they describe areas of work carried out by vets. There is also a recognition that EPAs will need to be bespoke to individuals. Hence, there is a toolkit provided by RCVS for creating additional EPAs. There is an opportunity to build upon this model of EPAs and align these outcomes with a new outcomes-based approach to SWPs.
36. We support the move by RCVS to encourage and recognise innovative education delivery, including the integration of appropriate workplace-based experience, within the 2023 accreditation standards. This will support further innovation in UK vet education delivery.
37. In order to align requirements with the clear outcome of supporting the development of professional identity, the RCVS should have no set time commitment within the accreditation standards. RCVS should retain robust oversight of each vet school approach to ensure fairness and a consistent delivery of outcomes.
38. As we seek to give vet schools more ownership of their SWP design, student empowerment must be a key feature. SWPs should offer each student an individualised experience as part of a personalised learning journey, which should be directed by the student but supported by appropriate university staff. We welcome the focus on an individualised experience in the RCVS policy.
39. We are mindful that under the current system students are asked to commit a significant amount of time to arranging EMS placements. In effect they already administering their programme of EMS. It is important that a move to SWPs should not create any additional burdens on students. Vet schools should ensure that students are supported by universities in to meet their agreed objectives.

²⁰ <https://www.rcvs.org.uk/document-library/rcvs-accreditation-standards/>

²¹ <https://www.rcvs.org.uk/document-library/rcvs-accreditation-standards/>

²² <https://www.rcvs.org.uk/lifelong-learning/students/veterinary-students/extra-mural-studies-ems/rcvs-proposals-for-ems-policy-from-2024/>

²³ <https://www.rcvs.org.uk/document-library/rcvs-accreditation-standards/>

²⁴ <https://www.rcvs.org.uk/news-and-views/publications/entrustable-professional-activities-for-the-veterinary-graduate/>

40. As part of this personalised learning journey, vet schools should work with their vet student to ensure an appropriate amount of time is being dedicated to the attainment of their individual objectives. For some students, it may be that more time needs to be dedicated to SWPs than would have been the case under the current weeks-based EMS system.
41. Each vet school should develop more effective mechanisms whereby students are engaged and supported in setting personalised objectives ahead of placements, with feedback mechanisms built into each placement. The achievement of these objectives should be linked within the other aspects of the veterinary course.

Delivering quality outcomes with providers

42. With a clear purpose established for SWP it is next important to consider how this will be achieved. Key to making a new system work will be the commitment of all stakeholders including EMS providers. We are aware that the current quality of EMS placements is not always consistent, with greater flexibility potentially making consistency even harder to achieve. It will be imperative to support providers to continue to play a valuable role in a new and improved system of SWP.
43. There is an opportunity to provide training for providers to ensure they have the core set of skills needed to work with students to set objectives. It is imperative that this training is applicable to different models of SWP, different curricula, and the unique needs of each student. The training, which should be delivered by RCVS as free CPD, should also be applicable to the diverse range of providers who will reflect the variety of the veterinary profession.
44. The VetGDP model should help inform the RCVS approach to training providers. VetGDP provides a period of workplace-based support for all veterinary graduates as they begin their first role in practice. By focusing on the development of their clinical and professional capabilities, the aim is for graduates to become competent, resilient members of the veterinary team. Central to VetGDP are trained VetGDP Advisers, who work on a one-to-one basis with veterinary graduates to provide support in the workplace. The RCVS provides online training to prepare veterinary surgeons for this role, which counts towards CPD.
45. There is also scope to learn from the development of IMR training and how that has been delivered to partner practices, whilst maintaining quality and consistency. IMR providers are given training from their sponsoring university, which is seen as high quality and genuinely useful. Anecdotally, we have heard that providers of IMR felt more comfortable and confident in their engagement with EMS students because of the training and systems they borrow from IMR.
46. Given wider constraints on veterinary time, it is imperative that training is meaningful and makes the best use of provider time. Given the overlap between existing IMR and VetGDP training, as well as certain postgraduate certificate and masters programmes, there should be the development of a short programme to further upskill those who have already undertaken other training.
47. Alongside efforts to improve the quality of provision through training, there will also be a need to consider how to quality assure placements. This should be done in a way that minimises administrative burdens and does not create a barrier to engaging with the system - a “right touch” approach to quality assurance. There is scope to include this activity within the structures of the Practice Standards Scheme. However, we recognise that this will be limited to veterinary practices who provide placements.
48. Alongside this initial training, providers would appreciate consistent ongoing feedback in order to improve their provision of work-based placements. Vet schools should develop more effective mechanisms to capture feedback from students, and effective ways to communicate this with providers, in order to embed continual improvement. It is essential that any mechanisms for feedback ensure students feel safe to give that feedback without repercussions and offer anonymity, if possible, which will encourage more students to provide it.

A matching service

49. We are aware that RCVS are developing a national EMS database. An EMS database should act as a “matching service”. An improved outcomes based SWP system should be underpinned by this matching service, which would support better alignment between the objectives and needs of each student and the placements they take.
50. This process could support objective setting early in the process, so no student arrives at a placement without proper consideration being given ahead of time, ensuring both student and provider gain from this investment.
51. The report of the SPVS Survey of practitioners’ opinions on EMS notes that a “theme is the negative impact of a disenchanted student enduring an EMS placement in an area that does not interest them.”²⁵ A matching service will also benefit providers and encourage them to offer placements because they will have increased certainty that they will be matched with genuinely interested students. However, this needs to be balanced against the

²⁵ SPVS Survey of practitioners’ opinions on EMS 2021

need to ensure students who may not have an interest are exposed to areas that are needed to complete the degree and can inspire a new interest or career pathway.

52. Private databases are currently held by each university i.e., they can be seen by vet students of that university but no one else. Managing internal databases with the additional functionality needed for an effective matching service, would likely create an administrative burden on vet schools. A central national matching service could free up resources and capacity, enabling students to be supported in other ways. RCVS would be able to build upon its current IT infrastructure, including the Find A Vet application.²⁶
53. A shift away from each university holding a database could prove challenging. Meeting data protection requirements will prove difficult. We have also heard concerns about losing the oversight from EMS coordinators within in university. Therefore, it is imperative that the university staff who operate these databases continue to engage with RCVS in the development of a new database. It is also vital that a new national database does not duplicate efforts.
54. Any national database should offer a mechanism to improve the standard of placements. The database should reflect the ability of providers to work with students to achieve outcomes and provide feedback. Where placements fail to meet basic standards, these placements should be removed. This system should apply equally to veterinary workplaces and other settings.

Recommendations

- **RCVS should amend the standards and procedures for the accreditation of veterinary degrees to allow for an outcomes-based approach. One aspect of this approach should be the development of professional identity.**
- **RCVS should remove the fixed time commitment requirement from AHEMS and clinical EMS.**
- **SWP should offer an individualised experience as part of personalised learning, recognising that everyone's needs, starting point and goals will be different. Each vet school should develop a structure whereby students are engaged in setting personalised objectives ahead of placements, with mechanisms for feedback built into each placement.**
- **Extra-curricular activities build capability within future vets and support the formation of an identity outside of work which is crucial for the next generation of well-rounded vets. These activities should be recognised, and the time commitment required for EMS should not make them impossible.**
- **RCVS should develop standardised training for providers to set objectives, provide feedback and engage with students. This should be delivered as CPD. There should be a shorter course available for those providers who have undertaken other training, such as VetGDP or IMR providers.**
- **Quality assurance of placements should be done in a way that minimises administrative burdens and does not create a barrier to engaging with the system. RCVS should explore how the structures of the Practice Standards Scheme could be used for this purpose.**
- **Vet schools should continue to develop mechanisms to capture feedback from students and communicate this with providers in order to embed continual improvement.**
- **A national SWP matching service should be explored by RCVS. Should such a project be initiated it is important to learn from the experiences of all relevant stakeholders including students, providers, and vet schools - particularly EMS coordinators who run existing databases and are experts in the demands of running these systems.**

²⁶ <https://findavet.rcvs.org.uk/home/>

3. An accessible and safe approach

55. We are seriously concerned by cases of discrimination, harassment and assault experienced members of the veterinary profession at all points in their career. Our BVA report on discrimination in the veterinary profession²⁷ previously showed that this is a significant problem across the profession, with 24% of working vets and vet students having experienced or witnessed discrimination in the past year. However, only 56% of vets said they were concerned about this issue. This needs to change.
56. The RCVS notes that they are “aware of instances of discrimination and poor treatment of students while undertaking EMS”.²⁸ It is important to note that discrimination can begin before a student sets foot in a workplace. For example, students from ethnic minority backgrounds can find it more challenging to source placements.²⁹
57. Unfortunately, there are limited data on the prevalence or nature of discrimination, harassment and assault during EMS placements. However, we are aware of anecdotal evidence from students and recent graduates who have had unacceptable experiences during EMS placements. A useful source of information is “An Investigation into pre-Clinical Extramural Studies Working Conditions in the Veterinary Undergraduate Curriculum in the UK” by Gabriella Hetesy.³⁰ This is an analysis of survey data from 348 vet students. Of those who answered the questions relating to harassment (on AHMS placements), 31% had experienced harassment.
58. However, it is important to recognise concerns were not just raised about AHMS providers but also vets and the wider team. There are also cases where students have been told to hide their religion, disability, and other protected characteristics. The survey data also highlighted concerns about students who felt they were asked to undertake activities which were unsafe or unethical.
59. The underreporting of racial harassment by university students has been identified by the Equality and Human Rights Commission.³¹ Many students who experience difficulties during EMS may be unwilling to make an official complaint or raise the matter with their university. Based on feedback from students, consulted by a joint RCVS and Veterinary Schools Council BAME Student Support Working Group, this trend seems to be reflected in vet schools. There may be several reasons for this, which are noted in the study.³²
- Reporting systems can be difficult to locate and navigate.
 - Students may not feel confident that reports will be acted upon.
 - Students may be concerned that support will not be available from staff.
 - Fear of not being able to graduate if EMS is not completed.
 - Offensive comments are often described as just ‘banter’ or ‘joking around’.
 - Raising complaints of this nature can be traumatic and stressful for students and they may feel the best course of action is to put up with the behaviour until the placement is over.
 - When a student complains and is advised to leave an EMS placement, they are still obliged to make up the time. This causes additional stress and places an increased financial burden on them.
 - Most students prefer to report anonymously. With so few students from the BAME community in universities and work placements, many are discouraged from doing so because it is obvious who has complained and difficult to protect their identity.
 - Students worry about the potential negative consequences on their personal development if complaints are made.

²⁷ [BVA report on discrimination in the veterinary profession](#)

²⁸ <https://www.rcvs.org.uk/news-and-views/publications/the-future-of-ems-report-of-stakeholder-day/the-future-of-ems-report.pdf>

²⁹ <https://www.rcvs.org.uk/news-and-views/publications/the-future-of-ems-report-of-stakeholder-day/the-future-of-ems-report.pdf>

³⁰ The findings of this paper were presented to BVA EMS Working Group meeting 2
<https://www.bva.co.uk/media/4535/bva-emswg-2-minutes-final.pdf>

³¹ <https://www.equalityhumanrights.com/en/publication-download/tackling-racial-harassment-universities-challenged>

³² RCVS VSC BAME Student Support Working Group Report <https://www.rcvs.org.uk/news-and-views/publications/rcvs-vsc-bame-student-support-working-group-report/?destination=%2Fnews-and-views%2Fpublications%2F>

- Students are concerned about maintaining positive relationships with the provider.
60. A power imbalance between the vet student and those providing their placements may act as a barrier to a student coming forward and making a complaint. This is in part a result of the strict week requirement. As noted above, when a student has difficulties and is advised to leave an EMS placement, they are still obliged to make up the time in order to fulfil the full 38-week requirement. Given the individual circumstances, and increasing competition for places, it may feel impossible to rearrange another placement or there may not be enough time to do so to ensure graduation on time, which will impact on their ability to take up work offers. Underreporting could also indicate a lack of faith in the system to act where discrimination, harassment and assault are identified.
 61. Universities have legal obligations under the Equality and Public Sector Act, 2010, and must demonstrate a duty of care towards students. However, they have no legal jurisdiction to investigate discrimination matters involving students whilst on EMS placement. This makes the issue of reporting and responsibility much more complex, as it falls outside the university's official activities and limits what formal action they can take.
 62. It is vital that the vet schools facilitate those who have experienced harassment, bullying and discrimination to come forward, making it more difficult for bullies to act with impunity, and allowing remedial action to take place as quickly and effectively as possible. This approach is important for preventing discrimination rather than simply responding to it, as it also promotes a better, healthier workplace culture for everyone. This is in line with our wider position on Good Veterinary Workplaces where we set out a zero-tolerance approach to discrimination.³³
 63. We are aware of the support provided by universities to students during EMS placements. When discussing this support as part of our student roundtable, we heard that this support may be poorly understood and thus underutilised by students. Vet schools should continue to provide support and guidance documents for students going on work placements. Documentation should be disseminated to personal tutors and all staff involved in work-based and placement learning. Students should be reminded at key points throughout the year how they can access support whilst on placement to ensure they are all fully informed and to emphasise that vet schools have a duty to support them and want to carry out that duty.
 64. Formal reporting mechanisms should be visible and easy to navigate. It is vitally important that students are in no way penalised or feel victimised where they make a complaint or leave a placement early. Vet schools need to demonstrate that they will support students where they submit a complaint and move through these mechanisms. University staff members who will be engaging students should receive appropriate specialist training to ensure they are able to communicate effectively.

Creating inclusive placements

65. Many of the tools that foster and maintain good veterinary workplaces will also help create environments where students can have the best placement opportunities. In the BVA Position on Good Workplaces,³⁴ we set out our vision for how a good veterinary workplace should look, highlighting the core principles and key resources every workplace should have. We recommend that workplaces appoint Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI) Champions who should be appropriately trained, resourced and visible in their advocacy, with the capacity to effect organisation change if it is needed.
66. We have developed a template role description for EDI Champions that can be tailored to suit individual workplaces.³⁵ Key suggested responsibilities for EDI Champions include raising awareness of the importance of diversity and the impact of discrimination across teams, reviewing workplace policies and culture documents, and organising events that discuss and celebrate diversity.
67. With EMS it is often the case that individual students' needs are not shared with providers ahead of time, making it difficult to tailor a placement to the student's individual needs. Students may not feel comfortable raising any needs before or during a placement. We also know that it is of benefit to providers to be aware of students needs ahead of time, to enable them to accommodate, and it is encouraging that this is being addressed as part of the RCVS plans to develop a database. We are aware that practices providing IMR are often adept at providing adjustments that meet the specific needs of students and are given training and support to enable this. There are also simple mechanisms in place whereby universities contact the IMR provider practice ahead of time to share relevant information about the student, raising any specific needs, such as caring needs that require leaving work by a certain time. Similar mechanisms should be put in place for EMS to enable providers to make adjustments.
68. We heard from students with disabilities who had undertaken EMS and had found the experience unduly stressful and tiring, sometimes resulting in them being unable to study immediately afterwards. During the Coronavirus pandemic, it became possible to undertake some virtual EMS, which was of particular benefit for some students with disabilities. It adapted to their needs in a way in-person EMS does not always do, opening doors to new

³³ <https://www.bva.co.uk/media/3708/bva-position-on-good-veterinary-workplaces.pdf>

³⁴ <https://www.bva.co.uk/take-action/our-policies/good-veterinary-workplaces/>

³⁵ <https://www.bva.co.uk/media/4398/edi-champion-role-description-template.pdf>

sectors and areas of work. Furthermore, online EMS will often be less expensive and might allow students to maintain their part time jobs for more of the year, meaning they could save for more expensive placements. Within a new outcomes-based system of SWP, opportunities for online placements should remain as part of wider options available to meet the individual objectives of each student.

Financial barriers

69. The financial pressures on students have grown since the inception of EMS. In response to a student survey, 85% agreed that they been disadvantaged due to an EMS placement costing too much e.g., not been able to undertake it or had to cancel or postpone it.³⁶
70. According to the British Veterinary Association (BVA) / Association of Veterinary Students (AVS) Survey 2020,³⁷ part-time work for veterinary students is on the rise as almost half (46%) say that they have less money than they need to live on. 50% of veterinary students now use part-time work to supplement their total income. This is a significant increase compared with 38% in part-time employment in 2016 and just 25% in 2012.³⁸ Students in the mid and later years of study are more likely to have a part-time job to supplement their income than those in earlier years. When it comes to living expenses, vet students report an average shortfall of £2000 per year.
71. These financial worries are contributing to mental health and wellbeing concerns. It is particularly striking that fewer than one in five vet students (18%) say that they haven't suffered from any mental health issues at university. Those who have report feeling overwhelmed (68%), experiencing anxiety (52%) and depression (35%). The main triggers or contributing factors are their studies (78%), lack of free time (57%), and financial worries (44%).³⁹
72. We are mindful that social capital sits alongside economic capital and is also important to consider. Students without a veterinary or farming background and connections may have greater difficulty setting up placements or have a more limited pool of placement opportunities.
73. Transport and accommodation are the largest costs to students associated with EMS. These are often exacerbated by geography. If a student lives in a part of the country with limited options for placements, there are additional travel and accommodation costs associated with taking placements further away. We also heard that it can be very difficult to access certain placements without access to a car, which adds further costs. This was particularly heightened during Coronavirus restrictions, where students had to drive themselves between farm visits in order to maintain social distancing.
74. The effect of financial barriers can be seen in the EMS placements student choose and where they were willing to make compromises. We heard how students are being strategic in their prioritisation of the time and money they invest in each placement. There were also cases where students were compelled to take placements in areas they had no interest in, to fulfil the time commitment without incurring too much additional cost. As noted above, we believe that EMS should be an individualised experience that responds to the needs and objectives of each student. This allows students to prioritise their finances accordingly to ensure EMS choices are shaped more by their needs and interests, than by financial necessity.
75. The practicalities of undertaking EMS presents an opportunity cost to students. In addition to the cost of undertaking EMS they are also prevented from using this time to earn money to support their studies. Balancing this with an academically demanding course and the need to participate in EMS can add further stress within the vet student population. Additionally, where a student has an existing part time job in a veterinary or non-veterinary workplace this may not be able to be considered towards their weeks of EMS. This is because certain universities do not allow a paid placement to be considered EMS. However, this is not an RCVS stipulation.
76. The available financial support is limited with considerable variation between vet schools, and often reliant on alumni donations. However, students may be unlikely to apply to these university funds because of a perception that someone else might be in greater need than themselves.
 - Glasgow: 2019-2022 - £48,411 was awarded to students (approx. 130 students) in need of financial aid from alumni donations
 - Edinburgh: an annual round of around 20-25 bursaries, provided by the School and a few EMS gifts from alumni. They used to be worth £500 fixed, but now awarded more flexibly on amount.
 - Cambridge: Clinical EMS students have a daily allowance whilst on EMS (£10 per day when away from home and £5 per day when at home, for up to 26 weeks in total). An annual travel grant of £300 is also

³⁶ Glasgow Student Survey

³⁷ <https://www.bva.co.uk/media/3359/avsbva-research.pdf>

³⁸ <https://www.bva.co.uk/media/3359/avsbva-research.pdf>

³⁹ <https://www.bva.co.uk/media/3359/avsbva-research.pdf>

available for each student. There are also some college funds that they can apply for which vary from college to college and can be extremely generous, to help support specific placements.

- Nottingham: Limited support available. A new £250 award recently launched. Bursaries available via University of Nottingham but not specific to the Vet School
 - RVC: students can apply for funding for EMS
 - Liverpool: none available
77. There are also external bursaries available. AVS and The Veterinary Defence Society Limited (VDS) offered 5 £200 EMS Grants for 2022.⁴⁰ Vets4Pets will be funding 60 students to complete Clinical EMS Placements in their practices. Bursary recipients will be given £334 per week for a 2-week placement.⁴¹ VetPartners will provide 15 bursaries a year, with each student receiving £1,500 a year for the full duration of their five years at vet school. Graduates will then be offered roles in VetPartners' practices across the UK.⁴² Whilst we welcome the introduction of these bursaries, they demonstrate the need to address financial barriers within veterinary education.
78. Vet students may be able to access additional student loan funding to cover the costs of EMS. The 2009 student finance regulations in England allow students to apply for long course loans where attendance over 30 weeks and 3 days is required. The extra loan is paid for 52 weeks where attendance is required on a course for 45 weeks or more. Although such extended loans are means-tested, they would provide access to significant extra funds to help some students defer the expense of undertaking EMS. Although this is not a complete solution to the problem of alleviating students' financial problems as it will add to graduate debt, it is still worth exploring as a means of providing additional funds to those students most in need.
79. As EMS is currently a mandatory and integral part of the veterinary degree course, RCVS has recommended that universities should together explore the possibility of defining some parts of their degree course as a "long course" and publicise this information to students to enable them to take advantage of the increased student loan available. Any amendments to EMS requirements must consider the possibility it may affect the eligibility for this long course loan.

Recommendations

- **In line with the BVA Good Workplaces Policy and Voluntary Code, there must be a zero-tolerance policy on harassment and discrimination which is standardised across all the vet schools.**
- **Vet schools should continue to provide support and guidance documents for students going on EMS placements. They should also have formal reporting and support mechanisms in place. These should be visible and easy to navigate for students.**
- **Vet schools should provide support and guidance for providers on discrimination, harassment and bullying during placements. These elements should also be addressed within RCVS training for providers.**
- **University staff members who will be engaging with students should receive appropriate specialist training to ensure they are able to communicate effectively should they receive a complaint about a placement.**
- **In line with the BVA Good Workplaces Policy and Voluntary Code, providers should appoint an Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) Champion who has a role in EMS provision.**
- **Vet schools should continue to develop mechanisms to ensure information regarding the needs of each student can be shared between students and providers ahead of placements.**
- **Within a new outcomes-based system of SWP, opportunities for online placements should remain as part of wider options available to meet the individual objectives of each student.**
- **Part time jobs, within a veterinary workplace or in a non-veterinary workplace, should be able to be recognised as contributing to professional identity development, where these are deemed by the vet school to meet the specific objectives for each student.**
- **Paid placements should be promoted. Guidance to providers should be shared by universities. This should consider the needs of different sectors and organisation size.**
- **Universities should together explore the possibility of defining some parts of their degree course as a "long course" and publicise this information to students to enable them to take advantage of the**

⁴⁰ <https://www.avsukireland.co.uk/opportunities>

⁴¹ <https://www.vets4petscareers.com/extra-mural-studies/>

⁴² <https://www.veterinary-practice.com/2022/vetpartners-bursaries-for-budding-vets>

increased student loan available. However, we are aware that this would need to be considered alongside any changes to the time requirement for EMS.

4. A sustainable future

A sufficient number of EMS places

80. Currently in the UK there are growing numbers of vet schools, and undergraduate places, with greater numbers of students requiring AHMS and clinical EMS placements. Meeting this growing demand will be difficult as it has coincided with growing workforce constraints. Furthermore, the demands for EMS placements are not shared equally across the country, with practices located close to vet schools often inundated with requests for placements.
81. This means it is harder than ever for providers to offer the capacity necessary to give each student a fulfilling placement. This situation is unsustainable, and it is vital we find ways to incentivise a substantial and diverse range of providers to take part.
82. We are also mindful that an increasing number of veterinary workplaces are engaged in delivery of programs which may draw resource away from providing EMS. For example, more veterinary practices are choosing to deliver IMR in partnership with vet schools. Most new vet schools that have been established recently, or are in the process of being established, have opted for a distributed model where clinical rotations are provided in partner practices as IMR. Consequently, more practices are choosing to take part in IMR and deciding against EMS or have less capacity for EMS alongside IMR commitments.
83. We are aware that major employers are increasingly signing overarching agreements with vet schools to provide IMR placements. IMR practices will often have clauses in their contracts that mean they are unable to take EMS students at the same time as IMR placements, limiting the EMS availability to certain times in the year. These exclusivity contracts can especially limit access to EMS in certain already oversubscribed sectors such as exotics, or in areas close to vet schools.
84. IMR provides many of the same benefits to a provider as EMS, with additional benefits, including financial or in-kind remuneration, as well as greater certainty which can support investment decisions. A negative of IMR is that there may be less flexibility for the practice, whereas EMS offers a practice greater latitude to manage each situation.
85. Other than IMR, some practices offer the clinical training and work experience essential to qualification as a veterinary nurse. Many practices are now involved with VetGDP, which provides a period of workplace-based support for veterinary graduates as they begin their first role in practice.
86. There are opportunities to seek synergies in the delivery of these different schemes. There is scope to better align training, feedback mechanisms and IT systems to reduce the administrative burdens associated with each.
87. EMS has costs and benefits for providers. It is essential that a new vision for SWP ensures the benefits outweigh the costs. According to the SPVS Survey of practitioners' opinions on EMS,⁴³ it is evident that providers generally enjoy EMS and see the benefits for them. It was found that 76% of respondents love helping students and enjoy providing EMS. However, 20% provide EMS out of professional duty and 4% dislike or do not have the skills or patience to provide EMS. We are also aware from discussions with providers, that EMS acts as a useful way to identify potential future employees and build relationships which can be beneficial for both providers and students.
88. Practitioners who support students on EMS have also reported these activities to be rich learning experiences for themselves, and therefore can also be counted as part of their own CPD. RCVS should explore how this could be formalised to ensure this development opportunity is appropriately captured by providers in their CPD requirements.
89. When considering the barriers, we know that when a provider decides to take on an EMS student there can be an impact on staff time and other resources. Given the timing of the SPVS survey, it is understandable that the most common reason for not providing EMS was the risk of introducing Coronavirus to the practice. However, the second and third reasons were "not enough time/ energy" and "too much work to do". "Not enough veterinary staff" was cited by over 30% of respondents. This highlights that wider activity undertaken by BVA to support recruitment and retention of the veterinary workforce and the development of Good Veterinary Workplaces will complement the goal of more sustainable provision.
90. We are mindful that we want to encourage increased numbers and a wider pool of providers to take part. We are also aware that the perception of barriers and risks may be greater for smaller organisations. Placing additional administrative barriers on providers could dissuade them from taking part. Providers want to strike a balance where there are structures to support the delivery of veterinary education whilst maintaining the "informality of

⁴³ SPVS Survey of practitioners' opinions on EMS 2021

EMS to maximise participation and to ensure a diversity of experience.”⁴⁴ A key objective should be to improve the interaction between the universities and providers. Vet schools need to ensure providers are aware of the structure of the course and expectations generally, as well as the learning objectives for individual students.

91. There are concerns about liability and insurance cover in the event an EMS student becomes injured whilst on a placement. Currently, it is recommended that all students access EMS insurance.⁴⁵ EMS Insurance is automatically included as part of BVA student membership which provides 'lump sum' compensation if students sustain certain major injuries or disablements as a result of an accident.⁴⁶ 67.4% of UK vet students are BVA student members as of 1 December 2022.⁴⁷ Most insurance policies held by employers would treat people on a work experience scheme as an employee. Whilst guidance is available for EMS students on the things they need to know about insurance,⁴⁸ there is less available for providers which can lead to uncertainty which could create a barrier to providing placements.

A diversity of providers

92. Placements outside traditional veterinary workplaces should be encouraged. We believe that students should have access to a diverse range of placements which will support the development of their professional identity, including public health and government veterinary services.
93. Currently, there are opportunities for students to undertake EMS placements across the food industry, zoology, pharmaceuticals or in the spirit of One Health to learn from the experience of human health professionals. However, greater support will be needed for the wide array of potential providers. For example, farmers play a huge role in the provision of AHMS, and placements provide a valuable workforce for sectors of agriculture at certain times of the year e.g., lambing season. However, having engaged with farming unions and received evidence from NFU, we understand the support and guidance offered to farmers is limited.
94. Placements in academic settings including academic conferences should count towards the EMS requirement. Conference attendance can foster greater professional identity, while also offering valuable training and networking opportunities. Meeting leaders in the professional field, identifying role models, and feeling the social acceptance of belonging to a group all contribute in ways that have a lifelong impact on professionalism. Similarly, when students engage with associations such as BVA, AVS or a non-veterinary organisation this provides valuable and relevant experience that can develop relevant skills that can be deployed in a veterinary role.

The administrative burden on vet schools

95. The scale of EMS each year from a university organisational perspective is enormous. In 2018, 34,188 weeks of EMS were arranged for students from just six UK vet schools. Considering the scale of EMS that needs to be organised, the capacity within vet schools is severely limited.
96. On average across the 6 vet schools above, 1.65 full time equivalent (FTE) administrative staff and 0.38 FTE academic staff are allocated. However, there is wider support from teams across the university such as legal and insurance. Given the scale of EMS, and the administrative burden, this is not sustainable. Efforts noted above, including a centralised database with a dedicated administrative team, if done correctly in collaboration with vet schools, would remove some of the burden on vet schools, enabling them to focus on other areas and support students.
97. The ambition set out in this paper for an individualised self-directed system that meets the needs of each student should not be limited by this lack of staff capacity. A new approach should empower vet schools with the responsibility for the design of SWP within the specific context of their curriculum. This should open up new opportunities for vet schools to consider how to embed professional identity outcomes across the course and use their resources in a flexible and efficient way to achieve this.

Underpinned by leadership from RCVS

98. Good governance is vital, and a clear understanding of roles and responsibilities, across all stakeholders, is needed. We have heard from stakeholders that there was a perception of uncertainty about where responsibility for EMS sits.
99. It is important that there is awareness amongst all stakeholders that the body that has the authority to ensure the continued viability of EMS is the RCVS. Under Section 5 of the Veterinary Surgeons Act 1966 (amended), to

⁴⁴ SPVS Survey of practitioners' opinions on EMS 2021

⁴⁵ <https://www.rcvs.org.uk/lifelong-learning/students/veterinary-students/extra-mural-studies-ems/#summaries>

⁴⁶ BVA and Lloyd and White, Three things you need to know about insurance for your EMS
<https://www.bva.co.uk/media/3799/lloyd-and-whyte-ems-insurance-flyer.pdf>

⁴⁷ BVA figures

⁴⁸ BVA and Lloyd and White <https://www.lloydwhyte.com/vets/for-you/ems-insurance/>

supervise courses of study followed by students training to be veterinary surgeons in the UK. RCVS has to be assured that:

“the courses of study to be followed by students training to be veterinary surgeons and the standard of proficiency required for registration in the register shall be such as sufficiently to guarantee that persons registered in the register will have acquired the knowledge and skill needed for the efficient practice of veterinary surgery”⁴⁹

- 100.** RCVS sets accreditation standards and evaluates veterinary schools against them. Compliance with all the standards taken together provides an assurance that the veterinary degree meets the needs of the veterinary profession and guarantees that its graduates “will have acquired the knowledge and skill needed for the efficient practice of veterinary surgery” to enable them to register as Members of RCVS. The “Day One Competences” describe the knowledge, skills and attributes required of veterinary students upon graduation to ensure that they are prepared for their first role in the profession and safe to practise independently.⁵⁰
- 101.** We believe that this process is appropriate for a future SWP programme:
- RCVS sets an outcomes-based standard within the accreditation standards.
 - Vet schools are then empowered to find ways to meet that outcome.
 - RCVS evaluates if that outcome has been met.
- 102.** What has been proposed in this paper is that RCVS should amend the standards and procedures for the accreditation of veterinary degrees, to provide scope for each vet school to develop models of work-based placements that are integrated with the specific curriculum and delivery model of that institution. The education professionals within each vet school would be tasked with designing a programme of SWP that meets the needs of their students as well as the providers of placements. RCVS would provide proper oversight of each vet school’s approach to ensure fairness and a consistent delivery of outcomes.
- 103.** RCVS also has a duty to consider how their requirements impact on students, providers, and other stakeholders, as well as considering the equality impacts of any policy changes that are proposed.

Recommendations:

- **RCVS should consider ways to align the administrative burdens for practices that support the delivery of EMS, Vet GDP and vet nurse Approved Training Practices.**
- **RCVS should explore a means to ensure the benefits of providing EMS is appropriately captured in CPD requirements.**
- **Reforms should encourage more providers to participate in the scheme. A wider variety of non-traditional providers should be supported.**
- **BVA should provide guidance to providers on insurance, like that provided for students.**
- **BVA should engage NFU and other farming unions on providing guidance to farmers to improve the quality of placements for all parties involved.**
- **RCVS should continue to allow a diversity of placements within SWP.**
- **A clear governance structure should be developed to provide certainty on roles and responsibilities. Overall authority should continue to sit with RCVS to set the standards and ensure vet schools deliver these.**
- **RCVS should equality impact assess any policy changes proposed to EMS.**

⁴⁹ Section 5 of the Veterinary Surgeons Act 1966
<https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1966/36/section/5?view=plain>

⁵⁰ RCVS Day One Competences February 2022

Annex A: Proposed roles and responsibilities for participants in the delivery of SWP

Participant	Role and Responsibilities
Royal College of Veterinary Surgeons	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Oversee the sustainability of the overall system of SWP. Ensuring that the needs of all participants in SWP are incorporated within the wider system. • Assess the equality impacts of any system. • Set accreditation standards for vet schools that provides assurance that the veterinary degree will ensure graduates “have acquired the knowledge and skill needed for the efficient practice of veterinary surgery”. • Set specific accreditation standards relating to professional identity formation that devolve responsibility to each vet school to develop models of work-based placements that are integrated with the specific curriculum and delivery model of that institution. • Provide effective oversight of each vet school's approach to SWP within the wider curriculum, to ensure fairness and a consistent delivery of outcomes. • Provide effective resources for all participants within the system of SWP e.g a matching service and training for providers. These resources should reflect the variety of vet schools, students and providers that exist. • Should RCVS seek to take a leading role in providing a centralised database, they would be responsible for ensuring information is up to date and any inappropriate providers are not listed.
Vet schools	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use the expertise of education professionals within vet schools to develop models of work-based placements that are integrated with the specific curriculum and delivery model of that institution • Sufficiently resource any system of SWP that is used eg staffing. • Have effective reporting and support mechanisms in place, with appropriately trained staff. • Provide students with the support needed to set overarching professional development objectives. • Empower providers with specific support that may be needed for the arrangements of SWP used by that institution. • Should vet schools continue to provide bespoke databases, they should ensure information is up to date and any inappropriate providers are not listed. • Should RCVS seek to take a leading role in providing a centralised database, vet schools should share their knowledge of providers or complaints to ensure inappropriate providers are not listed.
Vet students	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Set and meet individual professional identity objectives. Individual responsibility should sit with the student, but they should be supported by their vet school.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Correspond with providers to arrange placements. • Agree needs and objectives with the provider ahead of the placement. • Endeavour to receive feedback from their placement. • Share details of their insurance coverage with a provider ahead of their placement.
Providers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure the safety and wellbeing of students whilst on EMS placements. • Provide workplaces which support equality, diversity and inclusion of students and staff alike. • Correspond with students to arrange placements. • Agree needs and objectives with students ahead of placements. • Ensure they provide feedback to the student in a timely manner. • Share details of their insurance coverage with a student and vet school ahead of a placement.
British Veterinary Association	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use its unique position to support the delivery of SWP. • Provide resources for members on SWP. • Engage outside stakeholders e.g., NFU, to deliver useful resources.