1) The British Veterinary Association (BVA) is the national representative body for the veterinary profession in the United Kingdom and has over 15,000 members. Our primary aim is to represent, support and champion the interests of the veterinary profession in this country, and we therefore take a keen interest in all issues affecting the profession, including animal health and welfare, public health, regulatory issues and employment matters.

2) We were pleased to have been given the opportunity to respond to the RCVS review of the Year One Competences. We are generally supportive of the draft and supporting guidance as a natural follow on from the existing Day One Competences, creating a coherent and cohesive package of expected development for veterinary undergraduates making the transition through the early years as a practising veterinary surgeon. We fully support the principle of competence over skill. Competence requires the application of relevant knowledge, and the confidence and ability to transfer what has been learnt to a variety of contexts and new unpredictable situations, which we believe is essential to success as a veterinary professional.

3) The mechanisms through which the competences are achieved are an important consideration and we believe that there should be increased emphasis on adequate support and direction for recent graduates. It should be recognised by employers that new graduates are likely to need more time to perform some procedures, and support from senior colleagues when needed should be available. As such, asking for support and guidance, which is an important part of the learning process, should form part of the competences.

4) We have a number of suggestions for minor amendments to some of the guidance:

Section A: General professional skills and attributes expected of veterinary surgeons on completion of the PDP

- A1 – it has been suggested that it could be intimidating for recent graduates if this competence appears first, although we accept that is consistent with the Day One Competences.
- A2 - this could be improved through the addition of an explicit reference to animal health and welfare: “As well as decisions relating to the health and welfare of individual patients....”
- A3 – the explanatory statement of this point could include reference to a basic knowledge of legislation that a student might come into contact with – not just those as affecting veterinary businesses – such as the Animal Welfare Act, with the Veterinary Surgeons Act, the Wildlife and Countryside Act, and the Animals (Scientific Procedures) Act. The guidance should also be clear that recent graduates are only expected to have a broad understanding of the issues and legislation impacting on a veterinary business.
- A7 –this could be amended to include Official Veterinarian on the list.
• A11 – this competency could include animal health and welfare e.g. “to improve the quality of animal care, population level animal health and welfare, and public health”

Section B: Practical and clinical competences expected of a veterinary surgeon

• B1 – this point could benefit from the following explanatory text “A history should take into account the wider context including considering the potential for wider implications for animal and public health and animal welfare”
• B7 - Infectious disease sampling may not apply to all new graduates. This could be an example, not a requirement.
• B13 – it should be clear that when departing from the clinical particulars of a veterinary medicinal product the benefits must be balanced against the risks, including increased selection for antimicrobial resistance.
• B14 - When reporting adverse events suspected treatment failure should also be included as it is often overlooked and justifies specific mention.
• B16 – the explanatory text could be amended to “appropriate asepsis during procedures”
• B18 - Scoring systems are not fully validated in all species so a scoring or evaluation matrix could be suggested.

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