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Position Paper on Continuing Professional Development

Preamble

The members of the U EVP agree that a single qualification no longer gives the right to practise for life without competition and control. Any practitioner must keep his professional knowledge up to date to provide the best service to his clients and patients and in order to answer their needs, and protect animal welfare, animal health and human health. Furthermore, veterinarians have to be able to respond to the increasing national or international demand for the development of advanced scientific skills. Practitioners are fully aware of these requirements, and the possible consequences on professional liability. Therefore they believe that the veterinary profession must be in charge of its own CPD in order to control its content and its quality.

Lastly, this CPD paper must be seen in relation to the need for lifelong learning as defined by the Bologna agreement.

Veterinary Ethics and Deontology

The respect of the principles relating to European veterinary ethics and deontology is required so as to guarantee services in conformity with the regulations in force, with the Code of Conduct in force, with customers' requirements and the ethical principles relating to the delivered services and/or the animals under the vets' responsibility.

CPD in Europe

A survey on CPD throughout Europe was set up in spring 2003, and showed that every country has a CPD system of some sort. All U EVP delegations found it highly recommendable that all veterinarians should follow CPD. In some countries, CPD has already become a legislative requirement which is closely linked with the renewal of the license to practise.

Definition

According to the RCVS, CPD can be defined as "the systematic maintenance, improvement and broadening of knowledge and skill and the development of personal qualities necessary for the execution of professional and technical duties throughout the veterinarian's working life". CPD can be regarded as an ethical obligation, and is in full accordance with the FVE Code of Good Veterinary Practice

Mandatory or voluntary?

At the moment, U EVP proposes to make CPD voluntary although highly recommendable for veterinarians working in general practice as making it compulsory without proper policing is of little use. However, CPD for acknowledged or specialized veterinarians shall be mandatory in order for them to receive and hold their title.

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FECVA
FEEVA

Rue Defacqz, 1
1000 Brussels
BELGIUM

Right to practice

CPD should be strongly linked to the right to practise because it is the most important mean for each practitioner to maintain and improve his skills and knowledge. It is up to the regulatory authority of each Member State to determine how this link can be established officially.

CPD hours

Veterinary practitioners must undertake a minimum of relevant CPD to maintain and develop their professional skills. The hours spent on CPD should be noted on their personal record card (such as in the future the professional ID card) and certificates of attendance kept in order to act as practical proof for the CPD done.

Veterinarians working in general practice should obtain at least 100 scientific attendance hours over 5 years and 100 hours by other forms of CPD, in other words an average of 40 hours yearly.

Scientific attendance hours can be obtained by:

- attending national and international CPD courses,
- attending national and international congresses.

Other forms of CPD hours can be obtained by:

- giving lectures and writing articles to veterinarians or non-veterinarians,
- reading articles in national or international veterinary journals,
- obtaining veterinary certificates or diplomas which do not fall under the scope of specialisation,
- self-assessment.

Topics and courses

CPD scope is not limited to veterinary medicine and surgery. However, it must be closely linked to the veterinarian's main activity. It includes all topics relevant and profitable to the practitioner's professional life. CPD courses must be evaluated by the attendants, and the evaluation forms should be sent to the National CPD Committee.

National CPD Committees

Each country shall set up a CPD Accreditation Committee which will be in charge of accrediting CPD providers and CPD courses and controlling veterinarians' CPD records. This committee shall reflect all aspects of the veterinary profession.

European CPD Committee

Initially, the Joint Policy Committee (JPC) which is established by both EAEVE and FVE according to the cooperation between these two organisations, should act as the European CPD Accreditation Committee. In the future, a special Committee can be created for this. An UEVP member must be part of the FVE delegation in the JPC/ECCVT¹. The main task of the European CPD Accreditation Committee is to harmonise CPD throughout Europe and to advice and help National CPD Committees to fulfil their task. Another task could be to create European funds for CPD.

National events should be accredited by National CPD Accreditation Committees, international events by the European CPD Accreditation Committee.

¹ European Coordination Committee for Veterinary Training.