

WVA Position Statement on the Preparation of Veterinary Educators to Innovate Veterinary Medical Instruction

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BACKGROUND

The World Veterinary Association (WVA) recognizes a need to innovate and adapt veterinary educational processes in veterinary education establishments (VEEs). Well-structured and sufficiently resourced veterinary educational programs are needed to prepare veterinary students for challenges in contemporary practice and other careers (private and public practice). Well-trained veterinary educators (VEs) are essential for students to integrate and assimilate the knowledge needed to become competent veterinarians.

In some parts of the world, national and regional veterinary education accreditation programs (e.g., American Veterinary Medical Association Council on Education accreditation program and European Association of Establishments for Veterinary Education (EAEVE)/Federation of Veterinarians of Europe (FVE) European System of Evaluation of Veterinary Training program) provide standards and improve veterinary education. Other assessment and quality assurance programs (e.g., OIE/World Organization for Animal Health Evaluation of Performance of Veterinary Services assessment) also provide guidance and assistance.

Developing veterinary competency-based learning requires knowledge on how to approach unknown conditions or unpredictable situations, which are common situations in veterinary careers. This can be accomplished by providing opportunities for case- or problem-based learning, as when VEs take on roles of developing observational and examination skills, application of scientific methodology, diagnosis, critical analysis and thinking. In addition, it is encouraged that educators have the additional role of mentoring and coaching students to enhance the acquisition of soft skills (e.g., communication, teamwork, mental wellbeing, etc.) which are crucial for success as a veterinarian.

VEs should continuously develop a holistic understanding of contemporary educational methods and effective student assessments. Additionally, VEEs should facilitate and offer opportunities to VEs interested in improving their skill sets to optimize mentoring of students towards competency.

In order to ensure that the quality of veterinary education continues to improve, veterinary statutory bodies should play an integral part in the monitoring of VE programmes and encourage digital literacy training for VEs.

As recommended in the WVA Position Statement on Implementing Veterinary Continuing Education and Professional Development¹ (CEPD), CEPD is optimally provided by instructors with formal training in contemporary instructional methods.

WVA POSITION

The WVA calls on veterinary statutory bodies, veterinary educational establishments (VEEs), and institutions or associations to encourage a culture of continuous professional development of veterinary educators (VEs). Continuing Education and Professional Development (CEPD) programs should promote and develop training programs for veterinary educators (VEs) that cultivate a responsible and committed vision for deep learning and the professional development of students. This may be accomplished through the use of mentoring, as well as the application of contemporary technological tools and methods to develop student competencies. VEs should have a holistic understanding of instructional processes, be able to design and implement active learning methods, mentor students in their professional development and acquisition of competencies and develop meaningful student assessments. In some parts of the world, veterinary education accreditation, quality assurance and veterinary education assessment programs have provided guidance for VEEs to help VEs.