



VETERINARY PRACTITIONERS BOARD  
AUSTRALIAN CAPITAL TERRITORY

## **Employing veterinary practitioners' policy**

- Employers must ensure employed veterinary practitioners hold current registration that is recognised in the ACT. Registration may be confirmed by accessing online registers or by telephoning the relevant Board's office.
- Employers should provide appropriate support, guidance, and assistance to veterinary practitioners in their employment.
- Employers should not employ an inexperienced veterinary practitioner unless the employer has the capacity and is willing to provide the required level of support.
- Employers must not direct veterinary practitioners to undertake procedures / tasks for which they do not have the necessary skills unless they are provided with adequate supervision/support.

### **Employment of inexperienced veterinary practitioners**

It is important that inexperienced graduates are supported by their employer during their first years.

Employing a new graduate carries certain responsibilities and requires greater input and support from the provider of veterinary services than when employing an experienced veterinarian.

Not every provider of veterinary services has the resources to employ and appropriately support a new graduate. Some practices, even with appropriate resources, may not wish to expend the time and effort to employ a new graduate.

Graduates must be given as much assistance as possible from employers and experienced colleagues to improve their knowledge and skills, and to interact with other veterinarians.

Practices must take into account that new graduates may not have had the opportunity to develop sufficient competence, knowledge or communication skills to perform at all times to an acceptable standard without assistance. Practices must ensure that the inexperienced practitioner is supervised and supported at all times until both graduate and employer feel sufficient experience has been gained. Employers must not direct veterinary practitioners to undertake procedures/tasks for which they do not have the necessary skills unless they are provided with adequate supervision/support.

New graduates should not be expected to perform after-hours duty or remain in sole charge until they are fully conversant with workplace procedure and back-up facilities and have achieved adequate levels of confidence and competence. The time to achieve this will vary depending on the person and the circumstance and is likely to take several months. A new graduate should not be required to attend after-hours calls without adequate support in whatever form may be appropriate for the circumstances. This may involve establishing a formal supervisory relationship with other veterinarians within that practice or, from other practices.

The principal and staff, including non-veterinary staff, should have a positive attitude to the employment of a new graduate and so provide a supportive work environment. The veterinary business should have regular staff meetings and provide regular opportunities for discussion of cases

with peers and supervising veterinarians. There should be adequate supporting non-veterinary assistance for the new graduate from nursing and administrative staff.

Employers must not direct veterinary practitioners to undertake procedures/tasks for which they do not have the necessary skills unless they are provided with adequate supervision/support.

### **Graduate Obligations**

New graduates should:

- realistically assess their career needs and interests before accepting employment
- fully understand the employment agreement (including pay, working hours, after hours responsibilities and holidays) before accepting a position
- appreciate that veterinary science is a profession, not just a job
- be responsible for ensuring that they are eligible to practice (i.e. that they are currently registered as a veterinarian), and
- exercise their professional judgment and accept that cases will arise where assistance from an experienced veterinarian is necessary.