Re: Education Standards Committee and eligibility of graduates for professional registration

You may be aware of ongoing discussions about the voluntary registration of veterinary nurses, veterinary technologists and rural animal technicians, as well as the proposal for regulation of all allied veterinary professionals.

Over the past fifteen months, the NZVNA has appointed a special committee tasked with initiating the move toward professional regulation. The committee has been given an interim title of Allied Veterinary Professional Regulatory Council (AVPRC). Please see the letter that is currently going out to all veterinary professionals from the AVPRC. This letter can be found in the ESC committee area on the NZVNA website. Details are provided later in this correspondence.

The AVPRC has appointed an Educational Standards Committee (ESC) (taking the place of the former ANTECH Committee which was formally dissolved in May 2016). The ESC formed in December 2015 and is responsible for creating and overseeing educational standards, including accreditation of providers and ensuring eligibility of graduates for registration. Responsibility of the ESC extends only to the qualifications of Allied Veterinary Professionals (AVPs) which are those persons working in a clinical capacity to provide animal healthcare under the direction of a veterinarian.

The ESC does not cover the level 3 and 4 Animal Care and Animal Management programmes. Providers offering these qualifications should consider how these industries and providers could set up an industry and education advisory group to ensure standards are set and maintained. Feel free to contact us for advice.

Introducing the interim Educational Standards Committee

The interim ESC was appointed by the AVPRC and includes industry members who have knowledge of education and/or high level practice in industry. The interim committee will be in place for three years, during which time a structure will be put in place for the members to either be voted onto the committee or appointed by specific industry bodies.

The current members are:

- **Francesca Brown (Interim Chair)** - Francesca has extensive experience in Veterinary Nursing education and leadership, going back to 2003 and is valued for perspective and ability to facilitate groups to achieve results. As a member of the outgoing ANTECH board, she is providing the conduit between the two committees for a smooth transition.
Francesca also has qualifications in sustainable practice which will be valuable in ensuring the systems and process we put in place are sustainable for the long term.

- **Hayley Squance** - Hayley has over 20 years clinical experience in the veterinary profession and has been an educator for the past 11 years. In line with this she holds a Masters in Education (Adult Education) and is currently working towards a PhD in Emergency Management. She is regularly invited to speak at national and international conferences. Hayley is the Associate Dean of Veterinary Programmes, the Programme Director and senior lecturer of the Bachelor in Veterinary Technology at Massey University, which has been internationalized. She can provide valuable insight to us as we progress this goal for our post targeted review qualifications. She is passionate about advancing allied veterinary professionals through utilization, globalization and ensuring future proofing of the profession.

- **Katie Duncan** - Katie has over 12 years experience of advanced level nursing, leadership and nursing recruitment and is actively involved in the training of nursing students in practice. She is diploma qualified and working towards a VTS qualification in anaesthesia and analgesia. Katie is employed by one of the largest employers of veterinary nurses in NZ. As an industry representative Katie offers valuable insight into industry expectations of educational providers and graduates.

- **Lisa English** has completed the American Veterinary Technician Specialty programme. She has extensive experience in the field of small animal internal medicine nursing and the American system as well as experience teaching practical skills to diploma in veterinary nursing students. Lisa is focussed on utilisation of veterinary nurses in practice and offers an insight from the veterinary practice point of view.

- **Patricia Gleason** gained her Diploma in Veterinary Nursing from Massey University and is a veterinary nurse educator with over ten years experience in training, education and instructional design. She served on the ANTECH Board, representing the non-NQF providers. Patricia is currently completing a Masters in Educational Leadership and works within her institute’s Capability Development team as well as being the Programme Coordinator for Veterinary Nursing. Prior to becoming a qualified vet nurse, Patricia gained an MSc and had a 15+ year career in international development and conservation, working with government agencies and NGOs around the world. Patricia is focused on helping veterinary nurse students develop critical thinking and skills for reflective practice; and is an avid proponent of ongoing professional development within the profession.

- Awaiting appointment of an education representative from the Large Animal Veterinary Technicians Group
The roles for this committee are to:

- establish standards of education and training and maintain them for currency and relevance;
- accredit providers to enable their graduates to meet registration requirements;
- approve overseas qualifications as equivalent to a 2 year New Zealand Veterinary Nursing Qualification (Level 6);
- administer a national examination; and
- respond to complaints relating to education standards and national registration requirements.

The ESC is currently establishing accreditation criteria for providers. When the accreditation criteria are released, we will provide guidance to educational providers on time frames and mechanisms for meeting them. This accreditation process will initially be voluntary; and feedback from all providers will be sought before implementation.

The planning is still in its initial development phase, but some general guidelines can be offered:

- From 2019 onward, accreditation through ESC will be required to ensure your graduates are automatically eligible for the NZVNA Register/List (time frame to be confirmed).
- A key feature of the accreditation requirements is alignment of the NZ programmes to the Royal College of Veterinary Surgeons (RCVS) and AVMA Committee on Veterinary Technician Education and Activities (CVTEA) respective Day 1 Competencies; along with New Zealand-specific criteria. A combined document will be released as soon as practicable; but in the interim, if you ensure your programmes are meeting RCVS and CVTEA competencies, this will put you in good stead. These can be found on the NZVNA website in the ESC section (more details on this below).
- For providers offering New Zealand Certificate in Animal Technology Rural Animal Technician - as this is unique to New Zealand, we hope to work with the Large Animal Veterinary Technician group to develop Day 1 Competencies specific for the job role. Once developed, providers will then need to ensure these Day 1 competencies for rural animal technicians are embedded into their programme. If you wish to provide input, please contact us.
- Accreditation will be cyclical (most likely 3 yearly) for all providers graduating allied veterinary professionals at Level 5, 6 and 7 who wish to have the opportunity to go on the register. Timeframes to be confirmed.
- In most cases accreditation/reaccreditation will be achieved by submission of an online portfolio which includes video evidence of teaching and learning facilities. The need for site visits is being reviewed, and may be required.
- There will be a fee set for accreditation - a fees schedule will be set out in advance to enable budgeting. Target: July 2017
The first accreditation round will be 2018 for 2019 graduates (TBC).

Discussions are underway about developing a National Examination.

We plan to run a one-day cluster meeting for all providers to discuss the draft documents to date, in the latter half of 2016. The documents will be released for review prior to this meeting. Date and venue to be confirmed.

We have set up a secure area for the ESC on the NZVNA website. https://secure.zeald.com/nzvna/regulation/Provider%20Information

You can log into this page using your NZVNA log in. If you are an education provider staff member but not a NZVNA member please contact me to get your login details. At this link you will be able check up to date information and documents related to accreditation and registration including draft documents for review as they become available. The ESC email details are also provided there if you wish to contact us with feedback or questions.

Finally, to facilitate timely and appropriate correspondence, we need to ensure up-to-date contact details for all providers. Please ensure we always have current details for the following staff as changes occur:

- Contact person/persons (Programme Managers, Heads of School, Quality/Academic Units)
- Email addresses
- Details of what programmes you are running each year and approximate student numbers

We will be maintaining regular communication with the Allied Veterinary Professional education sector to keep you fully informed of actions and upcoming requirements.

If you have any questions, please don’t hesitate to contact us on educational.standards@nzvna.org.nz

Yours,

Francesca Brown
Interim Chair
Education Standards Committee
Subcommittee of New Zealand Veterinary Nursing Association