



To the 2021 veterinary graduates in Australia and New Zealand

In 2020 we wrote to the graduates of the year preceding yours believing the worst of the pandemic was over. Unfortunately, this proved not to be the case and some schools have encountered two straight years of significant disruption and others have avoided the worst impacts of the pandemic.

Nevertheless, the message is the same. In your final year as a veterinary student, it is important to reflect on all that you have achieved in spite of the many difficulties along the way. It is important that you know of the critical work that has happened 'behind the scenes' to ensure that you can enter the profession, as a graduate vet, with our full confidence.

Inevitably, ongoing restrictions related to the COVID-19 pandemic have affected the delivery of your program. You have become skilled at learning modes, the intensity of which could only be imagined two years ago. Your teachers have continued to innovate and as a graduating class, you also have shown strength, agility and goodwill in adapting to change.

For you, COVID restrictions have impacted two years of clinical training and clinical placements. This aspect of your education is designed to provide authentic work-integrated learning experiences so that you are work-ready on graduation. Requirements for clinical training and EMS have been trimmed to the minimum allowable, which means that for some, the depth of experience at graduation may be less than that would have been achieved before the onset of the pandemic.

Additional means of supplementing clinical exposure (whether by on-line or skills-lab or face-to-face methods) should be sought and incorporated wherever possible. COVID-19 impacts for many have meant that student involvement in clinical placements has involved a combination of face-to-face, self-directed and online clinical experiential learning. However, all Schools have continued to deliver learning experiences that ensure students meet program and accreditation requirements and competencies at graduation.

It has been noted that several in your cohort have been stranded overseas throughout the pandemic. They have not been forgotten by the profession and, as they return to our shores, they will be warmly embraced and brought up to speed.

The Veterinary Schools Accreditation Advisory Council (VSAAC) of AVBC has reviewed your curriculum and continues to communicate regularly with VSANZ and with Schools on all matters related to the accreditation of your degrees. Throughout the past two years, AVBC has been able to assure the veterinary boards of Australia and New Zealand that your degree continues to be accredited and you are on track to achieving each of the Day One Competencies necessary to register and practise.

It has been said that you are the “most wanted” cohort of veterinary graduates ever. Worthy employers respect the commitment you have demonstrated, admire your knowledge and are really looking forward to supporting your early career. They will provide further opportunity to develop your skills across all aspects of the profession. Take your time and seek out those practices where you will be mentored and encouraged through your transition to fully independent practice.

We are assured that you are well and truly ready for the next step in your veterinary career. We wish you every success.



Dr Peter Gibbs
Chair AVBC



Dr Warwick Vale
President AVA



Prof Anna Meredith
Chair VSANZ



Dr Grant McCullough
President NZVA

Additional resources

In addition to your future employer, all students have peer support available through their school alumnus networks, as well as support from the AVA and NZVA (<https://www.nzva.org.nz/>).

The AVA reaffirms their support by providing several resources, which include:

1. Free AVA Student Membership, including an extension of this membership for graduates of 2020 until June 30, 2021.
2. The Graduate Mentoring program, where graduates can be mentored by an industry professional in their early career. For more information, go to <https://www.ava.com.au/about-us/programs-awards/graduate-mentoring-program/>
3. The AVA's Return to Work program, which is accessible for free for students who have signed up to one of the AVA's special interest groups. For more information, log in and go [here](#)
4. The Veterinary Volunteer Initiative, where you can contact vets to discuss cases. For more information, log in and go to <https://www.ava.com.au/member-services/my-ava-groups/student/student-volunteer-initiative/>
5. AVA's Mental Health Phone Counselling service as well as HR Hotline, which includes a Free of Charge legal review of the Graduate's first professional veterinarian employment offer contract.
6. The AVA HR hotline has been extended for the use of new graduates. Here is the link: <https://www.ava.com.au/member-services/vetsuccess/hr-resource-centre/>

For more information, please do not hesitate to contact your respective veterinary school, or send inquiries to the AVA at <https://www.ava.com.au/contact-us/>

Registration

Registration to practice differs between states and you may wish to know further details. Links to all the veterinary registration boards can be found on the [AVBC website](#)