



A message to employers of 2021 veterinary graduates

The Australian Veterinary Association, New Zealand Veterinary Association, Veterinary Schools of Australia and New Zealand and the Australasian Veterinary Boards Council have continued to closely monitor the impacts of the pandemic on this year's graduating cohort. This year's students continue to express concern that potential employers may view them as underqualified compared to pre-COVID cohorts. Our purpose in writing is to assure you of our confidence that, as is always the case, given attentive support and capable mentors, this cohort has the requisite skills and knowledge to be practice-ready on graduation.

The COVID-19 restrictions imposed on our veterinary schools have continued to impact the delivery of most programs, with different modes of teaching, learning and assessment. Across the past two years, schools have continued to adapt, but the competences and standards of our veterinary programs have remained the same.

Students have been concerned about the lack of clinical placements. Clinical placements are designed to provide authentic work-integrated learning experiences during the training program so that graduates are work-ready. COVID-19 impacts for many schools have meant that student experience of clinical placements has involved a combination of face-to-face, self-directed, and online clinical experiential learning. All schools have continued to deliver learning experiences that ensure students meet program and accreditation requirements and competencies at graduation.

The AVBC has reviewed each modified curriculum and continues to communicate regularly with VSANZ and with Schools on all matters related to the accreditation of veterinary degrees. Throughout the past two years AVBC has been able to assure the veterinary boards of Australia and New Zealand that Australian and New Zealand veterinary degrees continue to be accredited and that final year students are on track to achieving all of the Day One Competences necessary to register and practise.

In addition, the graduating class have shown considerable flexibility and resilience in adapting to the many changes that COVID has ushered into their program; they are resourceful, self-directed learners and skilled in using online resources. These are important characteristics of a successful veterinarian.

How can you help?

- Where able, assist veterinary schools and the broader profession by providing student placement opportunities (as COVID allows).
- Encourage graduating students in their search for potential places of employment, especially if you consider your practice/industry 'graduate friendly'.
- Where possible welcome new graduates with open arms and provide moral support, whether through virtual webinars, email, or other forums of online communication.
- Make use of the various resources provided by the AVA and NZVA to guide potential new graduate employees, such as <https://www.ava.com.au/member-services/vetsuccess/my-new-career/>

We hope, through a united effort to show support for our newest vets, we can demonstrate the collaborative effort for which our profession is known.

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