



Policy on Registration

1. Legislation

Section 3 of the Veterinarians Act 2005 (Act) requires the Council to protect the public interest by aiming to ensure that veterinarians are competent to practise and for that purpose it provides the Council with the powers to register people qualified to practise as veterinarians.

Section 4 of the Act defines a veterinarian as a person who is a registered with the Council and who holds a current practising certificate.

Section 6 of the Act provides that:

- (1) a person, on payment of the prescribed fee, is entitled to be registered if the person satisfies the Council that he or she is a fit and proper person to be registered and has, or is eligible to have, —
 - (a) a recognised veterinary science degree or diploma from a recognised institution; or
 - (b) a veterinary science degree or diploma of not less than 4 years of study and 1 or more of the following:
 - (i) a pass mark in prescribed examinations;
 - (ii) a pass in an assessment programme approved by the Council;
 - (iii) a pass in post-graduate study or training approved by the Council.
- (2) Despite subsection (1), no person is entitled to be registered unless the Council is satisfied that the person can communicate in and understand English to an appropriate standard for practising as a veterinarian in New Zealand.

In addition Section 9 of the Act provides that:

A person is not entitled to be registered —

- (a) if he or she —
 - (i) has been convicted by any court in New Zealand or elsewhere of any offence punishable by imprisonment for a term of 3 months or longer; and
 - (ii) does not satisfy the Council that, having regard to all the circumstances, including the time that has elapsed since the conviction, the offence does not reflect adversely on his or her fitness to practise as a veterinarian; or
- (b) if the Council is satisfied that registration of the person would be inappropriate because, in New Zealand or elsewhere, he or she —
 - (i) is the subject of professional disciplinary proceedings; or
 - (ii) is under investigation, or has been struck off the relevant register of veterinarians, or has been otherwise disciplined by a veterinary professional organisation; or
- (c) if the Council is satisfied that the person cannot practise satisfactorily as a veterinarian because of a mental or physical condition.

2. Recognised Institutions, Qualifications, Assessment and Examination Programmes for Registration Purposes

Provided all other registration criteria are met, registration without further examination is normally granted to applicants:

- holding primary veterinary degrees from those schools which have been assessed and approved by an internationally recognised “authority” having a rigorous assessment and review process (including institutions holding limited or provisional accreditation)
- holding undergraduate veterinary degrees from schools which have been previously recognised by VCNZ under the Veterinarians Act 1994 until the date of non recognition in March 2001 (this applies to the National University of Ireland graduates and certain German and Danish School graduates who are eligible to be registered as a veterinarian in the country they gained their degree)
- holding a four year veterinary degree or diploma and a pass in the New Zealand National Veterinary Examination, or the Australian National Veterinary Examination or the Royal College of Veterinary Surgeons membership examination or the Canadian National Examining Board Licensing examination
- holding a four year veterinary degree or diploma and an American Veterinary Medical Association Certificate of the Educational Commission for Foreign Veterinary Graduates

A full list of recognised institutions, qualifications, assessment and examination programmes is set out in the relevant NZ Gazette Notice available on the Council’s website at <http://www.vetcouncil.org.nz/pubs.php> or from the Veterinary Council Office.

Honorary veterinary degrees are not recognised for registration purposes.

3. Overseas qualified veterinarians holding non recognised qualifications

Overseas-qualified veterinarians with non recognised qualifications are normally required to sit and pass the combined Australasian National Veterinary Examination (NVE) to demonstrate sufficient knowledge and experience to practise in New Zealand. This consists of a preliminary and final examination and is administered by the Australasian Veterinary Boards Council.

In some circumstances overseas-qualified veterinarians with non recognised qualifications may be eligible for limited registration.

In order to be eligible to sit the NVE an overseas qualified veterinarian must be a graduate of a primary veterinary course of at least four years’ duration from a recognised veterinary school listed in the "World Veterinary Directory", at a school which was part of a college or university listed in the "World List of Universities" or the AVMA-Listed Veterinary Colleges of the World.

Graduates with primary veterinary degrees of less than 4 years duration are not normally eligible to sit the National Veterinary Examination.

The Preliminary Examination is available in some overseas countries but the final examination may only be taken in Australia.

4. Summary of registration criteria

Each application for registration is considered on its merits as a separate case.

In considering each application for registration and an annual practising certificate the Council must consider whether the applicant:

- holds a recognised degree or diploma in veterinary science from a recognised institution; or
- holds a degree or diploma of at least four years' duration and one or more of the following:
 - a pass mark in a prescribed examination
 - a pass in an approved assessment programme
 - a pass in an approved post graduate study or training course; and
- can communicate in and understand English to an appropriate standard for practising as a veterinarian; and
- is fit for registration (as per s9 of the Act).

5. Declining an Application for Registration

Where the Council proposes to decline any application for registration, the Act provides that the applicant must be provided with the information on which the proposed decision is based. The applicant will then be given a reasonable opportunity to make submissions and be heard by the Council, either personally or by legal counsel or agent, in respect of the application, before the Council reaches a final decision.

The Council may propose to decline an application for registration on a recommendation from the Registration Committee or on its own initiative. Whatever the reason, all relevant information must be provided to the applicant, in accordance with section 12(3) of the Act.

Where the Council declines an application for registration or an applicant is dissatisfied with any part of a decision of the Council in relation to an application for registration (eg the imposition of conditions) the applicant has a right of appeal to the District Court (set out in section 64 of the Act). Appeals against decisions of the Council must be brought before the Court within 20 working days after notice of the decision has been served. ("Working days" is defined in the Act). The decision of the Council will remain in force pending the determination of the appeal. The District Court has the power on any appeal to confirm, reverse or modify the Council's decision. The Court may refer the matter back to the Council. The Court may also make any decision that the Council could have made itself.

In some circumstances, the Court may still allow an appeal to be heard even though the 20 working day deadline, as provided in the Act, may have passed.

6. Validity of Applications

Registration applications are valid for six months following receipt. At the expiry of six months if the applicant has not provided the further information required or entered the examination process, the registration application lapses and another application is required.

The registration and application documentation of applicants who do not proceed or enter the examination process is disposed of after 2 years of date of receipt.

The application documentation of applicants who have entered the examination process but do not proceed after sitting the preliminary examination is disposed of after 5 years of date of receipt.

7. International Consultations

Overseas veterinarians do not have to be registered in New Zealand when providing advice, on request, to New Zealand veterinarians on patients located in New Zealand.

In such circumstances the patient must be under the care and clinical responsibility of the New Zealand veterinarian who has requested the advice.

8. Visiting Veterinarians

Overseas veterinarians visiting New Zealand to speak at conferences or run workshops do not require registration as long as the activities they are undertaking do not directly involve animal treatment and they do not represent themselves as New Zealand registered veterinarians. Overseas veterinarians visiting New Zealand to carry out activities which involve treating or manipulating animals must be registered and hold a practising certificate

Policy reviewed and confirmed February 2012

Policy reviewed February 2014 and amended to reflect transfer of National Veterinary Exam (NZNVE) to AVBC – references to NZNVE removed

Policy amended May 2016 to include definition of 'veterinarian'.