



# Policy on Specialist Registration

## 1 Legislation

The Veterinarians Act provides

- 7 Entitlement to registration as specialist
- (1) The Council may, by notice in the Gazette, —
- (a) designate any branch of veterinary science as a branch in respect of which a veterinarian may practise as a specialist;
  - (b) amend or revoke any notice under paragraph (a).
- (2) A veterinarian, on payment of the prescribed fee, is entitled to be registered as a specialist if the veterinarian satisfies the Council that, in relation to the branch of veterinary science in respect of which he or she seeks to be registered as a specialist, he or she —
- (a) is appropriately qualified; and
  - (b) has had sufficient training and experience to justify practising as a specialist in that branch of veterinary science.

## 2 Rationale and Purpose

Registered veterinary specialists are those with higher qualifications and skill levels in a particular branch of veterinary medicine who have undergone recognised advanced and supervised training and passed recognised specialist examinations.

Under section 33 of the Act, only registered specialists may claim specialist status.

The Council introduced specialist registration to ensure that the public has access to advanced veterinary expertise. Veterinarians who wish to be registered as specialists must meet the requirements Council has defined in relation to qualifications, experience and training before specialist registration will be granted.

## 3 Procedures and Guidelines

New Zealand specialist registration is part of an Australian and New Zealand initiative, which enables New Zealand specialists to be automatically recognised for registration as Australian specialists under the Trans-Tasman Mutual Recognition provisions (and vice versa and provided the applicant satisfies the legal requirements of the local registration authority).

To ensure consistency of specialist registration standards, all applicants for specialist registration in New Zealand and Australia have their qualifications, training and experience assessed by the Australasian Veterinary Boards Council (AVBC)

Advisory Committee on Registration of Veterinary Specialists (ACRVS). ACRVS undertakes this role on behalf of the eight Australian veterinary boards and the Veterinary Council of New Zealand. The VCNZ is represented on ACRVS.

ACRVS assesses the qualifications and experience of the applicant concerned and recommends to the Council whether registration should be granted.

There is a pathway for suitably qualified founding members of *new* veterinary specialties to gain specialist registration. The AVBC has set minimum standards which apply to founding members of new specialties, and these form part of the requirements for registration in the new speciality.

To avoid confusion with the general specialist application form which is accessible on the VCNZ website, founding member applicants will need to contact the Registrar for a founding member application form.

Applicants for specialist registration are required to make a separate application to the Veterinary Council for specialist registration on receipt of the ACRVS assessment.

The Council has delegated the power to approve specialist registration applications to the Registrar who reports back to Council. Any debatable applications or those where the ACRVS has recommended that the application be declined are referred to Council.

Only Council has the power to decline specialist registration applications.

#### **4 Specialist Practices**

Unless every veterinary practitioner working in a practice is a registered veterinary specialist or is undergoing a recognised specialist training programme under the direct supervision of a registered veterinary specialist, the trading name of the practice may not contain the word 'specialist' or derivation of it. Such a practice may, for instance, be designated a Referral Centre.

For guidance on the use of the term "specialist" and its derivatives, see the VCNZ Policy on Use of Titles.

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