



Guidance on the 2018/19 Annual Practising Certificate (APC) application and workforce survey

Information about your APC

Online renewal is available during the 'bulk' APC renewal process in February and March. We email veterinarians in early February inviting them to apply online and giving them their login details.

If you weren't registered (for the first time) with the Council before 31 January, please contact us about renewing your APC.

If you're applying for an APC after 31 March you'll need to contact us.

Who should submit an APC application?

You need to submit an APC application and fee if you:

- want to practise as a veterinarian in New Zealand from 1 April 2018 (fee required)
- want to remain on the public Register of Veterinarians with a non practising status (fee required)
- are permanently retired from practice but wish to remain on the public Register of Veterinarians (no fee required)
- want to be removed from the Register of Veterinarians (no fee required).

Who needs an APC?

If you want to practise from 1 April 2018 you need an APC.

The Veterinary Council defines practice as wider than clinical practice. It includes reporting or giving advice in a veterinary capacity, regulatory and compliance functions, teaching, consultancy, research and management roles, given that such roles influence clinical practice and impact on the public interest.

A key question to ask when considering whether you need an APC is "Does the work I'm doing carry or convey the expectation that I'm a veterinarian?"

If you don't intend to return to practice in New Zealand until later in the year, you can delay renewing your practising certificate until that time – for more information see page 2 'Question 2: Intentions for 2018/19'.

Practising without a current practising certificate is illegal and can result in a conviction and fine of up to \$10,000.

Other consequences of not holding a current practising certificate are that you can't carry out certification and prescribing activities or undertake significant surgical procedures. You're also unlikely to be covered by your indemnity insurer. If you're insured with VPIS you won't be covered for events which occurred when you didn't hold a current practising certificate.

Don't let your practising certificate to expire before you apply for a new one. The online Register of Veterinarians records the start date of your APC. This means that it's visible to all, including insurers, veterinary medicine wholesalers and employers.

It's your professional responsibility, not your employer's, to renew your practising certificate.

If you want to practise as from 1 April 2018, you need to answer all the application questions, complete the declaration section and pay the fee. You will jeopardise the issue of your APC if you don't make sure to do all these things.

Completing the application form

Question 1: Personal and contact details

We comply with the requirements of the Veterinarians Act 2005 and the Privacy Act 1993. For more information about how we handle personal information you can see our policy [here](#).

To meet the requirements of the Veterinarians Act and associated regulations, we include certain information about registered and practising veterinarians on the publicly available Register of Veterinarians (the Register). The information we display includes practitioners' names, registration statuses, qualifications and the names of their practice or employer.

We're aware that there may be a small number of people with legitimate reasons for keeping their practice name private. If you feel there is good reason for us not to publish the name of your practice or employer, please contact Iain McLachlan, Registrar (registrar@vetcouncil.org.nz).

The Register is available as an online searchable facility on the Council's website.

Changes to your Register entry

To change the name you're registered under, or have qualifications added to your register entry, you need to send us certified documentary evidence.

The copies of your documents need to be certified or notarised as true copies of the originals by a notary public, justice of the peace, barrister or solicitor. We suggest you check the Yellow Pages of the telephone directory.

Please download and complete the relevant form [here](#) and send to us in hard copy with your certified documents.

Question 1.1: Public Register information

We will publish your name, practice/employer name, qualifications, practising status, registration date and APC commencement date on our public register. If you request it, we will also publish your business phone number and your email address on the public register, and provide these to people who request them.

Question 2: Intentions for 2018/19

Please indicate your practice intentions for the 2018/19 practising year. If you intend practising in New Zealand from 1 April 2018 you must hold a current practising certificate. (See page 1 of these notes: 'Who needs an APC?')

If you're not intending to practise in New Zealand during the practising year ending 31 March 2019, or intend returning to practice later in the year, please choose one of the other options. After 31 March you will be able to access an application form on the [APC page](#) of our website. See the [fees page](#) for details on the prorated APC fees.

What's the difference between non practising, retired, and removal from the Register?

None of these categories entitle you to practise as a veterinarian. However with a non practising status:

- we keep your details on the public (non practising) Register of Veterinarians
- we keep you current on Council and professional issues by sending regular Council publications and documents
- we continue inviting you to apply for an APC or choose another practising status.

The retired category is for permanently retired veterinarians. This allows your details to remain on the public (non practising) Register for no fee. Retired veterinarians who wish to receive Council communications need to pay the non practising fee of \$18.

If you don't intend ever practising in New Zealand again, you can apply to have your name removed from the Register of Veterinarians. If at some time in the future you change your mind, you'll need to send a new application for registration with the required documents and fee.

Question 3: Recency of practice

Before issuing you with a practising certificate the Council needs to be satisfied that you meet minimum practising standards, including recency of practice requirements.

You need to provide full details of your practice intentions, work history and CPD activities if:

- you want to return to veterinary practice after a break of three or more years; or
- you haven't practised within one year of completing the course requirements for your primary veterinary qualification; or

- you haven't practised within one year of passing an approved registration examination or assessment programme; or
- you've started work in a field of veterinary activity you've never practised in or haven't practised in for three years or more; or
- you want to start work in a field of veterinary activity you've never practised in or haven't practised in for three years or more.

Please send information about your work history and CPD in a CV format.

Please click [here](#) for a copy of the Council's Policy on Recency of Practice and feel free to contact us (04 473 9600 or vet@vetcouncil.org.nz) if you need more information.

Question 4: Overseas practice

If you've been practising overseas since your last APC, the Council needs to be satisfied that no issues arose which might affect your eligibility for a New Zealand practising certificate.

If you practised outside New Zealand during the year beginning 1 April 2017, and didn't arrange for a letter of good standing (LGS) on your return, please immediately arrange for a LGS to be sent direct to us from each overseas jurisdiction you practised in.

If you're a veterinarian currently practising overseas and intend to return to practice in New Zealand, you'll need to arrange for a LGS to be sent to us. Please bear in mind that a LGS is only valid for 3 months, so you may want to defer arranging this until closer to your return date.

Question 5: Fitness to practise

Before issuing you with an APC the Council needs to be satisfied of your fitness to practise. Things that can impact on a veterinarian's fitness to practise include: mental or physical conditions (eg neurological, psychiatric, depressive or addictive disorders and physical deterioration due to injury, disease or degeneration), adverse disciplinary findings, formal competence enquiries, criminal convictions and any investigations that may result in disciplinary or criminal proceedings.

If you answer yes to any of the questions in this section please email the Registrar at registrar@vetcouncil.org.nz with full details, including your name and registration number. Alternatively, you could send this information to the Registrar in hardcopy in a sealed envelope marked 'Confidential'. You'll need to include copies of disciplinary findings and orders, competency findings, conviction notices and medical reports where relevant. We will deal with all sensitive information very carefully, observing confidentiality and privacy principles.

Health Conditions

You must disclose any mental or physical condition **with the potential** to affect your fitness to practise. If you're in any doubt please disclose your condition/s, or contact the Deputy Registrar on 04 473 9600 for advice.

If you haven't previously told us about your health issue, please email the Registrar at registrar@vetcouncil.org.nz with details of your condition and its duration. Alternatively, you could send this information to the Registrar in hardcopy in a sealed envelope marked 'Confidential'.

You have the option of now providing any hospital discharge reports, together with the name and contact details of your treating health practitioner. The APC application asks for your consent to the Registrar contacting your treating practitioner for information about your condition. You may choose not to agree at this stage, preferring instead that the Registrar contacts you first. If you choose this option, there may be a delay in issuing your APC.

The Registrar manages health declarations in consultation with the Council's Health Advisory Group. Our approach is non-judgmental, rehabilitative and confidential, except in extreme cases where the veterinarian refuses to co-operate and the public interest is threatened.

Our general experience is that no further action is needed for the majority of APC health declarations. In a small number of cases a voluntary agreement may be put in place, with this early intervention enabling veterinarians with a treatable illness to keep practising while receiving treatment.

We usually communicate by email, but if we send hardcopies of any correspondence about the fitness to practise section, we'll send these to your contact address in envelopes marked 'Private and Confidential'. You may wish to choose an alternative email or physical address for correspondence on any fitness to practise issues.

Question 6: Compliance with minimum practising standards

Before issuing your practising certificate the Council needs to be satisfied that you satisfy its minimum practising standards. To date we have prescribed minimum practising standards in relation to:

- fitness to practise

- competency – including recency of practise
- continuing professional development
- professional requirements - the Code of Professional Conduct ('the Code')

Veterinarians declare, as part of their APC application, that they understand the requirements of the Code of Professional Conduct. To better inform this annual declaration and remind veterinarians of the key requirements, we've developed a number of minimum practising standards checklists detailing the standards considered most necessary to protect the public interest.

In this APC renewal round we're asking veterinarians **in clinical practice** to indicate their compliance with the [Animal Welfare and Veterinary Medicines](#) checklists.

- Veterinarians **in clinical practice** will need to indicate whether they comply with the standards set out in the checklists as part of the APC renewal process.
- Veterinarians should complete the checklists **before** the APC renewal round and save them with their CPD records.
- Veterinarians can claim completing the checklists as a CPD activity.
- If you're unable to comply because of practice protocols and policies, you should raise this with your employer or senior colleagues in the first instance - and with us if you're unable to resolve at the local level.
- We're taking an educative approach. If you're unable to meet the standards, this won't prevent the issue of your practising certificate. However we will be in touch with you to offer help in meeting the standard.

Going forward we'll evaluate responses to the minimum practising checklist section of the application to establish:

- the profession's current level of compliance
- the reasons for noncompliance
- whether the standards are realistic.

Question 7: Continuing professional development (CPD)

All practising veterinarians need to meet the requirements of the Council's CPD framework by undertaking activities relevant to their area of practice. Detailed guidance on our CPD framework is available in our [Continuing Professional Development Information for Veterinarians](#) guide.

For this APC application you need to declare the CPD points you accumulated in the year ended 31 December 2017.

Please bear in mind the total requirement is at least 60 relevant CPD points for the period 1 January 2015 to 31 December 2017, with at least 15 points in both the collegial learning activity (CLA) and continuing veterinary education (CVE) areas.

You don't need to contact us with an explanation for not meeting the CPD requirements if any of the following apply to you:

- you're a new graduate (ie completed the course requirements for your primary veterinary qualification within the last 12 months), or you passed an approved registration examination or assessment programme within the last 12 months
- you've already told us that you started or returned to practice during the year ended 31 December 2017
- you've already approached us about your restricted practice and limited CPD opportunities, and we've approved a lesser amount of CPD and conditions on your practice.

If there are individual circumstances which have made it difficult for you to meet our CPD requirements, or if you'd like guidance on how to best meet these, contact us either by writing to the Deputy Registrar or emailing her at despina.arathimos@vetcouncil.org.nz.

CPD compliance monitoring

Later this year we'll be selecting approximately 3% of practising veterinarians for an audit of their CPD (in July). We'll be looking at the CPD those veterinarians undertook during the 3 years ended 31 December 2017.

Most of the veterinarians being audited will be randomly selected and a smaller number will be selected on the basis of:

- a recent complaint or concern raised where recommendations were made around upskilling
- failure to meet the audit requirements in last year's CPD compliance monitoring.

If you're chosen for a CPD audit, we'll contact you about this in early May.

Question 8 (question 9 for online applications): Declaration

You need to personally complete your APC application – ie don't get somebody else to do this for you. Please answer the questions carefully and honestly. We're likely to treat false declarations or representations as a disciplinary matter.

Question 9 (question 10 for online applications): Fees and payment

Rebate for early completion of APC application and payment

The fee for renewal of your practising certificate is \$559 (incl. GST). We need to receive this from you by **31 March 2018** so that you can legally practise from 1 April 2018. We can rebate this fee to \$533 (inc. GST), **but only** if we've received your application and the fee by the end of the business day **on 28 February 2018**. You will need to pay the full fee of \$559 (no negotiation), if your payment and/or application arrive after 28 February 2018.

Direct Credit option for Employers

Veterinarians need to take individual responsibility for applying to renew their practising certificate. We prefer they also take responsibility for paying the fee and claim back, from their employer if they need to. This is because the task of matching payments made by employers to applications from individual vets is very time consuming and double payments are possible.

Having said that, we will accept bulk direct credit payments from employers paying the APC fees of **25 or more veterinarians**. This is subject to payment being made to the Council's BNZ bank account 02-0506-0072992-000 by **30 January 2018**, and an excel spreadsheet with the names, registration numbers and amounts direct credited for each veterinarian being provided to vet@vetcouncil.org.nz on the same day as the bulk payment is made.

In situations where employers haven't paid the fees and provided the necessary details by 30 January, the veterinarians renewing their APC will need to pay their own APC fee and claim back from their employer.

Question 10 (question 8 online): Workforce survey

The Council appreciates your co-operation and values your contribution in completing this survey. The information you give us is used to monitor workforce trends and provides a valuable contribution to workforce development and planning. It won't be published in a form that can identify individual respondents.

Complete relevant questions 8.2–8.8 only if you were engaged in veterinary practice (which includes non clinical work) in New Zealand during the year ended 31 December 2017. (See page 1 'Who needs an APC?').

Question 8.2: We need your physical workplace location so that we can produce accurate data on the geographical distribution of the workforce. Please enter the physical address of the workplace you mostly practiced from in 2017 and include the post code. The online survey has prepopulated this question with the details you gave last year. Please review these and either confirm by clicking the 'save and continue' button or modify.

Question 8.3: This asks for details on your employment type(s), role(s), work type(s) and the hours you work per week by work type. The online survey has prepopulated the employment type(s), role(s) and work type(s) fields with the responses you gave last year. Please modify these responses if you need to when completing this section.

- If you have difficulty identifying a typical week estimate the % of time spent over the year in each work type and apply this to the average hours worked per week.
- There are 4 sections in the online APC application (columns in the hard copy form) to record your employment type, role and work type and the hours worked by work type. If you have only one employment type, role and work type you will only need to fill in one section/column.
- If you need more than the 4 sections/columns provided, record details for the work types you work the most hours in, and enter any additional hours worked per week in the box provided.
- If you select **OT (other) as a code please specify what this is in the relevant box.**
- Please **use the detailed work type codes. Only use the 'collapsed' categories of MX, PA and RG if it is not possible to record all your work types or if too difficult to assign hours worked to each work type.**

Questions 8.4–8.7: These questions are relevant for both clinical and non clinical veterinarians given the definition of practice includes activities such as reporting or giving advice in a veterinary capacity, regulatory and compliance functions, teaching, consultancy, research and management roles.

If you want to practise as from 1 April 2018, you need to answer all the application questions, complete the declaration section and pay the fee. You will jeopardise the issue of your APC if you don't make sure to do all these things.