

CPD pilot audits

by Helen Beban, Professional Adviser, Veterinary Council of New Zealand

The Veterinary Council of New Zealand is responsible for protecting the public interest by ensuring that veterinarians are competent and fit to practise. One of the means to accomplish this is to ensure veterinarians are engaged in appropriate continuing professional development (CPD). A declaration of the CPD points is part of a veterinarian's obligations when applying for an annual practising certificate (APC).

For recertification in 2015, you will need to provide a self-declaration that you have met the council's requirements relevant to your declared area(s) of practice for the period 1 April 2011 to 30 June 2014. From 2016, you will need to provide a declaration regarding your CPD activities for the previous three years (ended 30 June).

You are required to collect a minimum of 60 verifiable and relevant CPD points over every three-year period with a minimum of 15 points in each of the Collegial Learning Activity and Continuing Veterinary Education areas (see <http://tinyurl.com/lusx8j8>).

First (pilot) audits

Annual compliance monitoring (auditing) will take place of the CPD undertaken in the previous three years. The first audits will occur in September and October 2014. This will be a pilot, and results of the audit, including feedback from the auditors and veterinarians audited, will be used to refine the process for future years.

The pilot audit will involve an audit of 2.5 percent of practising veterinarians. Of these:

- 50 percent will be randomly selected
- the remaining 50 percent of vets will be selected on a targeted basis.

Targeted selection criteria will include scores on the following risk-based criteria: zero or minimal CPD declared for the previous three years and a history of complaints or concerns where failure to keep current was an issue and recommendations were made. In the future, this will be extended to any veterinarians whose CPD compliance audit outcome was "achieved with recommendations" (see *Outcomes of the audit process* below).

The compliance monitoring will be undertaken by suitably qualified and trained auditors.

We will contact veterinarians selected four weeks before their audit with guidance about the process.

What to do if selected

You will need to complete and return a practitioner profile form together with copies of your CPD records for the previous three years ended 30 June. In the case of the first audits in 2014, you will be asked to send your CPD records for a 3.25-year period (1 April 2011 to 30 June 2014). This means you will have the benefit of an additional three months to meet the three-year requirements.

The onus is on you to demonstrate that you have maintained standards and taken steps to maintain your competence and enhance your performance. The objective is for you to demonstrate that you have identified gaps in your skills and knowledge or areas you wish to develop, and have undertaken CPD to meet these goals.

The system is flexible and will recognise the particular circumstances of individuals and employing organisations. Failure to meet the minimum category requirements may not necessarily result in action being taken, provided you are able to demonstrate that you have maintained standards and taken steps to maintain your competence and enhance your performance.

What the auditor will assess

If you are chosen for an audit of your CPD, the auditor will assess:

- overall, the CPD you have undertaken including an assessment of the type and appropriateness of CPD for your area of practice
- the adequacy of verification or evidence you provide to confirm participation (you will be required to provide the original or photocopies of your CPD records and verification documentation)
- your summary of CPD activities
- whether you have correctly classified each activity
- whether you have correctly attributed a points value to each activity
- your reflective statements (particularly where used to claim CPD not otherwise able to be verified) and whether these clearly indicate what you have learned and the impact on your practice.

In addition, the auditor may comment on:

- your CPD plan, if submitted (not compulsory, but this may be required in future and is highly recommended)
- whether there is any evidence that you have undertaken a self-assessment to identify your skills requirements or developing areas you wish to move into
- whether the CPD activities undertaken reflect the goals of your plan.

The auditor will be assessing whether your CPD is appropriate to maintain your competence in your area of practice, regardless of whether this is in a clinical, educational, research, regulatory, management or consultancy role.

The audit process will be constructive and educative.

Outcomes of the audit process

The CPD audit process will result in one of the following outcomes.

(a) **Fully achieved** – meets or exceeds audit requirements.

If you satisfy the audit requirements, you will have met the CPD requirements for your next annual practising certificate. This will be the outcome for most veterinarians.

(b) **Achieved with recommendations** – meets most audit requirements.

You will be asked to review the audit report and any additional information or recommendations provided to you for future development.

Continued on page 51 >>

CPD pilot audits – continued

(c) **Not achieved** – fails to meet audit requirements.

If you do not meet the CPD requirements, or have provided inadequate or misleading information, you will be required to submit supplementary material and may be required to discuss your options with the council. Depending on the circumstances, outcomes may include:

- the issue of an APC with a further audit during the year
- limitations on your scope of practice (for example, if you practise in a narrow field and there are limited opportunities for you to comply with overall CPD requirements)
- conditions being placed on your practice, for example, practising under the oversight of another veterinarian until compliance with CPD requirements can be demonstrated

- a referral to the council's competence screening programme and the possibility of a full competence assessment
- non-issue or suspension of your APC.

In the event of concerns, the emphasis in the first instance will be rehabilitative and supportive with the council working with you on ways to comply.

Do NOT leave it to the last minute to start recording your CPD. If you are required to produce records for a council compliance audit, it will be difficult and time consuming to produce validated records retrospectively. ■

i For further information, see the revised CPD Guide at:
<http://tinyurl.com/lusx8j8>