

Aberystwyth School of Veterinary Science (AVS)

Fitness to Practise Guidelines and Procedures

Introduction

1. Veterinary students represent the future of the veterinary profession and as such, are expected to conduct their studies according to the standards expected of the profession. The Royal College of Veterinary Surgeons (RCVS) sets and monitors these standards and publishes appropriate guidelines. In addition, it stipulates the procedures to be followed where individuals fall short of expectations. Veterinary students are also subject to the guidelines and procedures set by Aberystwyth University during their first two years of the BVSc programme.
2. There are two major, complementary standards set by the RCVS to which veterinary students must conform, namely, “Day One Competences” and “Fitness to Practise”. The former relates to the knowledge, skills and attributes that students must demonstrate on graduation. The RCVS defines competence as “the ability to perform the roles and tasks required by one’s job to the expected standard”. Fitness to Practise refers to the manner in which students demonstrate that they can practise their profession properly, in both their professional and private lives.
3. Aberystwyth University (AU) also has a Fitness to Practise policy, which has a protocol applying to all relevant courses as well programme-specific procedures. This document outlines the procedures specific to the BVSc programme, which is aligned to the two RCVS standards and the AU policy.

Guiding Documents

4. Students are required to familiarise themselves with the following three documents, which will be used by the AVS in implementing Fitness to Practise policies:
 - i. RCVS:
 - Day One Competences: <https://www.rcvs.org.uk/document-library/day->

[one-competences/](#)

- Fitness to Practise: <https://www.rcvs.org.uk/news-and-views/publications/fitness-to-practise-a-guide-for-uk-veterinary-schools-and/>

ii. AU: Aberystwyth University Fitness to Practise (*insert web link here*)

5. Students might also find useful the Code of Professional Conduct, which outlines the professional responsibilities of veterinary surgeons: <https://www.rcvs.org.uk/setting-standards/advice-and-guidance/code-of-professional-conduct-for-veterinary-surgeons/>

AVS Procedure

6. Where a member of AVS staff, or anyone else, is made aware of concerns relating to a student's fitness to practise, the matter will be formally discussed with the Head of School, or delegated nominee, who will decide on one of the following options:
 - i. No further action to be taken
 - ii. A meeting to be held with the student and a programme of remedial action implemented
 - iii. The matter to be referred to the AU Registry for potential investigation under its Fitness to Practise policy.
7. The Head of School or delegated nominee will keep a record of the incident, including any material provided by the staff member, notes of any meetings and reasons for the decision reached of further action, if any.
8. The Head of School or delegated nominee may consult with personnel from the AU Registry, Faculty staff, Royal Veterinary College (RVC) or anyone else that might assist in reaching a decision and/or progressing the matter.
9. If a meeting is to be held between the student and Head of School or delegated nominee, the student will be informed in writing and invited to attend. The student will also be invited to bring a fellow-student or student representative.
10. If the matter is to be referred for investigation by the AU Registry, the student will be informed of the matter either by the Head of School or a relevant AU staff member involved in Fitness to Practise administration. The composition of the Fitness to Practise panel has the option to include an external professional specialist, for BVSc students, this would be a veterinary surgeon familiar with the RCVS policy on Fitness to Practise. If the incident is sufficiently serious, the RVC may also be invited to nominate a representative to attend.
11. When BVSc students transfer to the RVC in their third year, they will be subject to the policies and procedures implemented by the RVC. However, this might include referral

back to the AVS or AU Academic Registry for consultation or disclosure of previous incidents while the student was at AU.

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