

ECVN policy regarding Standards and Quality

As a part of ensuring and continuing developing robust frameworks for training and specialist qualification in Veterinary Neurology, ECVN defines specialist standards and oversees quality assurance and enhancement of residency training programmes in Veterinary Neurology.

Our strategy will be achieved by:

- Improving the definitions of inherent qualities of ECVN Diplomate and standards in Veterinary Neurology and clear linkages to generic Level 8 (Doctoral level) criteria within the European Qualifications Framework for Lifelong Learning.
- Ensuring outcomes-based assessments in veterinary neurology establishing that Diploma holders have achieved the appropriate knowledge and skills required for a specialist in Neurology.
- Enhancing existing quality assurance processes to reassure all stakeholders, the public and profession, that ECVN-recognised specialists have all achieved the required standards for their title.

Communication and Learning

As part of its role in promoting the value of veterinary neurology specialist services, and the knowledge and skill set of veterinary specialists to the public, the specialism and the profession in general, ECVN uses various media and forums to fulfil its mission.

Our strategy will be achieved by:

- Providing a web-based discussion forum and learning platform to promote lifelong learning for ESVN and ECVN members.
- Providing and fostering regular education courses for its members, especially its residents, in association with ECVN's international partner-college ACVIM (Neurology).
- Providing an annual forum for scientific discourse and communication of advances in basic, veterinary and human neuroscience/neurology, and the

sharing of best practice in the interests of animal and public health and wellbeing.

In terms of **Standards and Quality**, the curriculum working group surveyed the ESVN and ECVN membership to understand the training needs, to establish the membership perception of the qualities a Diploma holder should have to differentiate them from advanced practitioners with the view to develop clearer learning objectives for residents' training and examination.

Two publications resulted from this work which do help us to advance the training we provide as a college, the curriculum of the residents and the examination process to authenticate ECVN Diplomates.

- <http://www.biomedcentral.com/1746-6148/11/2>
- <http://www.biomedcentral.com/1746-6148/11/10>

“Difference between diplomates and advanced practitioners”

All responders expected that diplomates have a detailed understanding of veterinary neurology in a clinical setting, an advanced level in research as well as competencies in teaching, while advanced practitioners were not expected to have competencies in teaching and research.” Lin et al. BMC Veterinary Research (2015) 11:10

Based on the results of former feedback the following **qualities define an ECVN Diploma Holder**. The qualities build the foundation of our curriculum and examination committee review.

1. A high level of competency through teaching, research and practice in veterinary neurology.
2. Demonstrated the ability to acquire and understand a substantial body of knowledge which is at the forefront of the discipline of veterinary neurology.
3. The ability to apply high-level knowledge and skills which is at the forefront of veterinary neurology, including the ability to deal with non-routine and complex cases.

4. A detailed understanding of applicable techniques for research and clinical enquiry, including the ability to design and implement a project for the generation of new knowledge, clinical methodologies and techniques at the forefront of veterinary neurology.
5. Make informed judgments on complex issues in veterinary neurology, often in the absence of complete data
6. Be able to communicate ideas and conclusions clearly and effectively to specialist and non-specialist audiences, including clients.
7. Continued contribution to research and/or clinical studies in veterinary neurology at an advanced level, contributing to the development of new knowledge, techniques, ideas or approaches in the specialty.
8. Lifelong learning through critical evaluation of the published literature and continued interaction with other specialists in veterinary neurology and other specialist disciplines.
9. Maintaining a high standard of professionalism, personal integrity, collegiality, high moral and ethical standard with regard to her/his contribution to the protection of animal health and welfare.
10. Promoting by example the specialty of Neurology to all stakeholders.

In April 2016, the curriculum review committee has used each quality as a starting point to identify a path of how each of the qualities can be assured and trained towards. The ECVN is furthermore working towards ensuring a level 8 qualification and has developed this guidance as a framework for the curriculum review

Knowledge, Skills and Competences of the Diplomates of ECVN Training of Veterinary specialists: EQF level 8 (doctoral degree)

The minimum 4-year Training Programme allows graduate veterinarians, who have completed a minimum of one year internship programme or its equivalent, as defined by the ECVN Credentials Committee, and a minimum of a 3-year College-approved Residency Training Programme to acquire in-depth knowledge of the scientific field of veterinary neurology and its supporting disciplines under the supervision and guidance of a Diplomate of the College. This distinguishes the Specialist level from the first clinical degree (Masters) level, which is EQF level 7, and the “middle tier” or the “Advanced Practitioner”.

Overall specialists will have the intellectual qualities, professional (including transferable) and technical skills necessary for successful employment in professional environments requiring the exercise of personal responsibility and

largely autonomous initiative in professional or equivalent environments. By his/her expertise, the specialist should have developed the self-confidence, self-criticism and sense of responsibility that are essential for the practice of the speciality.

A. In particular in relation to knowledge, specialists will be veterinarians who have demonstrated:

1. a systematic acquisition and understanding of a substantial body of facts, principles, theories and practices, which is at the forefront of veterinary neurology;
2. a high moral and ethical standard with regard to his/her contribution to the protection of animal health and welfare, human health and the environment;
3. willingness to maintain up to date knowledge through congresses and literature;
4. the ability to be acquainted with the structure, objectives, approaches and problems of the veterinary profession and specifically with regard to neurology
5. the ability to keep abreast of new developments in the speciality and become familiar with new methods, before applying these in practice;
6. understanding of the limitations of the specialty of neurology
7. understanding of the possibilities that other specialties may have to offer;
8. familiarity with the potential of multidisciplinary cooperation;
9. awareness of current E.U. and national regulations with regard to all aspects of neurology;
10. the ability to conceptualise, design and implement research projects relevant to their own professional practice for the generation of new knowledge, applications or understanding at the forefront of neurology
11. a detailed understanding of applicable techniques for research and advanced professional enquiry to support all the above.

B. In particular in relation to skills, specialists will be veterinarians who have demonstrated ability to:

1. perform at a high level of professional expertise in the speciality area of neurology including the ability to make informed judgements on non-routine and complex issues in specialist fields, often in the absence of complete data;

2. use a full range of investigative procedures and techniques to define and refine problems in a way that renders them amenable to the application of evidence-based approaches to their solution;
3. use clinical governance e.g. clinical audits or morbidity/mortality critical assessments to reduce harm and complications in the future;
4. communicate their ideas and conclusions clearly and effectively to specialist and non-specialist clients and audiences;
5. act professionally in the provision of customised and optimal solutions to problems with regard to animals, clients, colleagues, public health and the environment;
6. apply high level knowledge and skills at the forefront of the specialist area of veterinary neurology to their own professional work;
7. approach problems in an analytic, scientific way and attempt to find solutions;
8. assign priorities to identified problems;
9. use modern standards of skills and equipment;
10. find required information quickly;
11. organise all aspects of his/her work efficiently and effectively.

C. In particular in relation to competences, specialists will be veterinarians who have demonstrated ability to:

1. perform at a high level of competency through teaching, research and practice in the speciality of veterinary neurology
2. carry out their responsibilities safely and ethically;
3. create, evaluate, interpret and apply, through clinical studies or original research, new knowledge at the forefront of their professional area, of a quality to satisfy peer review, and merit publication and presentation to professional audiences;
4. promote, within academic and professional contexts, technological, social or cultural advancement in a knowledge based society;
5. promote aptitude and proficiency in the field of veterinary neurology
6. continue to undertake research and/or clinical studies in the field of veterinary neurology at an advanced level, contributing substantially to the development of new techniques, ideas or approaches in the speciality;
7. develop their professional practice and produce a contribution to professional knowledge;
8. maintain both professional expertise and research through advanced scholarship;

9. develop applied research relevant to their professional area and other scientific activities in order to contribute to the quality of the speciality of veterinary neurology.

Quality Assurance

The mission of the College is to contribute significantly to the maintenance and enhancement of the quality of European Veterinary Specialists in Neurology across all European countries at the highest possible level so as to ensure that improved optimal veterinary medical services will be provided to the public.

1. Towards achieving this goal, ECVN imposes special training beyond the professional veterinary degree to enhance the ability of candidates to meet certification requirements and to update the competence of specialists, and has:
2. established a policy and associated formal mechanisms for the approval, periodic review and monitoring for the assurance of the standards and quality of the programmes and awards is offering;
3. established a system of collection, analysis and use of up to date, impartial and objective, relevant information for the effective management of the training programmes and other activities of the College, to be regularly submitted to the EBVS;
4. established a clear policy and the procedures, including a re-evaluation form, for re-certification of the Diplomates for membership of the Colleges every five years;
5. conflict of interest avoidance mechanisms in place on all levels, e.g. applications for enrolment as a resident, approval of residency programmes, approval of credentials, examinations, appeals procedures and so on;
6. established a policy and the procedures for complaints or appeals, and disciplinary actions against Diplomates or Residents/Candidates.
7. moreover, working under the umbrella of the European Board of Veterinary Specialisation, ECVN also contributes to its goals by ensuring that:
8. the College commits itself to the development of a culture, which recognises the importance of quality, and quality assurance, in its activities, and to achieve this, it develops and implement a strategy for the continuous enhancement of quality;

9. the interests of society and veterinary profession in the quality and standards of specialist education and training are safeguarded;
10. any specified experience requirement is clearly defined, relevant to the objectives of the speciality, and amenable to evaluation;
11. a strategic plan must be developed every five years;
12. the strategy, constitution/bylaws, policy and procedures, and all major documents of the College are publicly available;
13. residents are assessed using published criteria, regulations and procedures which are applied consistently;
14. staff involved with the training of residents are qualified and competent to do so;
15. the resources available for the support of resident learning are adequate and appropriate for each programme offered.

Accountability procedures

ECVN has in place its own procedures which include the following:

- i. a published policy for the assurance of the quality of the agency itself, made available on its website
- ii. documentation which demonstrates that:
 - a. the processes and results reflect its mission and goals of quality assurance;
 - b. enforces, a no-conflict-of-interest mechanism in its own activities or in the activities of its Diplomates and Residents/Candidates;
 - c. has reliable mechanisms that ensure the quality of any of its activities and material produced;

In accordance with its objective to function as an Organisation developing, and enhancing standards and guidelines on quality assurance in the area of *veterinary neurology* and to maintain and develop co-operation with other appropriate European stakeholder organisations, ECVN is committed to a continuing cooperation with partner organisations in Europe and beyond. These mainly include the other EBVS-recognised Colleges, the respective Associations in Europe and specialist Colleges in other parts of the world (e.g. ACVIM (Neurology)).