

## **Academic Misconduct – European College of Veterinary Neurology (ECVN)**

Any reference to the “candidate” is to be taken to include a reference to a resident in a certified ECVN residency training programme, a candidate whose credentials have been accepted for examination or a candidate who is sitting ECVN Diploma accrediting examination.

### **1 Context**

#### **1.1. Definition**

Academic misconduct is defined for this purpose as: An attempt by a candidate to complete material for her/his credentials, an examination or other assessment by means considered to be unfair.

The following is a non-exhaustive list of examples of academic misconduct which will be considered under these Regulations:

##### **1.1.1 Plagiarism**

Representing another person's work or ideas as one's own, for example by failing to follow convention in acknowledging sources, use of quotation marks etc. This includes the unauthorised use of one candidate's work by another candidate and the commissioning, purchase and submission of a piece of work, in part or whole, as the candidate's own. “Plagiarism is the copying and use of someone else’s work, whether intentionally or unintentionally, as if it were the candidate’s own. Another person’s work includes any source that is published or unpublished that has been produced including words, images, diagrams, formulae ideas and judgments, discoveries and results. Direct quotations, whether extended or short, and from the published or unpublished work of another person must always be clearly identified. Quotations must accurately refer to and acknowledge the author or person who originally wrote or produced the work. Paraphrasing – using other words to express another person’s ideas and judgments – must be acknowledged (in a footnote or bracket following the paraphrasing).”

##### **1.1.2 Collusion**

Cooperation in order to gain an unpermitted advantage. This may occur where candidates have consciously collaborated on a piece of work, in part or whole, and passed it off as their own

individual efforts or where one candidate has authorised another to use their work, in part or whole, and to submit it as their own.

### **1.1.3 Misconduct in examinations**

Misconduct in examinations which includes, for example, when an examination candidate:

- copies from the examination script of another candidate;
- obtains or offers any other improper assistance from or to another candidate (or any other person);
- communicates verbally or non-verbally, written or via gestures with another candidate during the examination procedure
- has with them any unauthorised book, manuscript or loose papers of any kind, unauthorised electronic devices (including mobile telephones) or any source of unauthorised information;
- allows himself/herself to be impersonated or when any person impersonates another examination candidate.

### **1.1.4 Fabrication or misrepresentation**

The presentation of fabricated data, results, references, evidence or other material or misrepresentation of the same. Including, for example:

- claiming to have carried out experiments, observations, interviews or other forms of research which a student has not, in fact, carried out;
- claiming to have obtained results or other evidence which have not, in fact, been obtained;
- in the case of professional qualifications, falsely claiming to have completed hours in practice or to have achieved required competencies when this is not the case.

### **1.1.5 Misrepresentation of extenuating circumstances**

If a candidate misrepresents a case of extenuating circumstances to the examination secretary this shall be considered as misconduct.

### **1.1.6 Failure to obtain ethical approval**

Where work is undertaken without obtaining ethical approval when there is a clear and unambiguous requirement to do so.

## **1.2 Available Procedures**

Procedures are defined below.

## **1.3 Penalties.**

This procedure enables the executive committee of the ECVN to be the final arbiter of the penalty decided. However it is recognised that they will require advice from the Panel investigating the misconduct. In determining a penalty, the *intention to deceive* will be an important consideration.

## **1.4 Communications between the ECVN and the candidate**

All correspondence concerning proceedings under these regulations will be sent, by recorded delivery, to the last registered home address notified by the candidate to the ECVN. It is the responsibility of all candidates to notify the College of any change of address. Any material sent will be deemed to have been received by the candidate concerned unless non-delivery is subsequently proved.

## **1.5 Attendance**

None of the proceedings outlined below will be invalidated or postponed by reason of absence (except for notified good and sufficient reason) from any hearing of any party called to attend, provided that the candidate against whom a case has been made has been sent written notice of the hearing.

## **1.7 Continued study as a resident**

Whilst these procedures are underway the candidate may continue his/her residency training, continue with research and/or submit his or her credentials, but the final acceptance of the credentials will be dependent on the outcome of the investigation.

## **2 Reporting and investigation**

Any reference to the college is taken refer to the European College of Veterinary Neurology (ECVN). Any reference to the president is to be taken to include a reference to the president of ECVN or to a member of the executive committee of the ECVN authorised by the president to act on his or her behalf. Any reference to invigilator is to be taken to include a member of the examination committee, invited observer or invited invigilator who is present during the examination process. The decision of academic misconduct should be based on the balance of probabilities.

### **2.1 Reporting a suspicion of academic misconduct**

2.1.1 Where a member of the college suspects that academic misconduct has taken place, he or she will report the matter in writing to the president, providing reasons and any relevant evidence. The president is required to conduct an investigation into any reported academic misconduct. The president will appoint one other member of the college who is not a member of the executive committee to conduct the investigation. In case of a potential conflict of interest of the president, the president will authorise a member of the college to conduct the investigation on his or her behalf.

2.1.2 In cases of suspected misconduct in an examination, the invigilator will write a report and the examination script will be annotated to indicate the point at which the suspected misconduct was identified. This report will be given to the chair of the examination who then forwards it to the President who shall determine together with the independent ECVN college member whether there is a prima facie case for the suspected misconduct to be considered by a Panel.

2.1.3 Where a candidate for the examination has reason to suspect a fellow candidate of academic misconduct, they may report this, in confidence, to the external examination observer. Their identity will not be revealed as part of any investigation without their consent. A fellow candidate's statement cannot be used for any investigation as long consent to reveal his/her identity is not given. The examination observer will contact the president to lead the initial investigation as outlined below. If a direct conflict of interest of the president is identified by the external examination observer, the president will authorise a member of the college to conduct the investigation on his or her behalf who states to not have a direct conflict of interest.

2.1.4 The accused candidate will be interviewed by the president or his or her representative and one appointed member of the college to determine whether there is a prima facie case for the suspected misconduct to be considered by a Panel. Where relevant, these two members of the college will also check on the candidate's understanding of scholarship and referencing processes. Notes will be taken. A short report shall be written by the ECVN members involved in the investigation and be submitted to a Panel.

2.1.5 On suspecting plagiarism or falsification of data or any similar unsatisfactory matter concerned with a candidate, the two members of the college investigating the event shall in addition to the procedure mentioned in 2.1.4 contact and interview the supervisor about the matter. The supervisor might be required to submit a written statement. Notes will be taken by the two investigators and the investigators will need to determine whether there is a prima facie case for the suspected misconduct to be considered by a Panel.

2.1.6 Where the case is to go forward, the president shall convene a meeting of the ECVN Academic Misconduct Panel.

### **3 Composition and Conduct of the ECVN Academic Misconduct Panel**

#### **3.1 Composition**

An alternate is proposed for each member since there will be a need to convene the panel at short notice. An executive committee member of the ECVN and three ECVN members who were not involved in the original investigation and who are not members of the examination committee should build the Panel. Members of the Panel must not be or at no point should have been in close professional (eg mentoring or direct work colleagues) or personal relationship to the accused candidate and have to confirm that they do not have any direct conflict of interest. The member of the executive committee will act as secretary. The quorum shall be two persons plus the secretary.

#### **3.2 Conduct**

3.1.1 The Panel will review the report submitted to the Panel and interview the ECVN college members concerned with the incident and separately, will meet the candidate concerned in person.

3.1.2 The candidate has the right to be accompanied by a friend. The candidate must notify the secretary of the panel of the name and status of the friend in advance of the meeting. The friend may not be a member of the education, examination or executive committee of the ECVN.

- 3.1.3 The costs of the Panel meeting should be covered by the ECVN for the ECVN Panel members. The candidate needs to cover his/her own and his/her friends occurred costs associated with the procedure.
- 3.1.4 After interviewing all persons concerned with the case and considering all evidence, the Panel shall report its decision to the executive committee in writing. The decision shall state whether in the view of the Panel an academic misconduct has or has not been established. The Panel shall also make any other supporting comment, which might be of value to the executive committee.

## **4 Action of the examination and executive committee**

4.1 ECVN's examination and executive committee shall take no account of allegations of misconduct, nor confirm the result of the candidate concerned, until a decision has been made by the Panel.

4.2 The President or any member who has been appointed for the initial investigation should not be involved or influence the decision of the executive committee upon receipt of a decision of the Panel.

4.3 Upon receipt of a decision of the Panel that misconduct has occurred, the executive committee shall apply a penalty to the candidate concerned. In applying a penalty the executive committee shall consider, and would normally be expected to follow, the advice of the Panel, values of scholarship and the relevant professional context of the ECVN Diploma.

4.4 The executive committee may determine on the advice of the Panel that the misconduct is so severe that the candidate's studies for the ECVN diploma be terminated, irrespective of any possible rights of re-sit or reassessment.

4.5 The executive committee may determine on the advice of the Panel that the misconduct is so severe that the candidate should not have the right of re-submit work, re-sit or reassessment.

4.6 The executive committee may determine that a lower penalty be applied given advice received. However the executive committee must always determine the pieces of work giving rise to the misconduct as a fail. If under normal circumstances the candidate would be eligible to re-sit or resubmit the work, then the executive committee shall also determine whether the candidate may be reassessed in the pieces of work concerned or not.

4.7 The membership of the ECVN will receive an annual report on Academic Misconduct processes and will present at the annual general meeting a review of the consistency of any penalties applied.

## **5 Appeal**

Any candidate who has lost the right to progress to the award of the ECVN Diploma for which s/he originally registered as a result of this procedure has a right of Appeal through the Appeals Process.