

22<sup>nd</sup> July 2022

Professor Jennie Hodgson  
Level 8, 470 Collins Street  
MELBOURNE Victoria 3000

Dear Professor Hodgson

### AVBC Draft Day One Competencies

Thank you for the opportunity for the RSPCA to provide comments on the day one competencies for the AVBC.

Rather than complete the online survey we have collated the following points for your consideration;

- Whilst welfare is mentioned sporadically there is a lack of specific competencies relating to animal welfare *assessment* – this is an important part of appropriately advocating for the animal both within the veterinary setting and provide advice to animal guardians and has long been missing from the core curriculum of the veterinary degree.
  - We suggest adding in a competency either under Domain 2 or 7 along the lines of “Demonstrate in all areas of work a commitment to ensuring animals avoid negative experiences and have the opportunity to have positive experiences.”
  - We also suggest expanding on the knowledge and application of behaviour medicine in the competencies.
- Although we acknowledge the need to not duplicate competencies, we feel it important to note that there are a number of competencies listed under Domain 3: Animal population care and management, that could also be included in Domain 2: Individual animal care and management including;
  - 17 Assess and advise on the physical condition, welfare and nutritional status of an animal or group of animals.
  - 18 Advise stakeholders on practices that promote animal welfare.
  - 19 Recognise suspicious signs of possible reportable (endemic and exotic) and zoonotic diseases and take appropriate action, including notifying the relevant authorities.
  - 21 Advise on, and implement, preventative programs appropriate to the species and in line with accepted animal health, management, welfare, public health and environmental standards.
- We would support an additional competency related to mental health awareness and management of mental health in self and others with strategies for promoting and maintaining resilience. E.g. “Recognise indicators of mental health challenges in self and others and identify strategies for promoting and maintaining positive mental health for individuals working in animal care.”
- Competency 7 – re treatment plans – we would suggest also including the need to be able to “adjust the plan if required”
- Competency 14 – suggest addition to “assess and manage acute and chronic pain”
- Competency 15 – Add in confirming death following euthanasia

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- Competency 21 – A specific inclusion on antimicrobial stewardship plans would be recommended or at least the responsible use of antimicrobials (could also be addressed under competency 33).
- Domain 4: Public Health – we would support the specific reference to management of zoonotic and exotic disease control and use of the term “One Health” within these competencies given its growing importance.
- Competency 24 – broaden the statement to the veterinarian’s role beyond ‘point of slaughter’ – suggest replacing with ‘for any animal destined for meat and meat product supply chains’. It should be ensured that this goes beyond the preparation of human food and includes knackereries and pet food manufacturing. An alternative way to address this would be to include animal welfare in competency 23 and 24.
- Competency 26 – this competency should include other stakeholders such as industry bodies.

Thank you again for the opportunity to comment and we would welcome any opportunity for further involvement and discussion around these competencies and the standards for veterinary training.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'Suzanne Fowler'. The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Dr Suzanne Fowler  
Chief Science Officer  
RSPCA Australia