

## CONTINUING PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT GUIDELINES

### 1. BACKGROUND

The Veterinary Surgeons Board of South Australia (the Board) is responsible for exercising its statutory functions under the *Veterinary Practice Act 2003* (SA) (the Act) with the object of protecting the public interest and animal health, safety and welfare by achieving and maintaining high professional standards both of competence and conduct in the provision of veterinary treatment in South Australia.

One of the Board's functions under the Act is to prepare guidelines on continuing professional development (CPD) for veterinary surgeons in South Australia. Veterinary surgeons must then provide specified information about their completed CPD activity to the Board in an annual return. If a veterinary surgeon fails to provide this information by the due date, then the veterinary surgeon's registration may be cancelled by the Board (section 36 of the Act).

CPD is the process by which a veterinary surgeon maintains, improves and broadens their skills and knowledge, as well as develops personal qualities to ensure that they remain professionally competent to provide veterinary treatment to animals at a high standard.

CPD provides a foundation for veterinary surgeons to comply with the Board's *Code of Professional Conduct for Veterinary Surgeons* (the Code of Conduct), and to uphold the public's trust and confidence in the profession.

A contravention of, or failure to comply with, the Code of Conduct constitutes unprofessional conduct under the Act and provides a proper cause for disciplinary action against a veterinary surgeon.

The Code of Conduct provides that veterinary surgeons must:

- keep abreast of knowledge and skills in their field of endeavour, and accept the obligation to continue their education and so further their professional skills and competence (section 2(f))
- operate only in fields in which they are competent to do so unless supervised by a colleague with competence in the field, except in an emergency where immediate relief of suffering is paramount (section 2(g))
- diligently maintain knowledge of current standards of veterinary science (section 3.5(a))
- carry out professional procedures in accordance with current standards of veterinary science (section 3.5(b))
- ensure they have the knowledge and competence necessary to practice in a special interest area of veterinary science before undertaking practice in that area (section 3.8)

### 2. DEFINITIONS

**Board** – is the Veterinary Surgeons Board of South Australia

**Continuing Professional Development (CPD)** - is how a veterinary surgeon maintains, improves and broadens their knowledge, expertise and competence, and develops the personal and professional qualities required throughout their professional lives. CPD refers to all aspects of learning which can be validated as improving a person's professional capabilities for the benefit of the individual, the public and the profession.

**Continuing Veterinary Education (CVE)** – formal continuing education activities which are structured and can be validated by an external provider (e.g. conferences whether virtual or real time, workshops, seminars, assessed on-line learning, in-house seminars, studying towards a formal qualification, giving and preparing presentations and lectures, peer reviewed publications including case reports, preparation of published book chapters, clinical trials and studies, preparation and marking of examination questions for a specialist college or university course). CVE does not have to be limited to courses in veterinary science. Training in areas including but not limited to communications, mental first aid and resilience, human resources and financial management may constitute CVE.

**Collegial Learning (CL)** – planned or unplanned activities that involve interactive peer-to-peer learning (e.g. in-house training including formal lectures and assisting with procedures or demonstrating procedures, peer discussion and review activities, journal and study groups, case presentations, question and answer activities, on-line discussion forums, teaching activities, supervision of residents and students and mentoring employees).

**Self-Directed Learning (SDL)** – activities initiated by registered persons for the purpose of updating their knowledge and skills, often in response to a particular issue or for the purpose of providing a reference document to an external source other than for publication in a peer reviewed area (e.g. reading, review and research, on-line learning, case/procedure, preparation of case reports and preparation of specialist reports for an external body such as a court of law or registration body).

**Veterinary Surgeon** – is a person with primary registration on the general register under the Act.

**Veterinary Specialist** – is a person with primary registration on both the general register and specialist register in a particular specialty under the Act.

## 3. GENERAL GUIDELINES

### 3.1 Minimum CPD

A veterinary surgeon must undertake a minimum of **90 units of CPD activity** over a period of **3 years**.

For each 3-year CPD cycle:

- a **maximum** of **15 Self-Directed Learning (SDL) units** of activity may be claimed.
  - SDL activity must be supported by a personal reflective record which describes the veterinary surgeon's learning outcomes from the activity and how the activity has benefited or will benefit their professional practice
- a **minimum** of **30 Continuing Veterinary Education (CVE) units** of activity must be completed.
  - CVE activity must be supported by a certificate of completion, a signed log or identification of the publication/presentation
- a **minimum** of **30 Collegial Learning (CL) units** of activity must be completed.
  - CL activity must be supported by a certificate of attendance, a signed log or a personal reflective record which describes the veterinary surgeon's learning outcomes from the activity and how the activity has benefited or will benefit their professional practice

### 3.2 CPD Unit Allocation

1 hour of CPD activity = 1 CPD unit

### 3.3 Maintaining CPD Records

A veterinary surgeon must maintain CPD records which describe their CPD activity and how that activity has maintained and/or developed their knowledge and skills in professional practice.

In relation to each item of CPD activity, the veterinary surgeon must record the following information:

- the learning outcome of the activity (a description of what was learnt or delivered)
- the impact of the activity (a description of how the activity benefited or will benefit their area(s) of professional practice)

A veterinary surgeon must maintain their CPD records and retain relevant documents to substantiate that activity (e.g. copies of certificates of attendance at seminars/webinars) for a period of 5 years after completing the activity.

The Board may request a veterinary surgeon to provide copies of their CPD records and documents to substantiate CPD activity at any time.

A veterinary surgeon must not make a statement to the Board about their CPD activity or CPD records that is false or misleading.

### 3.4. CPD Annual Reporting

A veterinary surgeon must submit information to the Board in an annual return about their CPD activity and CPD records.

A veterinary surgeon must not make a statement to the Board in their annual return about their CPD activity or CPD records that is false or misleading.

## 4. SPECIALIST GUIDELINES

### 4.1 Minimum CPD

A veterinary specialist must undertake a minimum of **90 units of CPD activity** over a period of **3 years**.

A minimum of 60 of those units must be within the veterinary specialist's area of speciality in keeping with re-certification requirements.

For each 3-year CPD cycle:

- a **maximum** of **15 Self-Directed Learning (SDL) units** of activity may be claimed.
  - SDL activity must be supported by a personal reflective record which describes the veterinary surgeon's learning outcomes from the activity and how the activity has benefited or will benefit their professional practice
- a **minimum** of **30 Continuing Veterinary Education (CVE) units** of activity must be completed.
  - CVE activity must be supported by a certificate of completion, a signed log or identification of the publication/presentation
- a **minimum** of **30 Collegial Learning (CL) units** of activity must be completed.
  - CL activity must be supported by a certificate of attendance, a signed log or a personal reflective record which describes the veterinary surgeon's learning outcomes from the activity and how the activity has benefited or will benefit their professional practice

## 4.2 Current Certification

A veterinary specialist must either:

- be currently certified by their college of registration
- OR
- actively practise in their field of area specialty.

## 4.3 CPD Unit Allocation

1 hour of CPD activity = 1 CPD unit

## 4.4 Maintaining CPD Records

A veterinary specialist must maintain CPD records which describe their CPD activity and how that activity has maintained and/or developed their knowledge and skills in professional practice.

In relation to each item of CPD activity, the veterinary specialist must record the following information:

- the learning outcome of the activity (a description of what was learnt or delivered)
- the impact of the activity (a description of how the activity benefited or will benefit their area(s) of professional practice)

A veterinary specialist must maintain their CPD records and retain relevant documents to substantiate that activity (e.g. copies of certificates of attendance at seminars/webinars) for a period of 5 years after completing the activity.

The Board may request a veterinary specialist to provide copies of their CPD records and documents to substantiate CPD activity at any time. A veterinary specialist must not make a statement to the Board about their CPD activity or CPD records that is false or misleading.

## 4.5 CPD Annual Reporting

A veterinary specialist must submit information to the Board in an annual return about their CPD activity and CPD records.

A veterinary specialist must not make a statement to the Board in their annual return about their CPD activity or CPD records that is false or misleading.

## 5. EXEMPTION

The CPD Guidelines apply to all veterinary surgeons and veterinary specialists with primary registration in South Australia under the Act. A veterinary surgeon or veterinary specialist may apply in writing to the Board for exemption from the General and/or Specialist Guidelines.