



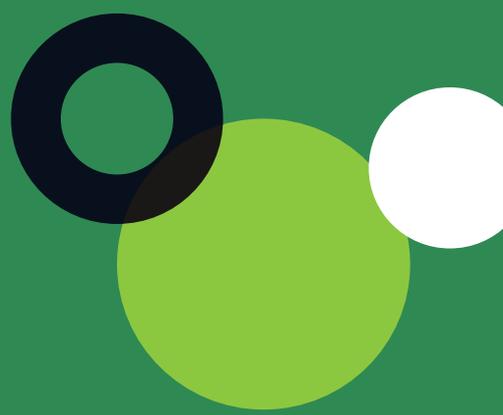
VETERINARY SCHOOLS COUNCIL

STRATEGIC PLAN

2022-27



WSSC

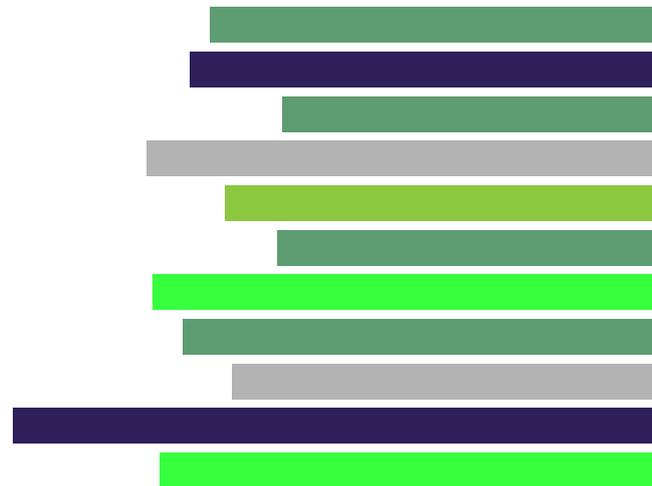


FOREWORD

This Strategic Plan explains how we, as the Veterinary Schools Council (VSC), will lead best practice in veterinary education, research and academic clinical service.

We will continue to engage with key stakeholders in the sector to identify and address common opportunities and challenges. We will work to reduce barriers to information sharing in clinical practice, research and education, recognising our unique responsibility as the selectors and educators of veterinary professionals of the future.

With our strengthened internal structure, we will promote the VSC as the voice of authority on issues relating to veterinary education and research in the veterinary sector and the wider public domain.



WHO WE ARE

The VSC, launched in 2014, currently represents the eight “accredited” UK schools of veterinary education as well as two associate members – the School of Veterinary Medicine at University College Dublin and the Faculty of Veterinary Medicine at the University of Utrecht. Harper-Keele Veterinary School recently joined as an additional member.

The VSC, comprising the heads of these veterinary schools, is an authoritative voice on matters relating to veterinary education – from the selection, education and training of those who will be the future of the veterinary clinical profession, to the academic clinicians and researchers who are critically important to the health of both the UK’s animal and human populations.

The VSC works closely with key organisations and institutions across veterinary education and research, as well as regulatory bodies, animal health charities and organisations that represent the wider veterinary profession.



CONTACT US

Veterinary Schools Council

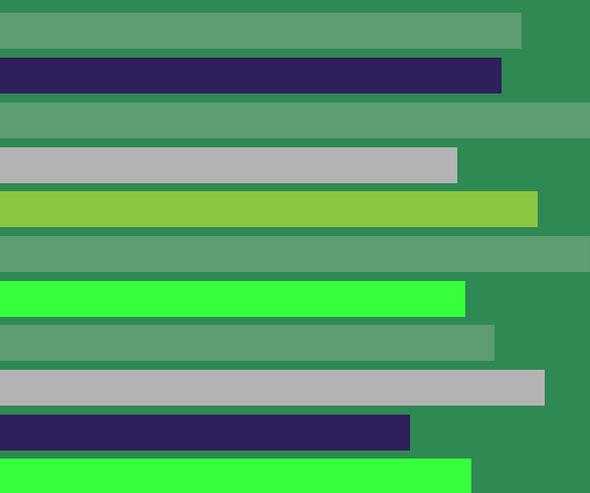
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OUR VISION

Our vision is of a sector where veterinary medical education, research and clinical practice are of the highest quality. In assuming this vision, the VSC's role is one of leadership, supporting students, staff and schools and advising and collaborating with cognate stakeholders.

OUR MISSION

- To promote excellence in veterinary education, research and clinical service for the benefit of animal welfare, health and society.
- To lead pedagogical conversations nationally and internationally and be regarded as an authority on preparing future generations of veterinarians.
- To demonstrate veterinary schools' unique contribution to addressing ongoing and intractable problems in society, including reframing debates with new insights from academic endeavour.



OUR STRATEGIC AIMS

The VSC has three key areas of focus:

1

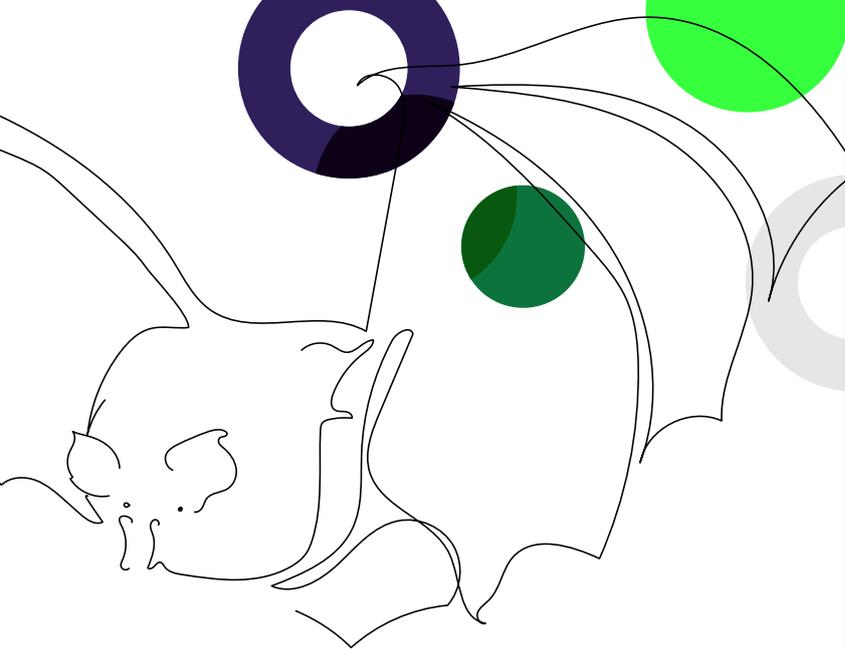
Supporting schools, staff and students so that veterinary schools are recognised as institutions of scientific and social value.

- Sharing and enabling best practice in recruitment and admissions, teaching and the curriculum.
- Recruiting and promoting talent by fostering and championing equality, diversity and inclusion, and actively succession planning at all levels.
- Raising the profile of academics by highlighting their achievements and providing opportunities to contribute expertise to national and international organisations in the animal health sector as well as wider society.
- Involving students in any changes to the delivery or assessment of veterinary education.

2

Advising and working with stakeholders in global veterinary education, public and global health.

- Raising the voices of world-leading veterinary education and public health experts in veterinary schools to lead the national and international agenda by describing risks, opportunities, challenges in global topics that include, but are not restricted to, agriculture, pandemic threats and public health.
- Publishing position papers to provoke, advise and guide government and other cognate organisations on priority issues and potential solutions.
- Collaborating with the regulators to maintain and pursue an outcomes-based approach to accreditation and an evidence-based approach to the definition and verification of degree outcomes.



3

Challenging expectations of the present and future scope and contribution of veterinary research so that a broader application of veterinary science is acknowledged and supported.

- Promoting the importance of a One Health approach to all our activities.
- Challenging current tenets on models of educational delivery.
- Developing and delivering disruptive approaches to clinical care, disease prevention and food chain security.
- Acknowledging the varied contributions that veterinary graduates make to the wider workforce and society.



OUR CORE VALUES AND BEHAVIOURS

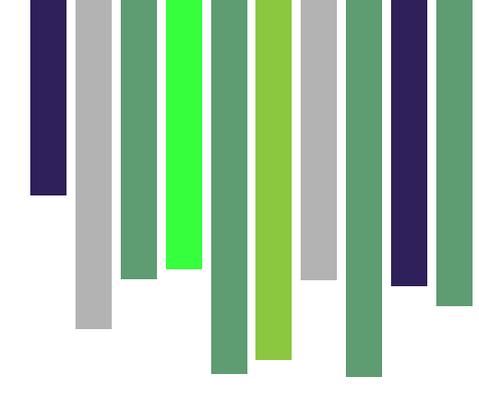
Our members commit to demonstrating the following values and behaviours.

We will:

- Work together in a positive environment.
- Value and champion diversity in veterinary education.
- Use VSC resources effectively and efficiently.
- Enable and promote evidence-based veterinary education.
- Communicate the importance of education in research-rich environments.

We will be:

- Inclusive, collaborative, and empathetic.
- Listeners, focused on solutions.
- Responsible and thorough.
- Innovative and critically analytical.
- Open and transparent communicators.



STRATEGIC THEMES

For the next five-year period, the VSC has identified five strategic themes:

THEME 1 SUPPORTING APPLICANTS

We will improve accessibility to the profession and its varied paths, to encourage and enable talented potential applicants from all backgrounds to apply to veterinary school, including applicants from minority and under-represented backgrounds.

We will do this by:

- Widening participation to make the course more accessible for all prospective students.
- Promoting equality, diversity and inclusion through outreach to under-represented demographic groups within the profession and ensuring that the profession safeguards colleagues from diverse backgrounds.
- Explaining the different career opportunities one can pursue with a veterinary degree.



THEME 2 SUPPORTING STUDENTS

We will share best practice and undertake joint workstreams where appropriate to foster and sustain excellence in undergraduate teaching, learning and assessment.

We will achieve this by:

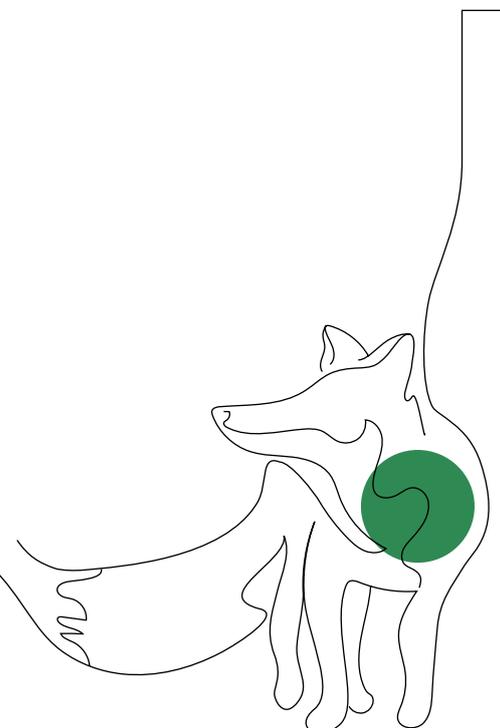
- Developing a vision for our graduates with an agreed and advanced understanding of their knowledge and skills in the broadest context and as part of a collegiate, diverse, multidisciplinary and adaptable workforce, both in the UK and internationally.
- The use of assessments and blended learning, so that the application of knowledge is best aligned to the future requirements of veterinary degree holders.
- Adapting courses to remain relevant to the latest relevant technological and non-technological developments including telemedicine, artificial intelligence and new understandings of human and animal behaviour.
- Continuing to shape clinical practice through research, ensuring students continue to be taught and offered opportunities to develop their research skills and critical thinking abilities so that they use best practice once they enter the profession.
- Sharing best practice on ensuring the veterinary school curricula are contextualised socially, geographically, racially and historically, and our students are interculturally competent.

THEME 3 SUPPORTING FUTURE ACADEMICS

We will provide signposting and role models in veterinary research to early-career researchers. We will advocate for new and sustainable funding for veterinary research.

We will achieve this by:

- Communicating routes to pursue, and move between, the diverse roles in veterinary science, including clinical, research and education-focused careers.
- Sharing best practice to support veterinary school staff in developing their careers, including raising the public profile of experts from our institutions.
- Working together to share best practice on how to support and promote diversity within veterinary education and ensuring that veterinary schools are inclusive employers.



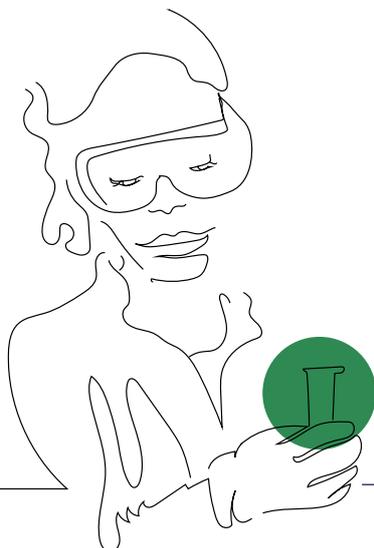


THEME 4 SUPPORTING THE VETERINARY SECTOR

We will maintain dialogue with the sector about the needs and interests of the workforce and those of early career veterinarians in the context of Vet Futures and other initiatives.

We will do this through:

- Proactive engagement with the profession, the public and other stakeholders.
- Actively supporting and helping to shape initiatives led by other stakeholder organisations, as well as leading specific programmes from within the VSC.
- Exploring opportunities to promote clear routes for the career development of experts, including veterinary nurses, within the profession.
- Providing professional lifelong learning opportunities.



THEME 5 PROMOTING RESEARCH AND SOCIETAL IMPACT

We will foster, sustain and promote relationships with stakeholders in research, including government funders and charities. We will encourage investments in comparative medicine and One Health, including ecologically- and socially-responsible food systems, with a balance between proactive and reactive research, and between curiosity-driven endeavour and strategic scientific effort addressing societal need.

We will achieve this by:

- Engaging with research funders on the future of research relevant to veterinary science. We will pursue funding for joint projects that address major societal challenges that relate to animals and their intersection with the human health environment.
- Analysing how we can collaborate to provide additional support for researchers, building on our mentoring programme for early career researchers.
- Promoting the contribution of scientists and all those involved in veterinary and allied health research. We will collate and publish current research taking place in VSC member institutions and promote its impact and benefits.

OUR CROSS-CUTTING THEMES:

EQUALITY AND INCLUSION

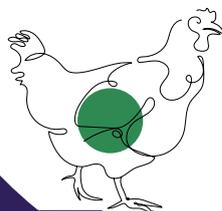
The VSC will promote and prioritise equality, diversity and inclusion goals within its work, with a focus on selecting for excellence, promoting applications from demographic groups currently under-represented at vet schools and support students from minority backgrounds.

WELLBEING

- The VSC will promote a sense of community and wellbeing for all staff and students.
- The VSC will encourage the embedding of mental wellbeing and resilience in the professionalism strands of the undergraduate curriculum.
- The VSC will explore the relationship between wellbeing and Extra-Mural Studies (EMS), including disproportional impacts on disadvantaged students.
- The VSC will support student and staff wellbeing by critically analysing existing results from surveys and engaging with the Association of Veterinary Students (AVS) and other relevant stakeholders where appropriate.

ADVOCACY

- The VSC will improve public and sector recognition of the role of veterinary education in public health as an expert voice in local and national conversations.
- The VSC will influence policies by clarifying, determining and communicating position statements, as well as working with key stakeholders and contributing to sector-wide projects.
- The VSC will collaborate with key stakeholders to identify and promote pathways to zero and net-zero targets on carbon emissions in all our activities by contributing sustainable solutions to society from the impact of our work.



COMMITTEES

These committees assist in executing the work plan laid out by the VSC.

VSC EDUCATION COMMITTEE

VSC Assessment Group
VSC EMS Liaison Co-ordinators Group
VSC Student Support Group
(Formerly Senior Tutor Network)

VSC RESEARCH COMMITTEE

VSC AMR Group

VSC EDI COMMITTEE

VSC ADMISSIONS COMMITTEE

VSC CLINICAL COMMITTEE

MEMBERS

**SCHOOL OF VETERINARY SCIENCES,
UNIVERSITY OF BRISTOL**
PROFESSOR TIMOTHY PARKIN

**DEPARTMENT OF VETERINARY MEDICINE,
UNIVERSITY OF CAMBRIDGE**
PROFESSOR JAMES WOOD

**THE ROYAL (DICK) SCHOOL OF
VETERINARY STUDIES,
UNIVERSITY OF EDINBURGH**
PROFESSOR DAVID ARGYLE

**SCHOOL OF VETERINARY MEDICINE,
UNIVERSITY OF GLASGOW**
PROFESSOR EWAN CAMERON

**SCHOOL OF VETERINARY SCIENCE,
UNIVERSITY OF LIVERPOOL**
PROFESSOR D. PAUL LUNN

**SCHOOL OF VETERINARY MEDICINE AND
SCIENCE, UNIVERSITY OF NOTTINGHAM**
PROFESSOR GARY ENGLAND

**UNIVERSITY OF SCHOOL OF
VETERINARY MEDICINE,
UNIVERSITY OF SURREY**
PROFESSOR CHRIS PROUDMAN

ROYAL VETERINARY COLLEGE
PROFESSOR STUART W. J. REID (CHAIR)

HARPER & KEELE VET SCHOOL
PROFESSOR MATT JONES

ASSOCIATE MEMBERS

**SCHOOL OF VETERINARY MEDICINE,
UNIVERSITY COLLEGE DUBLIN**
PROFESSOR MICHAEL DOHERTY

**FACULTY OF VETERINARY MEDICINE,
UNIVERSITY OF UTRECHT**
PROFESSOR DEBBIE JAARSMA

