

PRESS RELEASE

For immediate release

Europe creates specialist career pathway for veterinary primary care

The majority of the profession work and deliver care in general practice. Yet to date, there has been no formal career structure beyond certificate-level qualifications. For ambitious practitioners committed to general practice, opportunities have been limited and the path to specialist recognition did not exist. The lack of recognition and routes for progression has been identified as a major factor impacting retention within the profession.

The European Board of Veterinary Specialisation (EBVS) has granted provisional recognition to a new European College in Veterinary Primary Care - Companion Animals (ECVPC-CA), creating, for the first time, a defined route to European Diplomate status for vets working in general practice. The decision was taken at the EBVS General Assembly in Zagreb.

Central to the College is a competency framework that defines in detail the expertise required of a primary care specialist. Not by listing diseases or procedures, but by mapping the competencies that are unique to generalist expertise: managing patients with multiple morbidities; sustaining care across a patient's lifetime; making sound decisions under diagnostic constraints; synthesising across disciplines when individually each offers only a partial answer. Together this delivers an explicitly different competency profile from that of a discipline-specific specialist. The primary care specialist develops mastery of breadth, and the framework defines that mastery with a rigour that complements the standards set by existing European specialist colleges.

The approval reflects a growing consensus across Europe, including ongoing work by the RCVS, of the need for GP specialty training and clinical career pathways, and importantly that primary care veterinary medicine deserves the same recognition as any other clinical discipline. The new European College provides international recognition of this need and a clear structure to facilitate ongoing development.

Full EBVS accreditation will follow over a defined development period as the college establishes its formal specialist training programmes.

Amanda Boag

Past President of the RCVS and outgoing Treasurer of EBVS

“The case for recognising general practice as a specialty has been building in the UK and across Europe, with the RCVS having long championed the recognition of the skills and expertise that primary care vets bring to animal health and welfare every single day. This approval by EBVS marks a defining moment and is truly an exciting moment for our profession. The EBVS team and College Organising Committee have shown great vision and diligent oversight during the development of this proposal over the last year.”

Denis Novak

Founding architect of the European College in Veterinary Primary Care – Companion Animals

“Provisional approval of the European College in Veterinary Primary Care for Companion Animals is a landmark for our profession across Europe. The competency framework we have built finally articulates what it means to be a specialist generalist, distinct from discipline-specific expertise. And as the college develops, it has the potential to unlock the vast wealth of clinical data generated in general practice every day, driving a new era of practice-based research that reflects the true complexity of primary care.”

Raphael Guatteo

Newly elected President, European Board of Veterinary Specialisation

“EBVS exists to raise the standard of veterinary medicine across Europe. At this General Assembly, the EBVS board, formed of its member colleges, have reached a considered and decisive conclusion, following rigorous scrutiny and debate. That creates a pathway to recognition for specialism in companion animal primary care. This is just the beginning. The journey to full recognition will be demanding, and I have every confidence in the dedication and vision of the founding executive to see it through.”

- ENDS -

Notes to editors

The European Board of Veterinary Specialisation (EBVS) is the umbrella organisation for European veterinary specialist colleges, setting standards for postgraduate veterinary education and training across Europe.

The European College in Veterinary Primary Care – Companion Animal has received provisional EBVS approval. Full accreditation will follow a defined development period in which the college establishes its training infrastructure and formal specialist pathways.

The RCVS is currently developing new clinical career pathways for veterinary surgeons in the UK, including a dedicated GP specialty training programme with its own curriculum, defined learning outcomes, and flexible routes to specialist recognition.

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