Veterinary registration requirements in Hong Kong

Prof Michael P Reichel
Dean
College of Veterinary Medicine and Life Sciences
Veterinary Surgeons Board of Hong Kong

• An independent statutory authority

• Established (1997) under the Veterinary Surgeons Registration Ordinance (Laws of Hong Kong (CAP 529))

• provides for the regulation of the practice of veterinary surgery, the registration of veterinary surgeons, the disciplinary control of the professional activities of registered veterinary surgeons and for matters related
# of registered Veterinary Surgeons

\[ y = 0.7863x^2 + 23.055x + 137.23 \]

\[ R^2 = 0.9989 \]

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th># of Surgeons</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1998</td>
<td>151</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1999</td>
<td>188</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2000</td>
<td>221</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2001</td>
<td>242</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2002</td>
<td>279</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2003</td>
<td>304</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2004</td>
<td>339</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2005</td>
<td>361</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2006</td>
<td>412</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2007</td>
<td>447</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2008</td>
<td>491</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2009</td>
<td>532</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2010</td>
<td>565</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2011</td>
<td>611</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2012</td>
<td>662</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2013</td>
<td>695</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2014</td>
<td>746</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2015</td>
<td>823</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2016</td>
<td>861</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Phenomenal growth

• Over the past twenty years, the profession has grown nearly 6-fold

• Continues to add about 40 veterinary surgeons net (about 100 new registrations every year)

• HKVSB important to ensure quality
Registration in HK

• Personal attributes of the individual – no convictions
  – “Letter of Good standing” from each and every registration body

• Relying on the credibility of the graduate’s *alma mater*

• Credibility conferred by international accreditation
International accreditation the key

- Essentially three internationally-operating accreditation systems are being recognised in Hong Kong:
  - Royal College of Veterinary Surgeons (RCVS) London
  - Australasian Veterinary Boards Council (AVBC) through its Veterinary Schools Accreditation Advisory Committee (VSAAC)
  - American Veterinary Medical Association College of Education (AVMA CoE)

- Graduates from such accredited schools registrable directly
International accreditation the key

• Royal College of Veterinary Surgeons (RCVS) London
  • accredits the schools in the United Kingdom only, but participates in joint visitations (with AVBC, and others)
  • Graduates of accredited schools automatically registrable
  • has, however, more recently expanded to the Caribbean (St Georges), but declined to grant accreditation (yet AVMA did)
  • In the UK, RCVS usually visits half-way through the degree roll-out, and in the final year and then regularly (every 3 - 7 years; two new schools recently, Nottingham and Surrey (under way)
  • Not an arm’s length relationship (accreditor and registrar alike)
International accreditation the key cont.

• Australasian Veterinary Boards Council (AVBC) through the Veterinary Schools Accreditation Advisory Committee (VSAAC)
  - accredits the veterinary schools in Australia (7) and New Zealand (1) (three new ones in past decade)
  - Graduates of accredited schools automatically registrable
  - has a reciprocal recognition agreement with RCVS (and a separate one with the South African Veterinary Council (SAVC))
  - also participates in joint visitations (Chair headed Surrey visit)
  - Sits between schools and registration boards (arms-length)
International accreditation the key cont.

- American Veterinary Medical Association College of Education (AVMA CoE)
  - accredits North American veterinary colleges
  - Graduates of accredited colleges NOT automatically registrable
    - graduates still need to sit NAVLE through NVBME
  - also accredits internationally (Europe, Australia and New Zealand, Caribbean etc.)
  - arms-length (because of role of NVBME)

- All of these bodies are aligning their requirements, using their respective assessment templates, essentially similar requirements (apart from EMS – AVBC/RCVS)
International accreditation the key cont.

• Three more categories considered by the HKVSB
  – The respective examinations for individual foreign graduates as conducted by:
    • RCVS (Statutory MRCVS examination),
    • the AVBC (the National Veterinary Examination (NVE))
    • and the Educational Commission for Foreign Veterinary Graduates (ECFVG) of the AVMA
  – Some Taiwanese graduates (from NTU and National Chung Hsing, with additional six months practical experience, are certified in HK)
International accreditation the key cont.

• Lastly
  – by individual assessment demonstrating that:
    “he has passed such examinations in veterinary surgery and other related subjects and has received such training and experience as the Board may accept in his particular case”

  – that assessment is carried out by a third party, the Hong Kong Council for Accreditation of Academic and Vocational Qualifications (HKCAAVQ), who uses specialised assessors
Accreditation has teeth

- Can put veterinary school on notice
  – If one or more standards are not met, “minor” or “probationary”

- Can shorten the period of accreditation
  – Usually 7 years, may be as short as 1 or 3 years

- Can withdraw accreditation – no more new students enrolled
  – “terminal” accreditation, programme wound up
Observations

• In general, only degrees from internationally accredited schools accepted
  – AVBC and SAVC (OP), after further endorsement by the RCVS
  – AVMA (but without NAVLE, which is required by AVBC/RCVS)
  – Accreditation expectations generally in alignment (reciprocal agreement between AVBC and RCVS, have yet to disagree) some misalignment with AVMA (over EMS provisions)
  – Taiwanese schools and their acceptance by HKVSB appears vulnerable (no international accreditation)
  – Individual assessment an “enlightened” pathway not found elsewhere
A daunting task?

CityU’s College of Veterinary Medicine and Life Sciences subscribed to AVBC pathway

Ongoing quality assurance during development (frequent visits)

Immediate accreditation upon first cohort graduating
CityU’s CVMLS progress

- AVBC consultative visit in December 2015
- Full-site “Reasonable Assurance pathway” visit in December 2016
- Letter of Reasonable Assurance” granted in March 2017
- First student cohort commencing in “September 2017
- “Reasonable Assurance” converts to “Provisional Accreditation”
- Six monthly reporting to AVBC, next visit expected in 2018/19, jointly with the RCVS
QUESTIONS