

SOUTH AFRICAN VETERINARY COUNCIL

High Standard Veterinary Practice



VETERINARY TRAINING IN SOUTH AFRICA

STRATEGIC POLICY STATEMENT, MARCH 2012

The South African Veterinary Council [SAVC] supports the optimal delivery of veterinary services to all communities in all regions of South Africa. Veterinary services provided by the veterinary team (veterinarian, veterinary nurse, animal health technician, veterinary technologist, laboratory animal technologist including the animal welfare assistants) are critically important in the control of animal diseases and the management of food safety and security of a country. The importance of the delivery of veterinary services to all communities in South Africa, and not only a select few, should therefore not be underestimated by anyone who is serious about food security, poverty alleviation, health and well-being of the public, job creation and a sustainable economy for South Africa.

The spread of disease and the impact thereof on food safety and security and the economy should be a determining factor and should be considered when decisions are taken in respect of the delivery of services to all communities.

We as a statutory Council recognise that the delivery of veterinary services to all communities will only be made possible in South Africa if the learners from the various geographic areas and associated demographics of South Africa are identified, recruited and enrolled for veterinary training in South Africa.

The SAVC reviewed the comprehensive and scientific recruitment strategy of the Faculty of Veterinary Science, UP and is in full support of its endeavours to change the student profile [currently 65% mainly white female].

The intention is to deliver graduates who will have the required Day One competencies with a view to address the needs of all communities, animal populations and the country as a whole. The intake of black students will increase, applicants from all provinces will have preference save for applicants from Gauteng [previously overrepresented student complement] and graduates will be encouraged to enter rural practice and state veterinary services. Proof of exposure to all aspects of the profession should be a consideration for the selection of suitable candidates. However the needs of the country should not be disadvantaged by exclusion of applicants who have potential to serve those needs of the country.

The faculty is encouraged to investigate the addition of a specifically designated group that will make it possible for applicants with a valid interest in livestock health and production to enjoy preference when selected to study veterinary science. This would produce graduates that will serve the livestock health and production industry and particularly in the fields of veterinary public health, preventative veterinary medicine, epidemiology, and disease surveillance.

We in addition noted with appreciation the change from a seven-year curriculum to a six-year curriculum and a new core programme with elective components have resulted in a more balanced and representative demographic distribution of students earmarked for first year veterinary training in 2012.

The SAVC is of the opinion that any veterinary student recruitment strategy should be reviewed within every five years on an on-going basis to ensure that the strategy aligns itself with the dynamics and characteristics of a diverse populace and animal population prevalent in South Africa.

Research, teaching and mentoring of young graduates should be the cornerstone and foundation of the future of the profession in the country. Mentoring should include provision for exit programmes for those students who prove not to be suited for a career in veterinary science.

SAVC, MARCH 2012.