



VPRBV POLICY: SPECIALIST REGISTRATION OF PERSONS WITH UNRECOGNISED PRIMARY QUALIFICATION

VETERINARY PRACTITIONERS REGISTRATION BOARD OF
VICTORIA

Document version control

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BACKGROUND

Under section 8 of the *Veterinary Practice Act 1997* (VPA), general registration is a prerequisite for specialist endorsement in Victoria. Similarly, before having postgraduate qualifications and experience assessed by the Australasian Veterinary Boards Council's (AVBC's) Advisory Board for Recommendation of Veterinary Specialists (the ACRVS), persons must be registered with the relevant State body.

Accordingly, persons with specialist qualifications who wish to practise in Victoria must first apply for general registration with the Veterinary Practitioners Registration Board of Victoria (VPRBV).

Persons qualify for general registration if:

1. they have been awarded a degree in veterinary science or medicine accredited by the Board from a tertiary institution recognised by the Board (s5(1)(a) VPA); or
2. they have a qualification that is substantially equivalent, or is based on similar competencies, to a degree in veterinary science or medicine accredited by the Board (s5(1)(b) VPA); or
3. they have passed a qualifying examination, such as the Australasian Veterinary Examination, or equivalent UK or North American qualifications (s5(1)(c) VPA); or
4. their qualification is recognised by another Australian Board (s5(1)(d) VPA); or
5. they are registered in another State or Territory or New Zealand (qualifying under either the *Mutual Recognition Act 1992* or *Trans-Tasman Mutual Recognition Act 1997*).

For the purpose of point 1 above, a list of recognised tertiary institutions and the qualifications awarded by those institutions is published by the Australasian Veterinary Boards Council (AVBC), at [Veterinary registration in Australia and New Zealand](#) (click on 'Qualifications generally recognised').

Persons with specialist qualifications who do not hold an accredited [primary] degree in veterinary science or medicine from a tertiary institution recognised by the Board may apply for general registration in Victoria with a view to also applying for specialist endorsement of that general registration.

This policy sets out the Board's position and process in relation to considering whether persons with specialist qualifications who do not hold an accredited [primary] degree in veterinary science or medicine from a tertiary institution recognised by the Board qualify for general registration (and ultimately, specialist endorsement of that general registration) under section 5 of the VPA.

POLICY

The purpose of the VPA is to "to protect the public by providing for the registration of veterinary practitioners" (s1(a) VPA). When considering applications for registration, the Board's approach is to minimise the risk to the public while also ensuring practitioners who are qualified to be registered practise within the bounds of their area of expertise.

Persons with specialist qualifications who do not hold an accredited [primary] degree in veterinary science or medicine from a tertiary institution recognised by the Board may apply for general registration in Victoria with a view to also applying for specialist endorsement of that general registration.

In considering whether a person with specialist qualifications is qualified for general registration (and ultimately for specialist endorsement), each application will be considered on a case-by-case basis, however, the Board may consider the following:

- the applicant's veterinary degree and postgraduate qualifications, including the standing and accreditation status of the tertiary or other institutions which have awarded those qualifications. Applicants are expected to have undergone extensive advanced supervised training after completing their primary degree in veterinary science or medicine, including a 3-year residency generally culminating in passing a rigorous set of examinations. Examples include "Diplomates" of American or European Boards of Veterinary Specialties.

- the applicant's current knowledge and skills
- the applicant's professional experience and current role
- the applicant's contributions to and standing in the veterinary profession
- continuing professional development (CPD) undertaken by the applicant
- any advice about the applicant's training, qualifications, experience or expertise in the branch of veterinary surgery or medicine in which the applicant is seeking specialist endorsement
- any other information provided by the applicant
- any relevant precedent decision by the Board.

In addition to determining whether a person qualifies for general registration under section 5 (and ultimately for specialist endorsement under section 8), in granting general registration the Board will also consider whether:

- the applicant's principal place of residence is in Victoria or will be in Victoria while the applicant practises as a veterinary practitioner
- there are grounds under the VPA for the Board to refuse to grant general registration or specialist endorsement to the applicant
- specific registration under section 7 applies to the applicant's circumstances, and
- the applicant has paid the relevant fee.

If the Board determines that the applicant qualifies for general registration, and other requirements for granting general registration apply, the Board may grant general registration.

The Board will impose conditions on the veterinary practitioner's general registration including that they have their postgraduate qualifications assessed by a nominated assessment body within a specified timeframe, that they have a supervisor during that timeframe and that they only practise in their specialist branch of veterinary surgery or medicine.

If the assessment body recommends that the veterinary practitioner should be endorsed as a specialist, the practitioner will be required to apply for specialist endorsement within a certain timeframe. On grant of specialist endorsement, the Board will remove most conditions on the practitioner's general registration maintaining the requirement that they only practise within their specialty.

APPLICATION PROCESS

1. Persons with specialist qualifications who wish to apply for general registration and specialist endorsement but whose primary degree in veterinary science or medicine is not generally recognised by the Board should contact the Board. After discussion of their circumstances, the person will be provided with information about applying for general registration.
2. On receipt of their application, the Board will consider whether the applicant meets requirements for general registration in sections 4, 5 and 6 of the VPA.
3. If the applicant meets requirements, the Board may grant the applicant general registration and will propose conditions to be imposed on their registration under section 6(3) of the VPA.
4. The conditions that will be imposed on the veterinary practitioner's general registration are:
 - a) They cannot practise as a sole practitioner.
 - b) They must practise under the indirect supervision of principal supervisor [name and registration number of supervisor]. Indirect supervision requirements are set out in the Board's policy, [Supervision of veterinary practitioners](#).
 - c) They must only practise in the specified branch of veterinary surgery or medicine.
 - d) Within 3 months of being granted registration, they must apply to have their postgraduate qualifications and experience assessed by the Australasian Veterinary Boards Council's (AVBC's)

Advisory Board for the Recommendation of Veterinary Specialists (the ACRVS). More information: [Veterinary specialist assessment](#) (AVBC website).

- e) Within 14 days of receiving the ACRVS's assessment of their specialist qualifications, they must provide the assessment to the Board, and:
 - i. if the ACRVS has recommended specialist endorsement, they must apply for specialist endorsement following instructions on the Board's website: www.vetboard.vic.gov.au > [Registration > Specialist registration](#), or
 - ii. if the ACRVS has not recommended specialist endorsement, they must surrender their general registration by completing the following form: [Surrender registration](#).

Any failure to meet these conditions may constitute unprofessional conduct and result in disciplinary proceedings under Part 3 of the VPA. The Board may also refuse to renew the registration of the applicant before the end of the registration renewal period.

- f) They must notify the Board within 7 days if they are unable to comply with any condition on their registration.
- 5. After the applicant has received the ACRVS's assessment, they should provide it to the Board and apply for specialist endorsement of their general registration.
 - 6. The Board will consider whether the applicant meets the requirements for specialist endorsement in section 8 of the VPA:
 - i. If the requirements have been met, the Board will grant an endorsement of the applicant's general registration to the effect that they are qualified to practise as a veterinary specialist in the specified branch of veterinary surgery or medicine. At this time, the Board will also vary the conditions on the general registration of the applicant so that conditions c) and f) listed above remain.
 - ii. If the Board is not satisfied that the requirements have been met and determines to refuse to grant specialist endorsement, the Board must notify its proposed decision to the applicant and give them an opportunity to make submissions to the Board about the proposal (s9 VPA).

APPLICANT'S ENTITLEMENT TO MAKE SUBMISSIONS, SEEK REVIEW OR WITHDRAW THEIR APPLICATION.

Before imposing conditions on the applicant's general registration, the Board will notify them of the proposed condition (s9 VPA). The applicant will have 10 business days to make submissions about the proposal.

The Board must not refuse an application for general registration and/or specialist endorsement without first notifying the applicant of its proposed decision. The applicant would be given 10 business days to make submissions to the Board about the proposal (s9 VPA).

An applicant may apply to the Victorian Civil and Administrative Tribunal for review of a decision to refuse their application or impose conditions on their registration within 28 days of receiving notice of any such decision (s55 VPA).

After grant of general registration, a veterinary practitioner may apply to the Board to amend, vary or revoke any condition, limitation or restriction imposed on their registration (s6(4) VPA).

An applicant may surrender their registration at any point of the application process described in this policy.

DISCLAIMER

This document (printed, electronic or any other medium) cannot be regarded as legal advice.

Although all care has been taken in preparing this policy, it does not replace advice specific to the reader's circumstances. Where necessary, advice must be sought from competent legal practitioners. Neither the

authors nor the Veterinary Practitioners Registration Board of Victoria accept or undertake any duty of care relating to any part of this policy.

DATE OF POLICY

This policy was published on 8 April 2025. It may be superseded by later versions. The current version may be viewed on the Board's website at www.vetboard.vic.gov.au > Registration > Specialist registration