VetCEE standards and procedures
for Approved Continuous Veterinary Education
as approved by the VetCEE Board of Directors January 12, 2023

General information

Veterinary Continuous Education in Europe (VetCEE)

VetCEE was founded in 2014, and is a joint initiative of
- EAEVE (European Association of Establishments of Veterinary Education)
- EBVS (European Board of Veterinary Specialization)
- FVE (Federation of Veterinarians of Europe)
- UEVP (Union of European Veterinary Practitioners)

The main purpose of VetCEE is to provide accreditation of national and international programmes for Continuous Veterinary Education (CVE) or Continuous Professional Development (CPD) in Europe, and to facilitate the recognition of education between the various countries in Europe.

The VetCEE mission in CVE accreditation

The VetCEE mission is:
- to establish minimum standards for the evaluation of all kind of veterinary CPD designed for veterinarians, e.g. courses, congresses, modular programmes, workshops, etc.;
- to accredit any kind of veterinary CPD activity or e-learning material that fulfils the VetCEE quality requirements (high quality scientific content, free of bias, appropriate educational approach);
- to work in close collaboration with the Veterinary Statutory Bodies and Competent Authorities towards a harmonised approach for mutual recognition of competences and credits accumulated by the veterinarians through accredited CPD across Europe.

Agreements with national statutory bodies and other accreditation organizations

VetCEE only focuses on the assessment, evaluation and accreditation of post-graduate veterinary training. Awarding titles, registration of veterinarians and recording of their CPD remains under the responsibility of the National Competent Authorities and/or Veterinary Statutory Bodies.

Definitions

- **Course:** In this document, the term "course" refers to any type of CPD/CVE event or programme, eg. courses, live events, conferences, webinars, or specialist training.
- **Short course:** An educational event of less than 5 hours of contact teaching.
- **Providers:** Any person or organization that organizes CPD/CVE courses. VetCEE considers for accreditation events submitted by various types of CPD organizers, such as individual veterinary specialists, universities or faculties, or commercial CPD providers.
- **Instructor:** Any kind of teacher, presenter or lecturer participating in teaching a course.

VetCEE Standards

Accreditation criteria

In order to support high quality continuous veterinary education, VetCEE has set the following minimum standards for accreditation of educational events and other activities (later *course*).

An accredited course fulfills all of the following criteria:

1. The information provided in the application is complete, adequate and adhered to during the course
The basic course information application is complete, and includes the following information:
- title of the course, date(s) and a clear description of the course, specifying the nature of the course (course, conference, or short course of less than 5 hours);
- course topic and animal species, teaching language, hours of theoretical contact time, hours of practical contact time, hours of self-study, and number of credits;
- target audience and possible prerequisites;
- expected total number of participants and registration fees; and the instruction level of the course is identified within the European Qualification Framework (EQF), with levels 7 and 8 in the EQF system corresponding to courses directed toward veterinary graduates and specialists, respectively.

> ### EQF levels
>
> If content spans a variety of levels (eg. a conference) you should indicate the level of the typical content, not the highest level. Specialist conferences are delivered at level 8.
>
> The level of credit should be one level higher than the existing qualification of delegates; veterinary surgeons have already completed a level 6 qualification, therefore their next achievement would be a level 7 qualification and courses should be aligned to that level.
>
> **Level 6 credits** would be awarded to veterinary undergraduates or graduates of a non-veterinary degree (eg. Bachelors in veterinary nursing).
>
> **Level 7 credits** would be awarded to courses aimed at veterinary surgeons working towards a 'middle tier' of post-graduate training.
>
> **Level 8 credits** would be awarded to courses aimed at veterinary surgeons working towards specialist qualifications, eg. residents, or those who already have a specialist qualification.

2. Educational quality

2.1. Purpose of the course

The course fulfills a defined educational purpose or need. A needs assessment has been performed and the purpose for delivering the course is described in the application.

2.2. Target audience

The course is directed at a suitable target audience.

2.3. Level of instruction

The level of instruction corresponds to the purpose of the course and the level and prerequisites of the target audience.

2.4. Organizer and instructor qualifications

The organizing committee and instructors and their qualifications are described in the application.

The qualifications and expertise of the course instructors are appropriate and sufficient for the level of instruction and the course content.

The number of instructors is adequate to meet the educational needs and to achieve the learning outcomes, in both theoretical and practical sessions.

2.5. Intended learning outcomes

Learning outcomes are statements that describe what participants are expected to learn on a course. They refer to specific knowledge or skills that the participant will master after the course, and combines an active verb with a specific skill. Example: *"After the course, the participant will be able to interpret clinical chemistry data".*

The learning outcomes of accredited courses are defined based on the learning needs of the target audience. The teaching and learning activities correspond to the learning outcomes and assessment, and with the level if instruction (EQF level). The purpose of the course and the learning outcomes are consistently communicated to the participants, and the method of communication is described in the application.

In the application, the organizer describes the learning outcomes of the course, with approximately 5-10 learning outcomes for each European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System (ECTS) credit. Individual lectures or other sessions have further, more specific, learning outcomes, but these are not described in detail in the application. For short courses, the learning outcomes are generally fewer than in larger programmes.

For short courses, less than 1 day in duration
- Learning outcomes can be brief and generalized for the entire period, session by session outcomes are not normally required, for example, *"the participants should be able to*
  - *explain the concepts of ……*
  - *apply the concepts of …… to every day clinical practice*
  - *undertake …..*

o *confidently approach cases of ….."*

For 1-2 day long courses
- Learning outcomes can be provided for session by session or for the entire course (if covering a single subject).
- Learning outcomes must match the taxonomy of the learning level.

For multi-day courses with self-study material
- Session by session learning outcomes should be available
- Learning outcomes should be defined for the self-study material
- Learning outcomes must match the taxonomy of the learning level

For conferences
- Session titles should be descriptive
- The level of each session should be identifiable to participants where multiple streams run concurrently (eg. specialist, generalist, nurse)
- Congress committee members are responsible for ensuring that speakers understand the level and content of each session and for preventing un-planned duplication of content.
- Outcomes for attendance should can be generalized for example
  o *"Be able to describe the latest best practice in the field (level 6)*
  o *Be able to to describe the latest innovations in the field (level 7)*
  o *Be able to describe the latest science based advances in the field (level 8)"*

For modular courses
- Session by session learning outcomes should be available
- Learning outcomes must match the taxonomy of the learning level

2.6. Scope, workload, and number of credits

Teaching of the content at the level of the intended EQF level and learning outcomes is achievable within the time frame of the course, and corresponds to the number of credits.

The programme of the course is submitted with the application, together with the number of educational hours per day and for the whole course.

Allocation of credits:
- Credits are awarded for every 25-30 hours of learning, as described by the ECTS User's guide. This does not need to all be in person delivery and should include self-study and exam preparation.
- When using self-study content, the provider should be able to demonstrate how engagement in this material will be measured.

2.7. Learner engagement

The teaching and learning activities are engaging and supportive of systematic and active learning. The active learning methods are described in the application, and support the achievement of the learning outcomes.

Attendance is monitored, and the monitoring method is described in the application.

2.8. Assessment

An assessment method is required on all courses, and it is described in the application. The method and content of the assessment correspond to the learning outcomes and the teaching and learning activities. The assessment method is appropriate and suitable for its purpose, and corresponds to the learning outcomes and teaching methods.

The provider describes the procedure in case of a participant failing an assessment or not completing the course.

2.9. Feedback

A reliable and effective means for the participants to provide feedback on the course is provided and described in the application. Within four weeks of the completion of the course, the provider will submit an event report based on individual feedback from the participants.

2.10. Scientific quality

The course is of high scientific quality, and the programme is scientifically balanced and free from bias. The course provides an evidence-based approach to the subject of the course.

3. Content

Requirements regarding the content of an accredited course:

3.1. Target audience and relevance

The content should be relevant and useful to the target audience.

3.2. Educational need

The subject of the course, its learning outcomes and content correspond with the current needs of the particular field of expertise.

3.3. Evidence-based medicine

The content corresponds to current evidence-based practice in the particular field.

3.4. Content alignment with learning outcomes

The content corresponds to the intended learning outcomes, and allows the participants to achieve the learning outcomes.

3.5. Level of instruction

The level of instruction should match the EQF levels of the target audience and purpose of the course. Levels 7 and 8 in the EQF system correspond to a Master's or Licentiate degree, and specialization and doctoral degrees, respectively.

3.6. Instructor qualifications

The qualifications and expertise of the course instructors are appropriate and sufficient for the level of instruction and the course content. The number of instructors is acceptable to meet the educational needs and to achieve the learning outcomes.

4. Animal welfare and ethical use of animals in education

Animal welfare and ethical use of animals in education are of high priority, and animal welfare regulations and standards are strictly adhered to on all VetCEE accredited courses. The use of live animals is avoided whenever possible.

5. Compliance with ethical and legal requirements, confidentiality

> The course is conducted in compliance with all relevant ethical, regulatory, legal and industry-based requirements. The course provider respects and confirms the privacy and confidentiality of the learner and adheres to the European General Data Protection Regulation (https://gdpr-info.eu/), and confirms that any information provided by the learner will only be utilized for the specific purposes of completing e-learning material.

6. Environmental sustainability

> VetCEE recognizes the potential environmental impact of CPD, including travel, printing and promotional gifts from sponsors or exhibitors, and limits travelling in its administrative activities. VetCEE also encourages providers to reduce environmental impacts actively, and provider policies to ensure environmental sustainability of courses can be described in the course application.

7. Equality and diversity statement

> VetCEE is committed to advancing the veterinary profession by promoting equality and diversity, and preventing discrimination in all of its activities. Providers are expected to recognize and eliminate practices and structures that create or sustain inequality. Speakers should be selected based upon expertise and without bias.

8. Commercial influence and bias

> The course is free from undue commercial influence, advertising, or bias. Courses organized entirely by industry are not considered for accreditation, but course sponsorship can be accepted as unrestricted educational grants or support. Sponsorship may be briefly acknowledged in the course material, but the difference between marketing and education should be evident. The source of all funding is declared in the application and to the participants.

9. Conflict of interest

> Conflicts of interest are disclosed by course providers, organizers and VetCEE evaluators, and how any conflict of interest has been resolved is described in the application for accreditation.

VetCEE Procedures

Eligibility

> VetCEE will accredit any type of veterinary CPD/CVE that fulfills the described criteria. Providers may be eg. individual professionals, commercial education programme providers, national statutory bodies, associations, faculties or universities.
>
> Courses are directed toward veterinarians, at either general practice (corresponding to EQF 7) or specialist levels (EQF 8).
>
> The method of delivery should be appropriate to the purpose of the course and its learning outcomes, but may consist of live and/or e-learning methods.

Confidentiality

> Submitted applications and all attached materials are strictly confidential.

Applying for accreditation

The recommended time for submission of an application is 16 weeks from the planned start date of the course. The latest date for receipt of an application and confirmed payment of the VetCEE fee is 12 weeks before the planned start date of the course.

The provider creates an account on the VetCEE website, and completes the application on the VetCEE application portal.

Once an account is created, it is approved on the VetCEE accreditation platform.

Course evaluation process

Evaluators

Recognized experts with specific competencies in different fields of veterinary medicine can apply to become external VetCEE evaluators, by filling in an application on the VetCEE website. The applications are assessed and approved or declined by the VetCEE Experts in education. Evaluators are contacted to evaluate applications for courses in their specific field of expertise. The identity of the external evaluator is not disclosed to course providers.

The evaluation process

The course evaluation process begins when the application has been submitted and the payment has been received.

Evaluation of educational quality, ethical use of animals, and quality control (VetCEE)
The general educational quality and ethical use of animals of each course is evaluated by VetCEE Experts in Education, who then assign each application to one or two suitable external evaluators. The quality evaluation is based on the General principles and Essential criteria described in the previous section.

VetCEE will randomly perform on-site quality controls of accredited courses to ensure compliance with the accreditation criteria and information provided in the application.

Evaluation of course content (external review)
The external evaluator assesses the content of the course according to the VetCEE standards on the evaluation portal. The evaluator will then accredit the event, ask for additional information or clarification, or deny accreditation. The evaluation should be completed within three to four weeks.

Decision

If the criteria are fulfilled, VetCEE will decide to accredit the course. If all criteria are not fulfilled, VetCEE may ask for additional information or clarification or deny accreditation, if amendments are not possible or adequate.

If a course is repeated without modifications, the accreditation is valid for five years.

Accreditation will be denied if industry funding or other conflicts of interest are not declared, the applicant attempts to influence the decision, or the applicant advertises VetCEE accreditation before accreditation is granted.

Unauthorized or inappropriate use of the VetCEE accreditation status or logo will result in action being taken by VetCEE, and rejection of any future application by the provider.

Significantly inaccurate attendance declarations or failure to declare significant modifications of courses to VetCEE and reapply, will lead to rejection of the application and any future applications.

Feedback

After the event, the organizer will submit an event report based on feedback from the participants, and this report will also be sent the evaluators.

VetCEE can perform on-site quality control visitation of accredited events to ensure compliance with VetCEE accreditation criteria and submitted information.

Appeal process

Written appeals can be submitted to VetCEE (apply@vetcee.eu) within 30 days of the date of the accreditation decision.