

# partners in veterinary education

december 2003 | issue 1

## the new final year curriculum

The new program for final year students (veterinary interns) studying veterinary science at the University of Sydney commenced 8 December 2003.

This new approach is only possible through the generous support of veterinarians, organisations and government agencies and the Faculty is extremely grateful for the contribution provided by our partners in education.

We are confident that this new program will produce well-rounded graduates and future leaders of our profession.

Extramural placements constitute approximately half of the ten one-month rotations in final year. The process of intern assessment has been formalised to ensure the achievement of appropriate educational outcomes.

Assessment is based on submission of required assignments to the Faculty and completion of workplace related tasks, as agreed with the extramural supervisors.



**Dr John Baguley**  
 Manager  
 Extramural  
 Administrative  
 Support Unit

### Intern Assessment

| Assignment Tasks                  | Small Animal Practice (Core) | Rural Mixed Practice (Core) | Rural Public Practice (Core) | Elective |          |
|-----------------------------------|------------------------------|-----------------------------|------------------------------|----------|----------|
| Written Report (2,000 words)      | √                            |                             | √                            | √        | Variable |
| Case Log (20 Cases)               | √                            | √                           |                              | √        |          |
| Reflective Journals (1,000 words) |                              | √                           | √                            | √        |          |
| Communication Task                | √                            | √                           | √                            | √        |          |

Demonstration of agreed workplace tasks is assessed through the Supervisor Report Form. A model for this process is described on page 2.

Ultimately, the intern is assessed with regard to the likelihood of these attributes being obtained by the time of graduation. The expected performance of a new graduate should form the benchmark for assessment.

### this edition:

supervision and process 2

staff behind the scenes 2

preparation for veterinary practice 3

partner practitioners conference 3

student intern feedback 3

learning opportunities 4

communication tasks 4

elective choices 4

## extramural supervision and processes

Partner Practices should have received notification of the dates that interns will attend their practices and the names of interns allocated for the first six rotations.

The table below provides an overview of the process of intern supervision. This more formal process is recommended to ensure the development of a professional relationship between the supervisor and intern.

| Task  | Pre Rotation | First Week | Mid Rotation | Last Week |
|---|--------------|------------|--------------|-----------|
| Practice is contacted by Faculty and Intern to confirm placement approximately 4 weeks prior to rotation  | ■            |            |              |           |
| Initial meeting between Intern and Extramural Supervisor to discuss learning outcomes and conditions  |              | ■          |              |           |
| Intern submits Learning Agreement Form, Supervisor Details, Site Contract   |              | ■          |              |           |
| Mid rotation interview for informal feedback based upon Supervisor Report Form criteria   |              |            | ■            |           |
| Final interview and submission of Supervisor Report Form through the Partner Practice website at <a href="http://www.vetsci.usyd.edu.au/ppindex.php">www.vetsci.usyd.edu.au/ppindex.php</a> , fax or post |              |            |              | ■         |

We ask that you clearly define your expectations of the intern during the initial interview. The intern will take this opportunity to discuss his or her expectations and complete a Rotation Learning Agreement Form. Please discuss workplace tasks, hours, conditions and intern assignments.

Feedback may be formalised during the mid and final interviews but is encouraged throughout the rotation. It should be based on progress relevant to the Supervisor Report and Learning Agreement Forms. A possible model for feedback is a modification of the DESC model:

- **Describe** your interpretation and expectation of performance with respect to the Supervisor Report Form criteria
- **Express** your feelings about why this is important
- **Specify** how the student would obtain a good grading and
- **Communicate** your belief in his or her ability to improve

Ultimately, how you provide feedback is your decision.

In the final week we ask that you interview and formally assess your intern using the criteria provided in the Supervisor Report Form. Focus on what they have done well and how they can improve in future rotations.

Please sign the Supervisor Report Form and submit it to the Faculty as soon as possible; on-line, fax or post.

## staff behind the scenes

Overall management of the Year Five Program is the responsibility of **Professor David Hodgson**



The intramural placements at Sydney and Camden will be supervised by **Associate Professor Geraldine Hunt** and **Dr Christina Dart** respectively.

Extramural placement Rotation Coordinators will be responsible for academic liaison with Extramural Supervisors and assessment of interns during these placements.

**Associate Professors Peter Windsor** and **John House** are the respective Rotation Coordinators for Rural Public Practice and Rural Mixed Practice placements.

**Dr John Baguley** is the Rotation Coordinator for Small Animal Practice rotations and will also manage the administration group.

**Melanie Robson** (right) has worked tirelessly to develop and maintain the extramural database.



Melanie and **Angelika Trube** are the faces behind the day-to-day administration and liaison with partner practices and interns.

All contact details are available through the **Handbook for Extramural Rotations** (please contact us if you have not received your copy) or visit the webpage at [www.vetsci.usyd.edu.au/ppindex.php](http://www.vetsci.usyd.edu.au/ppindex.php)

## preparation for veterinary practice

Prior to participation in the final year program, fourth year students undertook a week-long intensive unit of study. This course included lectures from staff in the areas of jurisprudence, practice management, library and internet resources, year five program administration and completing assessment requirements. Rotation coordinators presented information regarding specific rotation placement requirements.

External speakers also participated including:

- Dr Barry Young** (Gladesville Veterinary Hospital) - Small Animal Practice
- Dr Rob White** (Rx Works) - Practice Management Software
- Ms Sarah Colley and Ms Jan Pimpanaro** (Provet NSW) - Practice Merchandising
- Dr Marilyn McKenzie** (Baulkham Hills Veterinary Hospital) - Professional Ethics
- Mr John Apter** (Guild Insurance) - Practitioner Insurance and Risk Management
- Ms Michelle Gilliver-Smith** (Consultant to AVA) - Industrial Relations
- Dr Gordon Bentley** (Dubbo Veterinary Hospital) - Rural Mixed Practice
- Dr Jim Cornish** (Nestle Purina) - Marketing Pet Food
- Dr Frank Nottle** (Rural Lands Protection Board Council) - Rural Public Practice
- Dr Ken Jacobs** (Canberra Veterinary Hospital) - AEVA and Equine Practice
- Dr Andrea Reiss** (Taronga Zoo) - Wildlife and Exotic Animal Practice
- Mr Keiran Passmore** (University Careers Centre) - Seeking Employment and the Job Interview

## partner practitioner conference

Associate Professor Bob Ratcliffe organised the inaugural Partner Practice Conference in June 2003. Over 100 representatives from our educational partners were able to attend.

Next year's Partner Practice Conference is scheduled for July 9-10. Once again it is a way for us to thank you for your participation in the new curriculum.

We are planning some exciting practice management sessions with Dr Tom Catanzaro as well as more clinical sessions. The Conference will also provide an opportunity to report on our new curriculum and gather your feedback.

Any further suggestions for our conference program would be welcomed.

## student intern feedback

Following each rotation, interns complete a Rotation Feedback Form which enables the Faculty to monitor the quality of our new program from a student perspective. We are particularly interested in whether students believe they are able to achieve their desired learning outcomes and whether rotations provide sufficient learning opportunities for their development.

Final year students in 2003 trialed this new program by completing three one-month rotations.

Overall, the experience for these student interns was positive. Many worked hard to fulfil the expectations of their supervisors as honorary employees and to complete Faculty assignments.

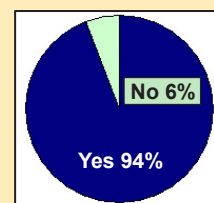
### Achieving learning outcomes

The purpose of the year five rotations is to ensure interns reach a satisfactory standard with respect to graduate attributes by the time of graduation. Interns are asked to nominate learning outcomes related to these graduate attributes prior to placements and negotiate achievable learning outcomes with supervisors in the first few days of their rotation.

### Student Feedback

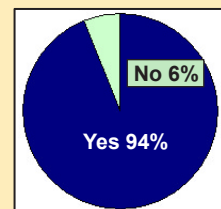
#### Achievement of Animal Management Learning Objectives

*These include handling and restraint and common animal husbandry tasks.*



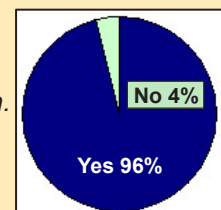
#### Achievement of Clinical Management Learning Objectives

*These are associated with the investigation, diagnosis and treatment of common diseases.*



#### Achievement of Professional Practice Learning Objectives

*These may include a variety of areas including welfare, practice management and communication. These attributes generally complement the more technical aspects of veterinary science.*





## learning opportunities

Interns rated the learning opportunities provided in a number of areas as excellent, good, satisfactory or insufficient opportunities.

| Learning Opportunities          | Ratings     |        |                |                              |
|---------------------------------|-------------|--------|----------------|------------------------------|
|                                 | Excellent % | Good % | Satisfactory % | Insufficient Opportunities % |
| Discussion of cases             | 54          | 29     | 13             | 4                            |
| Examination of animals          | 57          | 30     | 10             | 3                            |
| Practical experience            | 53          | 29     | 12             | 6                            |
| Interaction with clients        | 44          | 33     | 14             | 9                            |
| Discussion of intern progress   | 48          | 34     | 13             | 5                            |
| Recommendation to other interns | 57          | 30     | 10             | 3                            |

## communication tasks

During each rotation, interns must complete a Communication Task which is negotiated and confirmed by their extramural supervisor. The purpose of this task is to continue the development of written or oral presentation skills in a veterinary practice specific context.

Examples of oral communication tasks include presentations to staff on issues ranging from case management to the use of VEIN; local radio interviews; and running puppy party classes.

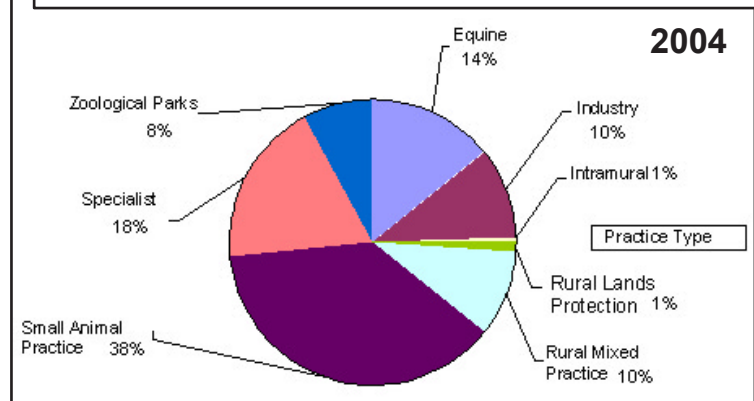
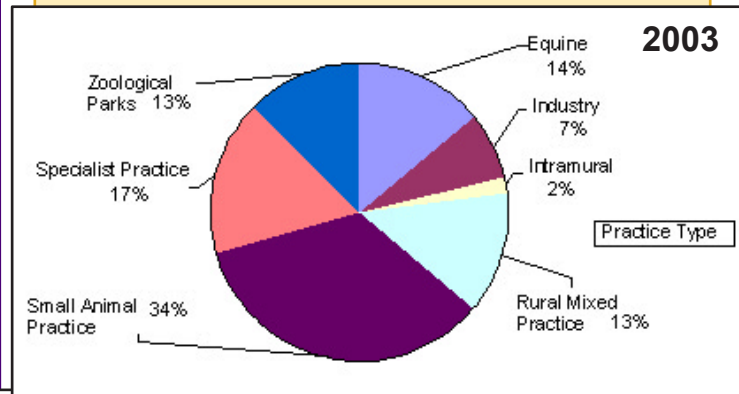
Examples of written communication tasks include writing referral letters; contributions to the practice newsletter; and practice protocols.

## elective choices

Data from the elective choices of the last three rotations for final year interns in 2003 and final year interns in the first six months for 2004 provide an interesting comparison.

Almost all our student interns appear to want to make the most of the opportunities provided by our Partner Practices. A significant number have selected international placements.

### Elective choices



### Student comments.....

"The vets here are extremely enthusiastic about the new course and the opportunities that they have for teaching future vets. They are willing to let you do whatever you want, provided they have confidence in your abilities and you show an enthusiastic attitude."

"A very friendly, supportive practice that offered thorough supervision, but enough freedom to get hands on experience and take some responsibility for cases. Great nursing and administrative staff that were very patient, willing to help and happy to teach."

"I got excellent experience in medicine and surgery. The vets are extremely helpful and give you every opportunity to learn as long as you take the initiative. My supervisor was very happy for me to develop my own interests, whatever they may be."

"It was the best and most rewarding four weeks of my course!"

### Something to say?

We are interested in your feedback and contributions. Please contact John Baguley with your ideas or suggestions for future editions.

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### VEIN - The University of Sydney Veterinary Education and Information Network.

An information service for veterinary and animal scientists, and allied animal health professionals. Services are provided on and off the web at [vein.library.usyd.edu.au](http://vein.library.usyd.edu.au)

