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## **Experiences of recent veterinary graduates in their first employment position and their preferences for new graduate support programmes**

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**Supplementary Information 1. Initial and reminder emails sent to veterinarians who had recently graduated and registered in New Zealand to invite them to participate in a survey of their experiences in their first employment position and their preferences for new graduate support programmes.**

# VETERINARY COUNCIL OF NEW ZEALAND

Te Kaunihera Rata Kararehe o Aotearoa



May 2019

## Help us support new vets better

The Veterinary Council want to develop a programme to help new registrants in making the transition to professional practice in New Zealand. This includes both new graduates and experienced overseas vets coming to New Zealand.

We're contacting you because, according to our register, you were first registered with the Veterinary Council in the last 5 years. We'd love to hear from you about your experiences as a new registrant in New Zealand and what you think we should be doing to support others.

We would hugely appreciate your input by completing an online survey, which should take about 20 minutes to complete.

We'll also put you in the draw to win a \$200 prezzy card!

Thanks  
Seton Butler  
Professional Advisor VCNZ

[Complete the survey here](#)

Veterinary Council of New Zealand  
PO Box 10-563 | Level 10, Bayleys Building, 36 Brandon Street  
Wellington 6143 | New Zealand  
Phone: 04 473 9600  
[www.vetcouncil.org.nz](http://www.vetcouncil.org.nz)

You are receiving this email because you are listed in the Register of Veterinarians. We will contact you at your listed email address from time to time with important communication and updates. If you have received this email and you are not a registered veterinarian, you have opted to receive such communications from the Vet Council. Please contact us if you wish to opt out.



June 2019

## Last chance to help us support new vets better

Thank you to everyone who has shared their thoughts with us so far, we greatly appreciate your input.

For those who haven't yet responded, we'd still love to hear from you.

The survey closes on Monday 24 June.

Help us make a positive change for new vets in New Zealand and go in the draw to win a \$200 prezzy card!

Thanks  
Seton Butler  
Professional Advisor [VCNZ](#)

[Complete the survey here](#)

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**Supplementary Information 2. Questions used in a survey of recently graduated and registered veterinarians regarding their experiences in their first employment position and their preferences for new graduate support programmes.**



## Introduction

We want to find out about the experiences of veterinarians in New Zealand during their first few years of work and to explore the quality and effectiveness of the support they receive.

The survey should take around 10 minutes to complete. When you complete the survey, you will have the option to go into the draw to win a \$200 Prezzy Card.

Your responses are not linked to your name and will only be visible to the researchers involved in this project. We plan to make a summary of the results of this survey available but nothing that could allow you to be personally identified will be published.

This project has been evaluated by peer review and judged to be low risk. Consequently it has not been reviewed by one of the University's Human Ethics Committees. The researcher(s) named in this document are responsible for the ethical conduct of this research.

If you have any concerns about the conduct of this research that you want to raise with someone other than the researcher(s), please contact Professor Craig Johnson, Director (Research Ethics), email [humanethics@massey.ac.nz](mailto:humanethics@massey.ac.nz).



## About you

1. How old are you?

- ☐ 20-24 ☐ 35-39  
☐ 25-29 ☐ 40+  
☐ 30-34

2. What is your gender?

- ☐ Female  
☐ Male  
☐ Non-binary  
☐ Prefer not to say

3. What is your ethnicity (please select all that apply)?

- ☐ NZ European/Pākehā ☐ Other European  
☐ NZ Māori ☐ Asian  
☐ Pacific Island (Pasifika) ☐ Other non-European

4. In which country did you gain your first veterinary qualification?

- ☐ New Zealand (Massey University) ☐ United States  
☐ Australia ☐ South Africa  
☐ United Kingdom or Ireland ☐ Canada  
☐ Other (please specify)

5. In what year did you complete your final clinical year rotations at veterinary school (YYYY)?

6. Which of the following employment types have you held since graduating with your veterinary degree? (select all that apply)

- ☐ Clinical veterinary job
- ☐ Non-clinical veterinary-related job requiring a veterinary degree
- ☐ Non-clinical veterinary-related job not requiring a veterinary degree
- ☐ Job outside the field of veterinary medicine
- ☐ Unemployed

7. How many total years have you been employed in a job for which a veterinary degree was a requirement? (exclude periods of unemployment or leave)

8. How much time to the nearest half year have you taken off for parental leave since graduating from veterinary school? (enter 0 if none taken)

9. Are you currently practising as a veterinarian?

*If you are in employment that requires a veterinary degree as a pre-requisite, for example as a clinician or working in a role requiring a veterinary qualification (i.e. govt response, industry, etc), please answer "yes".*

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No



10. Have you ever practised as a veterinarian?

*If you have been in employment that requires a veterinary degree as a pre-requisite, please answer "yes".*

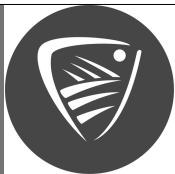
☐ Yes

☐ No





11. Please tell us your main reasons for leaving your veterinary role



## First employment after graduation

12. Which option below best describes your **first** employment environment after graduation?

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| <input type="radio"/> Independent private practice                               | <input type="radio"/> Government (MPI)   |
| <input type="radio"/> Group private practice (e.g. corporate practices)          | <input type="radio"/> State Owned Enterprise (SOE) or Crown Research Institute (CRI) |
| <input type="radio"/> Club practice  | <input type="radio"/> University or tertiary education                               |
| <input type="radio"/> Industry (e.g. manufacturers and pharmaceutical suppliers) | <input type="radio"/> Self-employed  |
| <input type="radio"/> Laboratory/diagnostic                                      |  |
| <input type="radio"/> Other (please specify)                                     |  |

13. What discipline do you spend most of your time in?

14. Which of the following best describes the practice location?

- |  |   |
|--|---|
| <input type="radio"/> Major urban area (population >100,000)       | <input type="radio"/> Small urban area (population <10,000) |
| <input type="radio"/> Large urban area (population 50,000–100,000) | <input type="radio"/> Rural/remote                          |
| <input type="radio"/> Medium urban area (population 10,000–50,000) |   |

15. On average, how many hours per week did you work during your first year in this job?

16. Were you rostered for afterhours emergency shifts during your first year in this job?

- ☐ Not applicable
- ☐ Yes and I was expected to answer calls on my own
- ☐ Yes, but there was always or almost always another vet available for support
- ☐ No

17. How many months after starting in your first year in this job were you first expected to be rostered for afterhours emergency shifts? (enter 0 if it was from day one; leave blank if it does not apply)

18. How many other veterinarians were employed in your immediate workplace during your first year in this job?

19. Please indicate below the extent to which you agree or disagree with each statement about your first job

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
I felt confident that I had the skills I needed to do the work assigned to me	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I was only put in situations that I could handle competently or that I was supported in	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
There was always a more experienced veterinarian available who I could ask for advice	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
When I started work, I went through an induction which introduced me to the work and made it clear what was expected of me	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
My employer set clear expectations for my performance and development	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
There was a clear plan in place to develop my skills and experience	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I met with my employer or supervisor regularly to discuss and review my work	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
My employer checked on my mental and physical wellbeing regularly	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
My employer made themselves available for me to discuss topics with them or to facilitate case discussions	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
There was a clear pathway for me to raise and resolve issues related to my work and colleagues	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I think my first job has had/will have a positive effect on my career	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

20. Are you still employed at this job?

- ☐ No
- ☐ Yes but I am considering leaving
- ☐ Yes and I am planning on staying in this job

21. How many years were you (or have you been) employed in this job (to the nearest half year e.g. 1.5)?

22. If you are no longer employed at this job (or are planning to leave), what were (or are) your primary reasons for leaving? (select all that apply)

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Loss of confidence in skills                           | <input type="checkbox"/> Lack of career development options   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Low self-perceived competence                          | <input type="checkbox"/> Unhappy living in practice location  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Routine workload too high                              | <input type="checkbox"/> Relocated due to family and/or spouse  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Afterhours workload too high                           | <input type="checkbox"/> Wanted to change disciplines   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Toxic practice culture and/or colleagues               | <input type="checkbox"/> Personal medical and/or mental health issues                                       |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Conflict regarding clinical standards and/or protocols | <input type="checkbox"/> Parental leave and/or family care obligations                                      |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Difficulty interacting with clients                    | <input type="checkbox"/> Ethical challenges regarding financial constraints limiting treatment options      |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Lack of support or mentoring                           | <input type="checkbox"/> Ethical challenges regarding performing euthanasia for economic reasons            |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Income or compensation too low                         | <input type="checkbox"/> Completion of a fixed term contract e.g. an Internship; maternity leave cover etc. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Other (please specify)                                 |   |

23. Any other comments you would like to share about your experience as a new graduate in your first employment?





## Current employment

24. Which option below best describes your current employment environment?

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| <input type="radio"/> Independent private practice                               | <input type="radio"/> Government (MPI)   |
| <input type="radio"/> Group private practice (e.g. corporate practices)          | <input type="radio"/> State Owned Enterprise (SOE) or Crown Research Institute (CRI) |
| <input type="radio"/> Club practice  | <input type="radio"/> University or tertiary education                               |
| <input type="radio"/> Industry (e.g. manufacturers and pharmaceutical suppliers) | <input type="radio"/> Self-employed  |
| <input type="radio"/> Laboratory/diagnostic                                      |  |
| <input type="radio"/> Other (please specify)                                     |  |

25. What discipline do you spend most of your time in?

26. On average, how many hours per week do you currently work?

27. Please indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree with each statement below.

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree	Strongly agree
My remuneration (including any overtime and bonuses) is fair in relation to other veterinarians	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
My remuneration (including overtime and bonuses) is fair in relation to other professions	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I work an appropriate number of hours per week in relation to my agreed employment terms	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I work an appropriate number of hours per week in order to maintain a work-life balance	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Any afterhours work I'm required to do is manageable in terms of maintaining a work-life balance	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I feel like a valued member of my organisation	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Overall, I enjoy my work	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>



What should VCNZ do for new registrants?

28. Reflecting on your first few years in practice, please indicate how helpful you feel each of the following would be for ensuring new registrants to get the support they need to become effective and confident veterinarians.

Not at all helpful      Not so helpful      Somewhat helpful      Very helpful      Extremely helpful

**A compulsory**

"technical" skills checklist (a checklist requiring oversight and sign-off from a supervisor as being proficient at a series of procedures, such as, being able to carry out a routine cat spay without supervision)

☐☐☐☐☐

**A non-compulsory**

"technical" skills checklist (a checklist requiring oversight and sign-off from a supervisor as being proficient at a series of procedures, such as, being able to carry out a routine cat spay without supervision)

☐☐☐☐☐

**A compulsory "soft"** skills checklist (like the previous checklist but with an emphasis on "soft skills" such as communication skills, dealing with conflict, dealing with difficult clients and dealing with grief)

☐☐☐☐☐



Not at all helpful      Not so helpful      Somewhat helpful      Very helpful      Extremely helpful

**A non-compulsory**

"soft" skills checklist  
(like the previous  
checklist but with an  
emphasis on "soft  
skills" such as  
communication skills,  
dealing with conflict,  
dealing with difficult  
clients and dealing with  
grief)



**A non-compulsory**

**programme** involving  
regular sessions with  
an experienced  
veterinarian (e.g.  
mentoring or coaching)  
covering things like  
personal wellbeing,  
career advice and  
professional issues



**A compulsory**

programme involving  
regular sessions with  
an experienced  
veterinarian (e.g.  
mentoring or coaching)  
covering things like  
personal wellbeing,  
career advice and  
professional issues



A requirement that all  
new registrants (newly  
registered  
veterinarians) work  
under supervision for  
the first part of their  
career



Requirements placed  
on those employing  
new registrants, such  
as regular meetings  
between the new vet  
and their supervisor to  
discuss performance,  
regular check-ins to  
monitor wellbeing, a  
performance and  
development plan and  
an induction plan.



29. Which of these options, have you personally experienced in your working life?

	Yes	No
A "technical" skills checklist	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
A "soft" skills checklist	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
A programme involving regular sessions with an experienced veterinarian (e.g. mentoring or coaching) covering things like personal wellbeing, career advice and professional issues	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

30. Which of the following would you choose to include in a programme for newly registered veterinarians if VCNZ were to implement one? (select all that apply)

- |  |   |
|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> A compulsory "technical" skills checklist     | <input type="checkbox"/> A non-compulsory programme involving regular sessions with an experienced veterinarian |
| <input type="checkbox"/> A non-compulsory "technical" skills checklist | <input type="checkbox"/> A compulsory programme involving regular sessions with an experienced veterinarian     |
| <input type="checkbox"/> A compulsory "soft" skills checklist          | <input type="checkbox"/> A requirement that all new registrants work under supervision                          |
| <input type="checkbox"/> A non-compulsory "soft" skills checklist      |   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> None of the above (please comment why)        |   |

31. If you were to find yourself being the employer of a new registrant today, what would be the **one** thing you would do to ensure they will have a successful career?

32. Please indicate any other actions that you feel VCNZ should consider taking.



## End of survey

Thank you very much for your help.

33. Would you be interested in participating in a short interview to discuss your opinions about newly registered veterinarian support programmes further?

- ☐ No
- ☐ Yes (please give us an email address to contact you on)

34. If you would like to go into the draw to win a \$200 Prezzy Card, please enter your email address