The Royal College of Veterinary Surgeons (RCVS)

RCVS Preliminary Investigation Committee (PIC)
(3 veterinary surgeon vacancies)

RCVS Disciplinary Committee (DC)
(4 veterinary surgeon and 3 lay vacancies)

VN Preliminary Investigation Committee (VN PIC)
(1 veterinary surgeon, 1 veterinary nurse and 1 lay vacancy)

Candidate Information Pack

January 2015

If you would prefer to receive this document in a different format, please contact us at enquiries@thewlisgraham.com or +44 (0)20 7850 4781.
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Welcome from Stuart W J Reid MRCVS, 
President of the 
Royal College of Veterinary Surgeons (RCVS)

Dear Applicant

I am delighted that you have expressed an interest in applying to be a member of one of the committees of the Royal College of Veterinary Surgeons which deals with allegations of professional misconduct against veterinary surgeons or veterinary nurses. The committees are an essential part of the regulatory arrangements which serve to assure the public that those who give veterinary care to animals are properly qualified and fit to practise.

If you believe that you have the necessary skills and experience, we would very much like to hear from you. Please use the guidance notes in this information pack to help you complete the application process. Thewlis Graham Associates, who are working with us, will also be happy to discuss these roles with you further and answer any questions.

Yours sincerely

Stuart W J Reid MRCVS
President
B) About the RCVS and the committees

The RCVS was established in 1844 by Royal Charter to be the governing body of the veterinary profession. The College sets and maintains educational, ethical and clinical standards for veterinary surgeons and veterinary nurses in order to protect the health and welfare of animals committed to veterinary care and safeguard the interests of the public. The statutory functions are set out in the Veterinary Surgeons Act 1966, and a new Supplemental Royal Charter conferring other powers on the College and formally establishing it as the regulator of the veterinary nursing profession was approved on 5 November 2014. These documents are available on the RCVS website: www.rcvs.org.uk

The Act requires the governing Council of the College to establish a Preliminary Investigation Committee (PIC) and a Disciplinary Committee (DC). The task of PIC is to investigate any case in which it is alleged that a veterinary surgeon is liable to be removed from the register of veterinary surgeons, or suspended from the register for a period, by reason of serious professional misconduct. After investigation, PIC decides whether to refer the case to DC. If a case is referred, DC hears the evidence, determines the facts and decides whether to direct removal or suspension. DC also deals with applications for restoration to the register following removal.

PIC and DC were formerly made up of members of the RCVS Council, but the Act was amended in 2013 to require them to be composed entirely of non-Council members from 1 July 2015. The point of this change was to separate the setting of standards for veterinary conduct from the function of deciding whether there has been a breach of the standards in a particular case.

The new RCVS Charter provides for the registration of veterinary nurses and the supervision of their professional conduct. The Veterinary Nurses’ Council (a committee of the RCVS Council) sets the standards for training, education and conduct, and a Veterinary Nurse Preliminary Investigation Committee (VN PIC) and a Veterinary Nurse Disciplinary Committee (VN DC) deal with allegations of professional misconduct. The VN PIC investigates any case in which it is alleged that a veterinary nurse is liable to be removed from the register of veterinary nurses, or suspended from the register for a period, by reason of serious professional misconduct. If it refers the case to the VN DC, that committee examines the evidence, determines the facts and decides whether to direct the removal or suspension of the veterinary nurse from the register. The VN DC also deals with applications for restoration to the register following removal.

Working methods and workload: Veterinary Surgeons’ PIC and DC

On average around 800 concerns about veterinary surgeons are reported to the RCVS each year. A fifth of these are investigated by PIC. For further information please see RCVS Facts 2014 on the RCVS website.

PIC delegates the investigation process to case examiner groups made up of a case manager, a veterinary examiner and a lay examiner. The case examiner group decides on the basis of documentary evidence (in particular correspondence with the complainant and the respondent veterinary surgeon, and sometimes reports of interviews and inspection visits) whether there is an arguable case against the respondent, and if so refers the case to PIC.
The committee then decides whether to refer the case on to DC. Further details about the investigation procedure are available on the RCVS website.

PIC meets every month in central London, documents being made available to the members in electronic form. The members other than the Chairman can also expect to spend around one day preparing for each meeting and up to four days a month assisting with the assessment and investigation of complaints by the case examiner groups.

DC has a quasi-judicial role and procedure. The respondent veterinary surgeon appears before the panel, will normally be legally represented and is subject to cross-examination; oral evidence is normally heard from witnesses; a legal assessor advises on points of law; and the committee retires to consider its findings and decisions in private.

DC hearings take place in central London. The full membership of the committee does not take part in every hearing: generally seven members sit to hear each case. Members of DC are selected for hearings with the aim of ensuring that all members sit a similar number of days each year. They are expected to be able to sit for up to 30 days a year if required, but as the number of committee members is increased the aim is to manage with fewer sitting days for each member. Hearings can be of short duration (one or two days) or longer (two or more weeks). Often, documents are provided in advance of a hearing and the DC members hearing the case are expected to read them before the hearing begins.

**Working methods and workload: VN PIC and VN DC**

On average around 40 concerns about veterinary nurses are reported to the RCVS each year, and a fifth of these are investigated by the VN PIC. For further information please see RCVS Facts 2014 on the RCVS website.

The VN PIC delegates the investigation process to case examiner groups made up of a case manager, a registered veterinary nurse examiner and a lay examiner. The case examiner group decides on the basis of documentary evidence (in particular correspondence with the complainant and the respondent veterinary nurse, and sometimes reports of interviews and inspection visits) whether there is an arguable case against the respondent, and if so refers the case to the VN PIC. The committee then decides whether to refer the case on to the VN DC. Further details about the investigation procedure are available on the RCVS website.

The VN PIC meets every six weeks or thereabouts, documents being made available to the members in electronic form. Members may attend meetings in central London or take part through Skype. The members other than the Chairman can also expect to spend up to half a day preparing for each meeting and up to one day a month assisting with the assessment and investigation of complaints by the case examiner groups.
The VN DC has a quasi-judicial role and procedure. The respondent veterinary nurse appears before the panel, will normally be legally represented and is subject to cross-examination; oral evidence is normally heard from witnesses; a legal assessor advises on points of law; and the committee retires to consider its findings and decisions in private. Hearings take place in central London, normally with three members of the committee present. The aim is to ensure that all members sit a similar number of days each year. They are expected to be able to sit for up to seven days a year if required. Hearings can be of short duration (one or two days) or longer (two or more weeks). Often, documents are provided in advance of a hearing and the members hearing the case are expected to read them before the hearing begins.

C) Advertisement

Please see the following page.
Members of the Preliminary Investigation and Disciplinary Committees

This is an important opportunity to support the Royal College of Veterinary Surgeons (RCVS) in its regulation of the veterinary professions. We safeguard the interests of the public and animals by ensuring that only properly qualified people are registered as veterinary surgeons and veterinary nurses and by supervising their professional conduct.

We are looking to appoint new members to the Preliminary Investigation and Disciplinary Committees, and to the Veterinary Nurse Preliminary Investigation and Disciplinary Committees, which consider cases of alleged professional misconduct. The appointments will take effect from July 2015. Veterinary surgeons (including practising or recently retired clinicians), veterinary nurses and lay persons are needed to serve on the committees. Members of the RCVS Council or of the Veterinary Nurses’ Council will not be appointed, but existing members of either Council may apply on the basis that they will stand down if appointed to one of the committees.

All committee members must:
- be committed to the seven principles of public life;
- understand the importance of maintaining public confidence in the regulation of the veterinary professions;
- be able to grasp detail and contribute to objective decision-making by exercising sound judgment;
- be able to establish and maintain excellent working relationships with a changing group of colleagues from a range of backgrounds and experiences;
- have good oral communication skills; and
- be able to manage time effectively.

Remuneration: Loss of earnings is set at a maximum of £310.00 per day and expenses will be covered for these roles.

Closing date: 1700hrs on Monday 16 February 2015

Interviews: Thewlis Graham Associates, our recruitment advisers, will interview candidates between 13 and 20 March 2015. The independent Selection Committee, appointed by the RCVS, will interview shortlisted candidates between 13 and 23 April 2015.

For further information and details of how to apply please visit www.thewlisgraham.com/rcvs. For a confidential discussion please contact our recruitment advisers, Thewlis Graham Associates on +44 (0)20 7850 4781.

T: +44 (0) 20 7850 4781   E: enquiries@thewlisgraham.com
Thewlis Graham Associates, Portland House, Bressenden Place, London SW1E 5RS
W: www.thewlisgraham.com
D) Person specification

It is proposed to make the following appointments with effect from 1 July 2015:

**PIC:** three veterinary surgeons;

**DC:** three lay members and four veterinary surgeons;

**VN PIC:** one lay person, one veterinary nurse and one veterinary surgeon.

In addition, it is proposed to identify candidates who can be appointed to any of the four committees, including the VN DC, if casual vacancies arise after 1 July 2015. If the selection process determines that there are more suitable candidates available than are needed for service on the committees from July 2015 and July 2016, the names of some of them will be held in reserve. If a vacancy arises later, a suitable reserve candidate may be invited to fill it (but will of course be free to decline).

The normal term of office will be four years, with a maximum of two terms.

Veterinary surgeons and veterinary nurses must be currently registered. Lay persons must never have been veterinary surgeons or registered or listed veterinary nurses and must not be qualified to be registered as such. All committee members must:

- be committed to the seven principles of public life (see annex A);
- understand the importance of maintaining public confidence in the regulation of the veterinary professions;
- be able to grasp detail and contribute to objective decision-making by exercising sound judgment;
- be able to establish and maintain excellent working relationships with a changing group of colleagues from a range of backgrounds and experiences;
- have good oral communication skills; and
- be able to manage time effectively.

Appointments will be made on the basis of merit. In choosing between candidates of equal merit regard may also be had to the desirability of committee members having collectively a range of experience. In particular, it will be advantageous if the veterinary members include some who are engaged in or recently retired from clinical practice. It is also helpful if the members of PIC and the VN PIC include clinicians who between them are familiar with the main areas of practice (small animals, farm animals and horses).
E) Conflicts of interest

Committee members will be required to declare any relevant business interests, positions of authority or other connections with organisations relevant to the business of the Royal College of Veterinary Surgeons and any other matters which could give rise to a conflict of interest.

Members of the RCVS Council or of the Veterinary Nurses' Council are eligible to apply for appointment and will be considered on the same basis as other applicants. If successful they will need to resign from the Council or from the Veterinary Nurses' Council before being appointed.

There is no bar upon a person who has served on one of the four committees applying to be appointed to any of them, but a former member of PIC or of the VN PIC will only be considered for appointment to DC or the VN DC after a break of three years.

Candidates who hold office in, or are employed by, organisations which represent the interests of the veterinary profession, or provide indemnity insurance for veterinary surgeons, may also be required to withdraw from such offices or employment if offered appointment to one of the committees. Any such office or employment should be declared at the outset. Candidates should also be aware that, if appointed to any of the committees, they would be expected to refrain from becoming involved in their private capacity in investigating or acting as expert witnesses in relation to any matter that might potentially come before one of the committees.

F) Fitness to be a member of one of the committees

Members of PIC and DC hold office subject to satisfying certain conditions, and the same rules will be applied to members of the VN PIC. Factors which will affect fitness to be a committee member include, but are not limited to:

- criminal convictions or outstanding criminal charges;
- a finding of impaired fitness to practise by any regulatory body;
- disqualification from a profession or as a company director; and
- bankruptcy.

The full conditions which apply to service as a member of PIC or DC are set out in an RCVS protocol, the relevant provisions of which are at annex B below. Applicants must disclose full details if any of the matters mentioned in the draft bye-laws apply to them. The protocol does not apply, formally speaking, to the VN PIC and DC, but the same rules will be followed.

Veterinary surgeons and veterinary nurses who seek appointment should be aware that, if they are selected for interview, information held by the RCVS on any past complaints against them which have been referred to PIC or DC, and any current complaints, will be disclosed to the Selection Committee. Any information disclosed in this way will be copied to the candidate in question.
G) Terms and conditions of office

Committee members will be office holders, not employed by the RCVS. They will be entitled to a financial loss allowance (if applicable) based on the number of days or half days spent on College business. The allowance covers actual earnings lost up to a maximum daily rate of, currently, £310 for veterinary surgeons and lay persons and £155 for veterinary nurses. An additional day’s financial loss allowance will be reclaimable for preparation work for each PIC meeting. There is no stationery/computer consumables allowance.

Listed DC hearings can be adjourned at short notice, but members entitled to claim financial loss allowance may receive a compensatory loss of earnings payment if a hearing is cancelled with less than five working days’ notice.

Committee members will be eligible to claim reimbursement of overnight subsistence of up to £200 per night and first class rail fare, economy air fare or motor mileage.

The limits for reimbursement of financial loss and travelling expenses are set by the RCVS Council and subject to review from time to time.

All committee members will be required to comply with arrangements for appraisal of their performance plus attend two-day annual training (post appointment) and any necessary ad hoc training. There will be additional one-day training for Chairmen and Vice-Chairmen. Training dates to be advised.
H) Selection process & timeline

Members will be appointed to serve on one specific committee. Applicants should indicate whether they wish to be considered for appointment to PIC, DC or the VN PIC or considered for all three committees. Applicants who wish to be considered as possible reserves for appointment to the VN DC later should also indicate this.

Thewlis Graham Associates are managing the recruitment process and will produce a longlist of candidates, interviewing as necessary. The selection screening will be evidence led, assessed against the competencies and experience you describe in your application and in your CV. In assessing applications from veterinary surgeons Thewlis Graham Associates will be assisted by Stephen Ware MRCVS as a veterinary adviser. An independent Selection Committee appointed by the RCVS will review the longlist, interview shortlisted candidates and make final recommendations. The Selection Committee outcomes will be subject to approval by, or on behalf of, the Council following the taking up of references.

The timetable is as follows:

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<tr>
<th>Timeline</th>
<th>Activity</th>
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<tr>
<td>16 February 2015</td>
<td>Closing date for applications</td>
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<tr>
<td>February/March 2015</td>
<td>Thewlis Graham Associates start screening and interviewing of interested candidates</td>
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<tr>
<td>End March 2015</td>
<td>Thewlis Graham Associates submits longlist of potential candidates and Selection Committee decides shortlist</td>
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<tr>
<td>13 - 23 April 2015</td>
<td>Selection Committee interviews</td>
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<tr>
<td>27/28 April 2015</td>
<td>Provisionally selected candidates contacted and references taken up</td>
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<tr>
<td>April/May 2015</td>
<td>Feedback to unsuccessful candidates</td>
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<tr>
<td>12 May 2015</td>
<td>PIC Induction Training</td>
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<tr>
<td>15 May 2015</td>
<td>DC Induction Training</td>
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<tr>
<td>June 2015</td>
<td>Formal appointments made</td>
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<tr>
<td>16/17 July 2015</td>
<td>PIC Annual Training</td>
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<tr>
<td>To be advised</td>
<td>DC Annual Training</td>
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The Selection Committee will consist of Sir Michael Buckley, former Parliamentary and Health Service Ombudsman and former lay member of the General Medical Council; Mrs Susan Pyper, former Chairman of NHS Trusts and DEFRA Advisory Committee, former lay member of RCVS Preliminary Investigation Committee and Lord-Lieutenant of West Sussex; and Brigadier Paul Jepson, Veterinary surgeon, retired Army officer and charity Chief Executive and past President, British Equine Veterinary Association.

Candidates who wish to raise queries should contact Thewlis Graham Associates and not approach a member of the Selection Committee. Any candidate who seeks to influence the Selection Committee before the interviews take place is liable to be disqualified.

I) Application guidance notes

To apply you will need to download the Candidate Application Form which is available from the Thewlis Graham Associates website: www.thewlisgraham.com

In the application form you will be asked to:

- describe your competencies and experience relevant to these roles;
- indicate which committee or committees you wish to be considered for;
- name two referees;
- confirm that:
  - you are resident in the UK
  - as a veterinary surgeon or veterinary nurse you are currently registered
  - as a lay person you have never been a veterinary surgeon and are not qualified to be so registered
  - you satisfy the conditions as to fitness to be a member of one of the committees.

We recommend that you use a standard desk-top or laptop computer for the actual application process. Although it is possible to complete the application form on most tablets or smart-phones, iPads or iPhones do not allow the uploading of Word documents and so there may be difficulties uploading the CV and Application Form into the candidate management system using these devices. If you have any difficulties please contact us at enquires@thewlisgraham.com

Once you have completed the application form you will need to upload it and your CV to a candidate management system hosted by Genius Consultancy. Click on the 'Apply Online' button on the Thewlis Graham Associates website: www.thewlisgraham.com. You will be redirected to the candidate management system and asked to set up a user login, using the same email address that you have put on the application form. This will also enable you to revisit the site later to check on the progress of your application."
When in the candidate management system you will see that on the left hand side of the screen there is a ‘Progress Tracker’ which enables you to check that you have completed the different stages of the application process.

As well as providing your personal details, you will be asked for information which is gathered for monitoring purposes. This monitoring information will **not** be used as part of the recruitment process and will remain anonymous. The RCVS and Thewlis Graham Associates are registered with the Information Commissioner in the UK as “data controllers” in accordance with the provisions of the Data Protection Act 1998.

Once you have finished entering the online information, you will be asked to tick a box, signing a declaration. You will then be invited to submit your application. Once you have completed the application process you will receive an email notification confirming that your application has been submitted. If you have not received this email within 2 days of submitting your application, please log back into the candidate management system and, using the ‘Progress Tracker’, check that you have completed all of the stages of the application process.

If all the stages are complete, and you have still not received a notification email, please contact Thewlis Graham Associates on +44 (0)207 850 4781 or at enquiries@thewlisgraham.com immediately.

We are committed to making the recruitment process as accessible as possible. If you have specific requirements at either the application or interview stage, or if you have any difficulties completing the form in the way described here, please do not hesitate to contact Thewlis Graham Associates.

If you believe that a mistake has been made in our selection process, or you are unhappy with the service you have received, then any concerns will be dealt with as quickly as possible. The first line of complaint should be through Thewlis Graham Associates and copied to registrar@rcvs.org.uk.
Annex A)

The seven principles of public life

Selflessness

Holders of public office should take decisions solely in terms of the public interest. They should not do so in order to gain financial or other material benefits for themselves, their family, or their friends.

Integrity

Holders of public office should not place themselves under any financial or other obligation to outside individuals or organizations that might influence them in the performance of their official duties.

Objectivity

In carrying out public business, including making public appointments, awarding contracts, or recommending individuals for rewards and benefits, holders of public office should make choices on merit.

Accountability

Holders of public office are accountable for their decisions and actions to the public and must submit themselves to whatever scrutiny is appropriate to their office.

Openness

Holders of public office should be as open as possible about all the decisions and actions that they take. They should give reasons for their decisions and restrict information only when the wider public interest clearly demands.

Honesty

Holders of public office have a duty to declare any private interests relating to their public duties and to take steps to resolve any conflicts arising in a way that protects the public interests.

Leadership

Holders of public office should promote and support these principles by leadership and example.
Annex B)

Extract from the Royal College of Veterinary Surgeons Preliminary Investigation Committee and Disciplinary Committee Protocol 2014

Conditions about fitness to be a member of a statutory committee

9. Members of the committees will hold office subject to satisfying the following conditions:-

(a) they must at no time have been convicted of an offence involving dishonesty or deception in the United Kingdom, or in relation to the welfare of animals, or where the final outcome of the proceedings was a sentence of imprisonment or detention, the conviction not being a spent conviction;

(b) they must at no time have been removed from the office of charity trustee or trustee for a charity by reason of any misconduct or mismanagement in the administration of the charity for which the person was responsible or to which the person was privy, or which the person contributed to or facilitated by their conduct;

(c) they must at no time have been removed from office as the chair, member, convenor or director of any public body on the grounds that it was not in the interests of, or conducive to the good management of, that body that the person should continue to hold that office;

(d) they must at no time have been adjudged bankrupt or had sequestration of their estate awarded, the person not having been discharged;

(e) they must not be the subject of a bankruptcy restrictions order or an interim bankruptcy restrictions order;

(f) they must at no time have made a composition or arrangement with, or granted a trust deed for, their creditors, not having been discharged in respect of it;

(g) they must not be disqualified from being a company director;

(h) they must not be included in a barred list under statutory provisions for the safeguarding of vulnerable groups;

(i) they must at no time have been subject to any investigation or proceedings concerning fitness to practise by any licensing body, if the final outcome of the investigation or proceedings was suspension from a register held by the licensing body (that suspension not having been terminated), or erasure from such a register, or a decision that had the effect of preventing practice of the profession licensed or regulated by the licensing body, or only allowing practice subject to conditions which were not lifted;
(j) they must at no time have had their name removed from the register of veterinary surgeons under section 16 of the Veterinary Surgeons Act 1966;

(k) they must not have been the subject of a direction under section 16 of the Veterinary Surgeons Act 1966 for their registration to be suspended, if that suspension remains in operation;

(l) they must not be, or have been, subject to any investigation or proceedings concerning fitness to practise by any licensing body or by the Council, or at any time convicted of an offence elsewhere than in the United Kingdom, if the Council is satisfied that their membership of the committee would in view of that investigation or those proceedings or that conviction be liable to undermine public confidence in the regulation of the veterinary profession;

(m) their attendance at meetings of the committee must not have fallen below a minimum level of attendance acceptable to the Council;

(n) they must undertake any education or training required by the Council and comply with any arrangements as to appraisal of their performance as committee members which the Council may require;

(o) they must not be unable to perform their duties as committee members because of adverse physical or mental health.

10. The Council may remove from office any member of a statutory committee if satisfied that they do not comply with one or more of the conditions mentioned above, or that their membership of the committee would for any other reason be liable to undermine public confidence in the regulation of the veterinary profession.

11. Before removing from office a member of a statutory committee, the Council will set up a panel to advise it on the matter and will have regard to the advice of that panel. The panel will not include members of the Council.