



European College of Veterinary Surgeons

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ECVS Constitution

Article I: NAME

The name of this organisation shall be the EUROPEAN COLLEGE OF VETERINARY SURGEONS, hereinafter referred to as "the College".

Article II: INCORPORATION

The College shall be incorporated under the laws of Switzerland as a not-for-profit educational association.

Article III: MISSION

The mission of the College is to contribute significantly to the maintenance and enhancement of the quality of European Veterinary Specialists in Veterinary Surgery across all European countries at the highest possible level.

Article IV: OBJECTIVES

The primary objectives of the College shall be the promotion of study, research and practice of veterinary surgery in Europe, and increase the competency of those who practise in this field by:

- a) The development of graduate teaching programmes in veterinary surgery with particular reference to the resident training system as a prerequisite to become a specialist in the speciality of veterinary surgery.
- b) The establishment of an agency to qualify members of the veterinary profession as specialists in surgery by guaranteeing and maintaining the highest level of specialisation in veterinary surgery, according to European Qualifications Framework (EQF) level 8.
- c) The encouragement of its members to pursue original investigations and to contribute to the veterinary literature.
- d) The definition and description of the specialty disciplines in surgical science.

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- e) The development and supervision of continuing education programmes for veterinarians interested in surgery.
 - f) The supervision of the professional activities of its members.
 - g) The promotion of co-operation with national and international veterinary associations.
 - h) The recognition of individuals, both members and non-members of the College, who have promoted veterinary surgery by either achieving individual distinction in surgery, or working on behalf of the College.

Article V: MEMBERSHIP

The members of the College shall be the following:

- a) Certified Diplomates
- b) Non-certified Diplomates
- c) Retired Diplomates

Section 1 MEMBERSHIP CRITERIA

In order to become a member of the College an individual must:

- a) Have a satisfactory ethical standing in the profession and practise scientific, evidence-based veterinary medicine, which complies with animal welfare legislation.
- b) Be a graduate of a veterinary college of a European country, unless relieved of this obligation by the Board of Regents and
- c) Be licensed to practise in a European country unless relieved of this obligation by the Board of Regents and
- d) Have devoted a minimum of four years after graduation from veterinary school to special training and experience in veterinary surgery. The training programme should meet the requirements of the College as described in the Training Brochure and
- e) Have successfully passed the qualifying examination of the European College of Veterinary Surgeons and be certified by the Board of Regents of the European College. The criteria for certifying members shall be specified in the Training Brochure and Examination Guidelines of the College, in line with the Policies and Procedures of the EBVS.

Section 2: DESIGNATION of MEMBERS AS DIPLOMATES; CERTIFIED AND NON-CERTIFIED STATUS

Each individual elected to membership of the College shall be designated as a Diplomat of the European College of Veterinary Surgeons, and shall be authorised to use the designation of Diplomat of the European College of Veterinary Surgeons, "Dip. ECVS" or "Dipl. ECVS". Diplomates shall be regarded as either certified or non-certified. Certified status is required in order for a Diplomat

- a) to style himself or herself as EBVS European Specialist in Small Animal / Equine / Large Animal Surgery as approved by the European Board of Veterinary Specialisation (EBVS) and/or
- b) to be able to act as a supervisor in resident training programmes.

Section 3: RECERTIFICATION AND MAINTAINING CERTIFIED DIPLOMATE STATUS

At the point of election to membership of the College, a Diplomat shall be deemed to have Certified Status. In order to maintain this Certified Status, every five years each Diplomat shall submit a re-certification application for consideration by the Re-certification Committee and subsequent approval by the Board of Regents. Any Diplomat may have his/her Certified Status removed or suspended for failure to satisfy the re-certification criteria.

Section 4. MEMBERSHIP FEES

Each Diplomat shall be required to pay an annual membership fee.

Retired Diplomates who have attained 65 years of age are not required to pay a fee.

Section 5: EXPULSION OF MEMBERS FROM THE COLLEGE

Any Diplomat may be expelled or suspended from membership of the College

- a) for non-professional or unethical conduct or for any other action deemed to be contrary to the best interests and objectives of the College or
- b) for non-payment of the annual membership fee.

For a) such decisions shall only be made following an investigation as described in the ECVS Book of Procedures (Appeals and Complaints) and ratified by a unanimous vote of the Board of Regents. Such decisions may be appealed as

described in the ECVS Book of Procedures (Appeals and Complaints). The outcome shall be reported to the General Assembly at the Annual Business Meeting. The details of the investigation will not be reported to the General Assembly.

For b) such decisions shall only be made following all efforts to contact the Diplomate and attempts to confirm whether he/she wishes to retire, suspend membership or continue to be a current member of the College. The outcome may be reported to the General Assembly at the Annual Business Meeting once all avenues have been fully explored.

Until the expulsion is final according to the procedures described above, the member shall remain bound by his/her obligations as a member of the College; he/she may not however exercise any of the rights provided for in this Constitution.

Article VI: EXAMINATION OF CANDIDATES FOR MEMBERSHIP

Section 1: The Board of Regents shall function as the Examining Board. In this capacity it shall:

- a) Confirm the applicant's eligibility for membership according to the criteria set out in Article V section 1 above.
- b) Solicit letters of recommendation from the Resident's supervisor(s) for those applicants who have completed an authorized resident training programme. These letters should be explicit as to the candidate's proficiency as a surgeon.
- c) Conduct a comprehensive examination on the application of basic medical science and surgical principles to all body systems.

Section 2: A Credentials Committee and an Examination Committee shall be appointed to assist the Board of Regents in the performance of these functions.

Article VII: FINANCES

The Treasurer administers the funds of the College on behalf of and at the direction of the Board of Regents. The College is run as a not-for-profit organisation. Income surplus to all expenditures and liabilities shall be securely invested on behalf of the College and held in reserve for future contingencies.

The College's operating expenses and liabilities are paid entirely from its own funds, which are generated from the following income sources (not necessarily exclusive):

- a) Annual membership fees.
The fee for each Diplomate shall be determined by the General Assembly and is payable annually. See article V section 4 above.
- b) Donations and sponsorship, e.g. from companies and international organisations.
- c) Income from educational and scientific meetings organised by the College.

The College's sole financial responsibility is the care of its own funds and their use in College business. Individual Diplomates shall have no personal responsibility for liabilities of the College.

Article VIII: BODIES OF THE ASSOCIATION

- a) General Assembly
- b) Board of Regents
- c) Auditors

Article IX: GENERAL ASSEMBLY (Annual Business Meeting of the College)

Section 1: The College shall meet annually as a General Assembly of its members at an Annual Business Meeting at such time and place as designated at the preceding meeting. It is the duty of every member to be present at the Annual Business Meeting.

Section 2: The General Assembly is the senior legislative body of the College and has the following duties:

- a) Determining and updating the Constitution.
- b) Election of the Regents and Auditors. A new President Elect shall be elected annually. The Executive Secretary and Treasurer shall each be elected for a three-year term, but may be re-elected for one further term. Professional auditors shall be elected for a three-year term, but may be re-elected.
- c) The election of the Regents shall be by ballot as described in Article XVI. The newly elected Regents shall be installed in office at the Annual Business Meeting.
- d) Action on the auditors' report.
- e) Formal approval of the business conducted by the Board of Regents during the preceding year.

- f) Action on business presented by the Board of Regents, or as required by the Constitution.
- g) Determination of membership fees for the following year.
- h) Expulsion of member Diplomates.

Section 3: A quorum shall consist of one quarter of the voting members of the College.

Section 4: Each Diplomate has the right to vote. He/she has to be present at the Annual Business Meeting to do so. Each Diplomate has one (1) vote. Ballots may be arranged at the discretion of the Board of Regents under special circumstances.

Section 5: All matters to be decided by vote of the General Assembly, unless otherwise specified elsewhere in the Constitution, shall be determined by the absolute majority vote.

Section 6: The language of correspondence, negotiations and examinations shall be English (GB).

Article X: BOARD OF REGENTS

Section 1: The Board of Regents shall consist of the Chair of the Board of Regents, the President, the President Elect, the Executive Secretary, the Treasurer, the Operations Manager and six Regents. As far as is possible in the best interests of the College, the Board of Regents should have a balanced representation of members from the various European nations, of small and large animal surgeons, and of the academic and practice arms of the profession. Regents should have previous College committee experience.

The term of office of the Chair of Regents, the President and the President Elect is each for one year. They are registered at the Register of Companies. They hold an honorary post and only get reimbursed for their reasonable expenses.

The term of office of the Executive Secretary, and the Treasurer is each for three years. They can be re-elected for one further term and are registered at the Register of Companies.

The Operations Manager is appointed by the Board of Regents and is registered at the Register of Companies.

The six Regents are elected for terms of three years each. Generally two Regents are elected every year. A Regent may be re-elected for one further three-year term.

Section 2: The Board of Regents shall be the executive body of the College and shall consider all the business and policies pertaining to the affairs of the College. It, or its designated Committees, shall receive all applications, conduct examinations and make recommendations for elections of membership of the College. It shall consider and act upon charges against Diplomates for alleged offences against the constitutional requirements and objectives of the College, or charges of unprofessional conduct, and shall have the authority to recommend the expulsion of a Diplomat for grievous offences. It shall recommend new Regents to the membership, appoint standing Committees, select the time and place of meetings and determine the fees for examinations, membership and other activities requiring fee income.

The Board of Regents shall direct the management of funds held by the College. A meeting of the Board of Regents shall be held immediately before the Annual Business Meeting of the College. There shall be at least one more scheduled meeting of the Board of Regents each year. This shall be determined and announced at the time of the Annual Business Meeting of the College. Special meetings may be called at any time by the Chair of the Board of Regents and shall be called by him/her at the written request of not less than six members of the Board of Regents. Not less than 21 days notice of the time and place of any special meeting shall be given by email, regular mail, telephone or telefax, addressed to each Regent at his/her address as it appears on the books of the College.

Six members of the Board with voting rights shall constitute a quorum for the transaction of any business, which may come before the meeting. In the event of a tied vote, the Chair of the Board shall have the casting vote.

Section 3: Vacancies occurring on the Board shall be filled by election of a member at the next Annual Business Meeting. Any member elected to fill a vacancy shall hold the office until expiration of the term in which the vacancy occurred.

Section 4: The immediate Past President of the College shall be the CHAIR OF THE BOARD OF REGENTS. The term of office is one year. He/she shall make recommendations to the Board of Regents regarding appointment to all the standing Committees of the College. The Chair shall oversee the conduct of all business of the College during his/her term of office.

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- Section 5: The PRESIDENT shall preside at the Annual Business Meeting of the College, preserve order, regulate debates, appoint Committees not otherwise provided for, announce results of elections and perform all other duties legitimately appertaining to his/her office. The President of the College shall be a member of the Board of Regents, and Chair of the Fiscal Committee.
- Section 6: The PRESIDENT ELECT shall succeed to the Presidency one year after the Annual Business Meeting at which he/she was elected. He/she shall perform the duties of the President in his/her absence or inability to serve. The President Elect shall be a standing member of the Programme Committee for the Annual Meeting of the College. He/she shall be a member of the Board of Regents.
- Section 7: The EXECUTIVE SECRETARY shall be a member of the Board of Regents and is registered at the Register of Companies. The term of office is three years, but he/she may be re-elected for one further term. He/she shall attend to the correspondence of the College and the Board of Regents; oversee notification of members of the Board of Regents and new members of their election; and assist in keeping the minutes of the College and the Board of Regents in books which shall be the property of the College, and accessible at all reasonable times and places. He/she shall oversee the certification of satisfactory completion of all residency and credentials requirements of all candidates for examination for membership. He/she shall send invitations and programmes to guests invited to attend the Annual Meeting at the request of members. He/she shall conduct such routine executive tasks as may be required by the Board of Regents and be a member of the Fiscal Committee.
- Section 8: The TREASURER shall be a member of the Board of Regents and the Fiscal Committee. The term of office is three years, but he/she may be re-elected for one further term. He/she is registered at the Register of Companies. He/she shall oversee the financial accounts prepared by the Operations Manager upon order of the Board of Regents. He/she shall work with the Operations Manager to keep full and accurate books of account, containing a record of all monies received and expended, which books shall be the property of the College and open to the inspection of the authorized officials at all reasonable times and places. He/she shall oversee collection of application and examination fees, and membership fees, as promptly as possible, and report all members in arrears. He/she shall submit a written financial report to the Board of Regents annually. A summary of this report shall be submitted to the General Assembly of the College.

Section 9: The OPERATIONS MANAGER is registered at the Register of Companies. He/she shall assist the Executive Secretary in the preparation of the minutes. He/she shall approve and pay all bills for expenses of the College. He/she shall keep the books of monies paid upon order of the Board of Regents. He/she shall keep full and accurate books of account, which are the property of the College, containing a record of all monies received and expended. He/she shall ensure that these records are available for inspection by authorized officials as and when required. He/she shall collect application, examination and membership fees, as promptly as possible, and report all members in arrears. He/she shall assist the Treasurer in submitting a written financial report to the Board of Regents annually. A summary of this report shall be submitted to the General Assembly of the College. He/she shall be the custodian of the records of attendance at all meetings of the College of members and guests in special registers for each. He/she shall conduct such routine tasks as may be required by the Board of Regents. He/she shall be a non-voting member of the Board of Regents.

Article XI: COMMITTEES

The Board will appoint members, and determine their term of appointment, to the following committees:

Section 1: The CREDENTIALS COMMITTEE:

This Committee shall evaluate all applications from candidates applying to sit the examination of the College and recommend qualified candidates to the Board of Regents. It shall also submit a list of applicants who do not qualify, with reasons for their rejection.

Additionally this Committee shall evaluate residents and alternate trainees and residents in training and advise them on fulfilling the requirements in the Training Brochure. It shall also evaluate the credentials of those ACVS Diplomates wishing to become ECVS Diplomates and advise the Board of Regents of their findings.

This Committee shall also evaluate all residency training programmes.

Section 2: The EXAMINATION COMMITTEE:

This Committee shall annually prepare and administer a qualifying examination to candidates approved by the Board of Regents. It shall work under the direction of, and report its findings to, the Board of Regents.

Section 3: The FISCAL COMMITTEE:

This Committee shall consist of the President, the Treasurer, the Chair of the Board, the Operations Manager and the Executive Secretary. It shall prepare an annual budget for the College, review the Treasurer's books for the annual audit and advise the Board of Regents on the financial affairs of the College with the help of the professional auditors and the College office.

Section 4: The PROGRAMME COMMITTEE:

This Committee will be responsible for the development of the SA and LA scientific programmes of the annual Congress and submit a speakers' list for final approval by the Board of Regents.

Section 5: The RE-CERTIFICATION COMMITTEE:

This Committee shall evaluate the submissions of all Diplomates applying for re-certification by the College and recommend qualified candidates to the Board of Regents. It shall also submit a list of Diplomates who did not satisfy the requirements for re-certification, with reasons for their rejection.

Section 6: The RESEARCH COMMITTEE:

This committee shall receive and evaluate all requests for College funds, allocated to "Research Grants and Awards" and shall make recommendations to the Board of Regents regarding distribution of funding.

Section 7: The APPEALS COMMITTEE:

This Committee will consider and evaluate appeals made by Resident candidates against a decision on their credentials application or against their results in an examination. The Committee will evaluate such appeals and report in writing to the Board of Regents on their merit, with recommendations as to the action to be taken.

The Committee will also consider and evaluate appeals against a decision made following a Complaints Procedure. The Committee will decide on such appeals and report in writing to the Executive Secretary

on their merit. It is not the duty of the Appeals Committee to consider requests for the discretionary relaxing of procedures, rules, regulations or College policy in individual cases. Nor is it its duty to make recommendations as to such. Its function is to consider Appeals that contend that the procedures, rules or regulations have been applied or interpreted incorrectly or unfairly leading to a wrong or unjustifiable decision or result.

Article XII: ANNUAL SCIENTIFIC MEETING

The Scientific Meeting of the College will be held annually, the host city and the dates of the meeting being decided by the Board of Regents. Local organizers in cooperation with the Operations Manager suggest congress location and social functions.

The scientific programme will consist of a General session with invited speakers, an Open Communication session, a Resident Forum and a Poster session. Pre-Congress courses and Wetlabs may also be organized.

The format of a meeting may be changed by the Board of Regents.

The Programme Committee will present a proposal for the scientific programme, with subjects for sessions, topics for lectures and names of speakers, for final decision by the Board of Regents.

Abstracts for the open communication, Resident forum and poster sessions will be evaluated by the Programme Committee.

Article XIII: AWARDS

In support of the College's objective to recognise individual contributions to veterinary surgery, the Board of Regents will, from time to time, recommend the making of personal awards. These need to be approved by a two-thirds majority at the Annual Business Meeting. There are two categories, described as follows:

Outstanding Career Achievement

The ECVS Award for Outstanding Career Achievement is the most prestigious of the College's honours. It was established by the Board of Regents to recognise ECVS Diplomates who have distinguished themselves in the pursuit of surgery by making significant contributions to the development of surgical techniques and methodology, and disseminating knowledge to colleagues, residents and students. This award will consist of a plaque and will be bestowed at the Annual Business Meeting.

Distinguished Service Award

Distinguished Service Award candidates shall be nominated by the membership and elected by the Board of Regents. The nominees must have demonstrated exceptional service to the ECVS.

Article XIV: AUDITORS

Section 1: Professional auditors are elected by the General Assembly at the Annual Business Meeting for a three-year term and may be re-elected. The auditors shall prepare an annual report of the College finances.

Section 2: The Treasurer evaluates the report of the auditors and presents his/her assessment to the General Assembly.

Section 3: The College is not subject to any legal auditing.

Article XV: DISSOLUTION OF THE COLLEGE

In the case of dissolution of the College, all assets shall be expended for educational purposes and shall be transferred to an institution with equal or similar objectives. There will not be any distribution of the assets among members, beyond legitimate expenses remaining to be claimed.

Article XVI: AMENDMENTS AND VOTING PROCEDURE

Section 1: The CONSTITUTION may be amended by ballot. Proposed amendments must be submitted in writing to the Executive Secretary for appropriate review by the Board of Regents. Proposed amendments shall be distributed to the entire voting membership at least 60 days prior to the Annual Business Meeting. Voting members shall return their ballots by the deadline indicated in the voting instructions. A two-thirds vote in favour of the proposed amendment, by eligible voting members returning valid ballot forms, is required for its approval.

Section 2: Ballots shall be sent from the College's office to the membership for a vote. The membership shall return their ballots to the College's office who will verify the validity of all votes and forward them to the Board for ratification at the Board meeting immediately before the Annual Business Meeting. The President will announce the results of voting at the Annual Business Meeting. In selected cases, where the results of

the voting have to be known urgently, the ballots are counted by the College's office and the results, after verification by the Board of Regents, sent out to the membership.

Section 3: Election of Regents will occur by electronic or other ballot. Ballots with all nominations listed will be distributed to the voting membership, at least 60 days prior to the Annual Business Meeting. Diplomates wishing to stand for election to the post of Regent should send their curriculum vitae, including ECVS committee experience, together with the names of their proposer and seconder to the Executive Secretary at least 90 days prior to the ballot. Voting members shall return their ballots by the deadline indicated in the voting instructions. The nominee receiving the most valid votes will be elected to the position and installed in office at the Annual Business Meeting. In the event of a tie for the most votes, a second ballot election between the tying nominees will be conducted. The Regent will be installed at the time the election results are validated.

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