



## European College of Veterinary Surgeons

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### ECVS ETHICAL GUIDELINES:

## Professional Conduct

### Professional and ethical conduct for ECVS Diplomates

Exemplary professional conduct upholds the dignity of the veterinary profession and all EBVS Diplomates. ECVS Diplomates must follow their relevant guide to professional conduct as mandated by their country / region of registration as a veterinarian.

In brief, Diplomates should be honest, fair, courteous, considerate, and compassionate. Diplomates should seek to ensure the health and welfare of animals committed to their care and to fulfil their professional responsibilities, by maintaining the following ethics, values and behaviours:

- professionalism
- compassionate care
- respect
- trust
- honesty
- leadership

**Diplomates and animals:** Diplomates must make animal health and welfare their first consideration when attending to animals, to relieve disease, suffering, or disability while minimising pain or fear. They must keep within their own area of competence seeking advice from other veterinarian and specialists where appropriate and must communicate with each other to ensure the health and welfare of the animal or group of animals. Diplomates must ensure that clinical governance forms part of their professional activities and should strive to improve their veterinary knowledge and skills, collaborating with other professionals in the quest for knowledge and professional development.

**Diplomates and clients:** Diplomates must be open and honest with clients and respect their needs and requirements providing independent and impartial advice and inform a client of any conflict of interest. They must take reasonable steps to address adverse physical or mental health or performance that could impair fitness to practise; or, that results in harm, or a risk of harm, to animal health or welfare, public health or the public interest. If Diplomates are concerned about a professional colleague's fitness to practise, they must take steps to ensure that animals and other colleagues are not put at risk and that the interests of the public are protected and must ensure that tasks are delegated only to those who have the appropriate competence and registration. Diplomates should protect the personal privacy of patients and clients and not reveal confidences unless required to by law or unless it becomes necessary to protect the health and welfare of other individuals or animals.

**Diplomates and the veterinary team:** Diplomates must work together with others in the veterinary team and business, to co-ordinate the care of animals and the delivery of services in a professional and ethical manner. Diplomates should not slander or injure the professional standing or reputation of other colleagues in a false or misleading manner. Diplomates having supervisory authority over another veterinarian should make reasonable efforts to ensure that the other veterinarian conforms to ethical principles as outlined in this document. Diplomates should treat all colleagues in their working environment with respect and professionalism and not engage in any physical, sexual, mental, coercive abuse of their colleagues or animals under their care.

**Diplomates and the public:** Diplomates must seek to ensure the protection of public health and animal health and welfare and must consider the impact of their actions on the environment. They must certify facts and opinions honestly and with due care and if promoting and advertising veterinary products and services, they must do so in a professional manner. Diplomates must not engage in any activity or behaviour that would be likely to bring the veterinary profession and ECVS into disrepute and should strive to enhance their image with respect to their colleagues, clients, other health professionals, and the general public. The responsibilities of the Diplomates extend beyond individual animals and clients to society in general and they are encouraged to make their knowledge available to their communities and to provide their services for activities that protect public health.