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International Veterinary Recruitment

Working in the UK

Making the decision to work in the United Kingdom can be a daunting prospect, but the VetRecruit team is here to ensure your move is as easy as possible and that you enjoy your time in UK veterinary practice. We have written this guide to explain the basic practical steps you need to take to begin work. We also suggest you read our 'UK Vet Profession' guide.

Royal College of Veterinary Surgeons Requirements

The Royal College of Veterinary Surgeons (RCVS) is solely responsible for the registration of veterinary surgeons in the United Kingdom. It is a legal requirement that all veterinary surgeons are registered and admitted to Membership of the Royal College of Veterinary Surgeons before engaging in any type of veterinary work in the United Kingdom.

In general the entitlement to be registered as a member of the RCVS is determined by the Veterinary Surgeons Act 1966 (which can be downloaded from the RCVS website, www.rcvs.org.uk). The Act provides that only those named on the RCVS Register may practise veterinary surgery in the United Kingdom and that they must have the requisite knowledge and skill to do so. Eligibility for registration is based either on having a recognised qualification or passing the RCVS statutory membership examination.

Qualifications (i.e. veterinary degrees) currently recognised are:

1. The degrees awarded by the six Veterinary Schools in the United Kingdom.
2. European Union qualifications listed in the Recognition Directive (78/1026/EEC): Austria, Belgium, Czech Republic, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Ireland, Italy, Lithuania, Luxembourg, The Netherlands, Norway, Portugal, Spain, Sweden and Switzerland.
3. Accession Countries: Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Poland, Slovakia and Slovenia.
4. Foreign and Commonwealth qualifications recognised by the RCVS Council for practice only within the United Kingdom: Australia, New Zealand, South Africa, USA, and Canada.

Nationality is not a factor in determining eligibility to be registered, except in relation to those with EU qualifications, who must be nationals of an EU member state.

If you have a veterinary qualification that is not recognised by the RCVS then you will need to complete the RCVS Statutory Membership Examination to ensure you meet the College's required standards. It is also mandatory for Statutory Membership Examination candidates to hold an English Language qualification (IELTS at Level 7). Details on how to enter for this examination can be found on the RCVS website.

Please note that the RCVS will not allow applicants to register unless they have a prior appointment. Applicants must therefore contact the Registration Department to arrange an appointment. Registration always takes place at 11.00am on Tuesday and Friday every week, subject to availability, however some days are not available for registration (see RCVS website for details). It is advisable to double-check any dates arranged nearer the time of intended

registration as dates that are currently available may be withdrawn or become fully booked. An appointment to register will only be granted once the RCVS is fully satisfied that all requirements for eligibility have been met and all necessary documentation has been provided. A national of an EU Member State holding a recognised EU veterinary qualification listed in the Directive wishing to become established in the United Kingdom should send to the RCVS photocopies of the following documents for verification of eligibility for registration:

1. A scheduled EU/EEA veterinary qualification, with a notarised English translation where necessary.
2. Proof of registration as a veterinary surgeon in a Member State (issued within the last three months), with a notarised English translation where necessary.
3. A Right of Establishment Certificate (certificate of good professional standing) from the competent authority of the Member State where he/she is currently practising (issued within the last three months), with a notarised English translation where necessary; or, in exceptional cases, an employment reference and an extract from the applicant's 'judicial record' (with a notarised English translation where necessary) may be acceptable as evidence of good character.
4. The relevant identifying pages from their passport or National Identity card.

Once registered, members are required to pay an annual fee to the Royal College; this fee varies depending on member status. Again, see the RCVS website for details. Members are required to abide by the RCVS Guide to Professional Conduct and are expected to complete an average of 35 hours Continued Professional Development (CPD) per year - this involves keeping abreast of new research findings, attending refresher courses and keeping a record of your ongoing learning in the veterinary field.

The RCVS contact details are:

Royal College of Veterinary Surgeons
Belgravia House
62/64 Horseferry Road
London
SW1P 2AF

Telephone: (00 44) 20 7202 0707

Facsimile: (00 44) 20 7222 2004

Email: registration@rcvs.org.uk

Hours of business: Monday to Friday, 9.15am-5.00pm

Please note that, whilst we have tried to make sure that all the information displayed here is current and correct, it is possible that there may be incorrect information or some items may be oversimplified. We therefore strongly recommend you visit the RCVS website (www.rcvs.org.uk) or contact the RCVS directly for more information. This information was last updated in July 2007.

Professional Indemnity Insurance

When working as a veterinary surgeon in the UK it is paramount that you are covered by an insurance policy to protect you in case of a client not being satisfied with a particular diagnosis or treatment and deciding to take legal action against you in order to claim compensation. According to the Royal College of Veterinary Surgeons Guide to Professional Conduct,

“veterinary surgeons must ensure that all their professional activities are covered by professional indemnity insurance or equivalent arrangements. Such cover may be held individually or through an employer.”

Hence, before starting any job you should ask whether the practice is insured against claims for professional negligence and third party claims and whether their policy will cover you. If you are not covered you must take out your own policy. There are different professional indemnity insurers on the market, one being the “Veterinary Defence Society” (www.veterinarydefencesociety.co.uk, telephone 0044(0)1565 652737). Some professional indemnity insurers may also help to defend any professional conduct complaints against you and may pay for legal representation.

UK Government Requirements

Once you have arrived in the UK you must complete a Government form called "Arrival in the United Kingdom" ("Form P86"). This can be obtained by calling Her Majesty's Revenue and Customs (HMRC, the UK Government Agency responsible for taxation) on 0845 900 0404 (00 44 845 900 0404 from outside the UK), or by visiting the HMRC website (www.hmrc.gov.uk).

When you start work, your employer will ask you to complete another HMRC form called "PAYE - notice of new employee" ("Form P46"). This allows HMRC to keep a record of your earnings. Your employer will usually arrange for any tax you owe to be automatically deducted from your pay, but if HMRC requires anything further of you they will contact you directly. This automatic payment of tax is called the PAYE (Pay As You Earn) scheme.

Applying for a National Insurance Number

A National Insurance (NI) number is a personal number used to record a person's NI contributions and credited contributions and is also needed when claiming benefits. By law you are required to apply for a NI number when you have started, or are about to start, work in the UK or when you are self-employed.

There are a number of checks you will have to go through when you apply for an NI number. You will have to contact the Department for Work and Pensions (www.dwp.gov.uk) or Jobcentre Plus (www.jobcentreplus.gov.uk or telephone 0044 (0) 845 600 0643 (8am - 6pm Monday to Friday)). Firstly they will make sure that you need an NI number and that you have not already got one. If you need one they will write to you and arrange an interview at a local JobCentre or social security office. The purpose of the interview is to check your identity and your right to work in the UK. You will be asked questions about who you are, why you want an NI number and about your right to work in the UK. The letter will explain what information, documents or evidence you will have to bring with you for the interview. Please note that photocopies are generally not accepted.

Types of evidence to prove your identity and right to work include:

- Passport/National Identity Card
- Birth certificate
- Marriage certificate
- Full driving licence
- Mortgage or rental agreement

- RCVS registration certificate

Employment documents:

- Payslip
- Letter from your employer
- Contract of employment

Evidence that you are self-employed:

- Invoices
- Letters from your clients
- Letters from your accountant

If you have recently arrived in the UK after living outside Europe, you must bring any travel documents you have. These include your passport or National Identity Card. Please note that this list is simply an example of evidence/documents you may need to provide, it is neither complete nor is it necessary to have all evidence listed ready at the time of the interview. As said earlier the letter you will receive arranging the interview will detail what evidence will be specifically needed. Once your application has been approved you will be given an NI number in writing as soon as possible; a card with your NI number details will be sent to you at a later date.

Opening a Bank Account in the UK

As in most countries, there are a several banks available in the UK where you can set up your account. Usually you just walk into one of the branch offices and arrange an appointment. They will tell you what documents you will need to bring with you to enable them to set your account up. Please note that requirements may differ from bank to bank. Types of evidence or documents that may be requested include:

- Passport
- National Identity Card
- Driving Licence
- Letter from your employer
- Your contract of employment
- Rental agreement
- Utility bills (e.g. water/electricity bills) with your name and UK address on them