



Your Ref: UGC/GEN/487/11(5)
Our Ref: JG/V003/06/13

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26th June 2013

Dear Professor Chin

**Reply to Revised Proposal of City U for the Establishment of a School of Veterinary
Medicine in Hong Kong**

Thank you for this opportunity to give comment on the proposal by City University to establish a veterinary school in Hong Kong. I apologise for not replying to all questions posed but welcome the opportunity to meet and discuss in more depth the implications of this proposal particularly from the animal welfare aspect.

The following is a brief reply to the general question of the demand and supply of veterinary surgeons in Hong Kong.

General Questions:

(a) What is the general view of your society towards setting up a veterinary school in Hong Kong?

In principle we are supportive of a veterinary school in Hong Kong. However, the provision of world class, high quality teaching and research is essential. Such a vet school would benefit the long term development of the veterinary profession and the local community in areas such as animal welfare, food safety and production/companion animal health.



(b) If the vet school was set up, approximately what number of annual graduates would be appropriate for Hong Kong? Should it aim to train practitioners for Hong Kong alone, the Pearl River delta, the Mainland as a whole or the Asia-Pacific region? And to what standard (regional or national) should the vet school be pitched out?

The actual number of appropriate graduates is a difficult question to answer as there is a lack of available statistics. We believe the HKVA is currently conducting a survey to canvas the veterinary profession to get an idea of local requirements.

The number would also be dependent on whether the school was purely servicing Hong Kong or the region. For Hong Kong alone a rough estimate would be around 30 students, increasing the scope to the Mainland or A-P region would obviously greatly increase the number (the limiting factor then would likely to be capacity of the school). For instance vet schools in the UK, Australia and US commonly graduate well over 100 students per year.

Hong Kong SAR (as Asia's World City) is uniquely situated to influence both the Mainland and A-P region as a whole, therefore a "gold standard" local vet school with international recognition would potentially have a major impact not just on Hong Kong but the rest of the region. Accepting students from China and the region should be its long-term if not immediate goal.

Demand and supply of vets in Hong Kong:

(c) Has your society conducted any manpower analysis on the veterinary profession in Hong Kong?

No.

(d) There are a very small number of vets (around 30) currently employed by the government each year while the remaining bulk are employed by private clinics or other relevant parties (such as Ocean Park, Hong Kong Jockey Club and your Society). From your Society's perspective, has there been any difficulty in employing vets in Hong Kong? Would it be possible if you can provide us with information on turnover rate and remuneration (with break down figures on entry level, median and salary range) of vets recruited by your Society in the past five years for our reference?

The main problem our Society has is in employing experienced veterinary surgeons (over 5-6 years qualified). This maybe that more experienced veterinary surgeons wish to pursue a partnership or setting up their own clinic which we cannot provide. We employ 23 veterinary surgeons of which 17 are full-time and 6 are either permanent part-time or locum staff. 4 of



these veterinary surgeons are local Hong Kong Chinese with the remainder coming from a variety of countries including UK, Australia, New Zealand, US and Europe. On average 2-5 veterinary surgeons will leave per year with the length of employment ranging from 1-2 years up to 20 years+.

Salaries range from \$33K for new graduates up to \$50-70K for senior veterinary surgeons in managerial roles (this includes a housing allowance of \$10-12K per month). Our full-time veterinary surgeons work 5 ½ days a week (from 8.45am-6pm) and have 22 days of annual leave per year plus all public holidays. Vets are also covered by the Society's health insurance, CPD leave is provided commensurate with years of service (2.5-5.5 days/year).

(e) Does your society see any need to review the existing vet registration mechanism administered by the VSB and Government in order to adjust the pool of potential vets to practice in Hong Kong?

Under the current system with no vet school it is difficult to consider reviewing the current mechanism for acceptance. If a vet school was established consideration could be given to restricting entry of overseas veterinary surgeons with the possibility of an entrance examination similar to US or UK examinations (another reason it is vital for any vet school to be of a high standard).

Please accept my apologies again for the limited response to your questions. I hope we will be able to be of more assistance to your survey during our meeting in July.

Yours sincerely

 DR. JANE GRAY

Mr. Sandy Macalister
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