

Participant Information Statement

Research Study: Evaluation of self-perceived competence in behavioural medicine of recent veterinary graduates

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1. What is this study about?

We're conducting a research study on competency in veterinary behavioural medicine. Behavioural problems are a frequent cause of concern for pet owners, and behavioural medicine is becoming increasingly recognised as a significant component of modern veterinary practice. However, little is known about how competent veterinarians at the start of their careers feel in this discipline, especially in the Australian context. We aim to find out how recent veterinary graduates in Australia perceive their level of competency in behavioural medicine, as well as determine factors which contribute to their perception. This will provide an insight into how the Australian veterinary curriculum may be improved to ensure students feel well-prepared for their first role in the profession. Taking part is optional.

Please read this sheet and ask about things that aren't clear or you want to know more about.

2. Who is running the study?

The researchers conducting this study are:

- Dr Ingrid van Gelderen, Associate Lecturer, Sydney School of Veterinary Science, Faculty of Science
- Ms Pei Lin Soo, DVM student, Sydney School of Veterinary Science, Faculty of Science

Student Declaration

Ms Pei Lin Soo is doing this study as part of their Doctor of Veterinary Medicine at The University of Sydney.

3. Who can take part in the study?

We are seeking recent veterinary graduates in Australia for the study. This includes graduating final-year veterinary students, and veterinarians with up to 3 years of experience in companion animal practice. These criteria have been put in place as the

study is focused specifically on veterinary professionals in the beginning stages of their career.

4. What will the study involve for me?

If you decide to participate in this study, you will be asked to answer a set of 11 questions via Qualtrics, an online secure University approved system. This anonymous survey will take no more than 5 minutes to complete, and your participation is completely voluntary.

The survey is divided into three main sections. The first section will ask for your background information, including the institution where you completed your veterinary medicine training, your current stage in your veterinary career, and whether you have completed further training in veterinary behaviour.

The second section will inquire about your view on whether the behaviour teachings in the veterinary curriculum has adequately prepared you for working in practice. This is followed by Likert scale questions, whereby you will be asked to indicate how competent you feel in various aspects of behavioural medicine on a 4-point scale from 'incompetent' to 'competent'.

Finally, the third section will ask about details on the behaviour teachings that you received as part of your veterinary curriculum, and the amount of exposure to behavioural cases that you get.

This survey is not linked to any existing records that may be or are held at the University (e.g. medical records, academic records, personal letters, photographic etc.).

There is no audio/video/photographs/other recording involved. The survey is provided only in English.

As this survey is anonymous, there is no opportunity to contact individual respondents to review information generated about them prior to publication.

5. Can I withdraw once I've started?

Participating in this study is optional and you do not have to take part.

Your decision will have no impact on your current or future relationship with the researchers or anyone else at The University of Sydney.

By submitting your survey, you are consenting to partake part in the study. You have the option to withdraw any time before submitting. Once your responses are submitted, we won't be able to tell which one is yours. This means you cannot withdraw after submitting the survey.

6. Are there any risks or costs?

Aside from giving up your time, we do not expect that there will be any risks or costs associated with participating in this study.

7. Are there any benefits?

There are no direct benefits for you as a participant in this study.

8. What will happen to information that is collected?

By giving your consent, you agree to us gathering information about you for this study.

Any identifiable information you share us will be securely stored and will only be disclosed with your consent unless we are legally required to release information. We plan to publish the findings of this study.

You will not be identifiable in these publications.

9. Will I be told the results of the study?

You have the right to hear the results of this study. This feedback will be in the form of a brief lay summary and will be communicated to you by contacting the researchers indicating that you would like to receive this information, and by providing your contact details. This feedback will be provided as a plain language summary.

10. What if I would like further information?

After reading this information, the researcher/s will be available to have further discussions with you and answer any questions you may have:

- Dr Ingrid van Gelderen, Associate Lecturer, Sydney School of Veterinary Science, Faculty of Science

11. What if I have a complaint or any concerns?

The ethical aspects of this study have been approved by the Human Research Ethics Committee (HREC) of The University of Sydney 2023/763 in accordance with the *National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Human Research (2007)*.

If you have any concerns about the study's procedures or would like to make a complaint to someone not involved in the study, please contact the University:

Human Ethics Manager
human.ethics@sydney.edu.au
+61 2 8627 8176

This information is for you to keep