

# **Policy for Applicants with Disabilities, Long-term Medical Conditions and Mitigating Circumstances**

## **6 Applicants with disabilities, long-term medical conditions and mitigating circumstances**

### **Declaration of disabilities and long-term medical conditions**

All applicants should declare any disability or long-term medical condition on their application so that the RVC is aware of the support required at the earliest opportunity. Applications are considered on academic grounds and against our published entry requirements; declaration of a disability or long-term medical condition on the application form will not have a detrimental impact on this process. If an applicant believes that their disability has had an impact on their ability to fulfil any part of the RVC's entry requirements, they should notify the Admissions Office of this, using the Mitigating Circumstances process detailed below, so that this can be considered during the assessment process.

### **Reasonable adjustments**

Applicants who may require adjustments to participate in the interview or selection process are encouraged to let the RVC know as early as possible. While applicants are prompted to declare needs when accepting their interview, earlier discussion enables more effective planning for all parties. Adjustments will be made, where appropriate and feasible, following discussion with the Admissions Office and, where relevant, the RVC Disability Officer. Please note that it may not be possible to implement adjustments on the day if no advance notice is given. For any other visit to the RVC, applicants should contact the event organiser to discuss any accessibility requirements.

Once on course, reasonable adjustments will, where possible, in conjunction with the Advice Centre to enable students to successfully complete their chosen course. Applicants who require adjustments and further support are encouraged to contact the Advice Centre to discuss these further.

### **Royal College of Veterinary Surgeons (RCVS) and Fitness to practise**

Graduation from the RVC's Veterinary Medicine and Veterinary Nursing degrees confers automatic membership of the RCVS, granting the legal right to practice as a veterinary surgeon or nurse in the UK. The RVC must ensure that all applicants can meet the professional standards required for these roles, as outlined by the RCVS. In cases where a disability or health condition affects a student's ability to undertake the course or meet the fitness to practice requirements, reasonable adjustments will be explored. However, if adjustments cannot ensure the applicant can meet the essential competencies and standards required for the course or practice, their application may not be successful.

All applications to the RVC will initially be considered on academic grounds. Any applicant who is successful at being selected for interview but that has declared a disability which could impact their ability to study and/or practise will then be contacted for further information and, where necessary, referred to either our Disability Advisor and/or our Occupational Health Advisor. In most cases it is hoped that a final decision can be reached ahead of the interview process but there may be occasions where it is necessary to invite the applicant to interview before a final decision has been determined.

Applicants to our Veterinary Medicine courses should refer to the [RCVS Fitness to Practise - A Guide for UK Veterinary Schools and Veterinary Students](#) and the [RCVS Day One Competences](#) as these outline essential competencies that a qualifying veterinarian must be able to undertake. They may also wish to read the HEOPS (Higher Education Occupational Practitioners) guidance on assessing [veterinary students fitness to train](#).

Applicants to our veterinary nursing courses should refer to the [RCVS Fitness to Practise: A Guide for UK Providers of Veterinary Nursing Education and Student Veterinary Nurses](#) and

the [RCVS Day One Competences for Veterinary Nurses](#) as these outline essential competencies that a qualifying veterinary nurse must be able to undertake.

### Mitigating/Extenuating Circumstances

Any applicant who feels that they have mitigating/extenuating circumstances which may have caused significant disruption or disadvantage to their education or exam performance is encouraged to notify us of these, so that we can consider these in the context of their application. Applicants who wish to make us aware of such circumstances should contact the Admissions Office to request access to our online mitigating circumstances form.

Applicants should note that applications are considered holistically against our published criteria and therefore the acceptance of mitigating circumstances does not guarantee that an application will progress to the next stage of the assessment process.

### What is a mitigating circumstance?

Mitigating circumstances are factors that are outside of an applicant's control and therefore they should:

- be something that the applicant could not reasonably expect ('unforeseen')
- be out of the applicants control and something they were not able to prevent
- be time specific
- have had a significant and detrimental effect on the applicants' performance, assessment or ability to fulfil a deadline

Whilst there is not a definitive list, examples of the types of extenuating circumstances we would encourage applicants to tell us about are:

- The onset or worsening of a serious or chronic mental or physical health condition
- Significant adverse personal/family circumstances and/or the loss of a close relative/significant other
- Significant disruption to educational provision at school/college
- Being the victim of a serious crime or significant involvement in an on-going court case
- A natural disaster, act of terror or conflict affecting the applicant's school/college, home, or close family

We are not normally able to consider circumstance such as:

- A managed disability or long-term health condition where reasonable adjustments have already been made by the school or examining body
- Not being aware of our entry requirements and therefore not meeting specific requirements or missing specific deadlines
- Short-term illness or other events during the examination period for which mitigation has already been given by the exam board
- Poor time management and organisation, including last minute technical issues and problems relating to deadlines or failure to inform yourself of assessment and examination guidelines
- Anticipated disruptions such as holidays, moving house or work commitments

### Externally awarded examinations

Where mitigating circumstances relate to examinations, applicants should ensure that the relevant exam board is notified prior to the issue of results and that their relevant mitigating circumstance procedures have been followed.

The RVC expects that the relevant exam board has taken account of mitigating/extenuating circumstances and therefore that appropriate adjustments have been made and are reflected

in the results. We will therefore apply limited mitigation in these circumstances.

### Deadlines to submit mitigating circumstances

The deadlines for submitting the form throughout the application process are as follows:

- **For consideration at the initial assessment stage (prior to invitation to interview for Veterinary Medicine and Veterinary Nursing applicants):** within two weeks of the deadline for applications.
- **For consideration in relation to submission of the supplementary application form:** no later than 72 hours after the deadline has passed.
- **For consideration in relation to interview performance:** one week after the date of your interview.
- **For consideration in relation to qualification/exam results:** by 1st July in the year your results are released

Applicants must contact us immediately at [myapplication@rvc.ac.uk](mailto:myapplication@rvc.ac.uk) if they have any mitigating circumstances but cannot meet any of these deadlines. We are not able to reconsider an adverse decision because of late or undisclosed mitigating circumstances.

### Evidence for mitigating circumstances

Evidence is required for all mitigating circumstances and should be provided by an independent person or body.

- If the circumstances relate to a medical condition/symptom then a letter from a GP or hospital should be provided.
- Where mitigating/extenuating circumstances are in connection with a qualification or its results, a letter from the applicant's school or college should be provided in addition to any further supporting information.
- If the mitigation relates to personal or family matter, then a statement of support from an independent person (e.g. schoolteacher, counsellor, care worker etc.) who has knowledge of the circumstances should be provided.

### Re-marks and Examination Appeals

Applicants who have applied for a re-mark or appeal with an awarding body should notify the RVC immediately. While the RVC will make every effort to reconsider applicants whose grades are amended as the result of a successful re-mark, it may not always be possible to hold an offer open pending the outcome of an appeal.

If a re-mark is successful, and the course applied to is full, an applicant may be offered an alternative programme or a deferred entry place.

### Consideration of mitigating circumstances

Submitted mitigating circumstances forms will be reviewed by the Admissions and Deputy Head of Admissions in the first instance, who will determine an appropriate outcome. If they are unable to make a decision or in the case of severe mitigating circumstances, they will refer the matter to the Head of Admissions and Applicant Services.

We do not make contextual or other lower offers as a result of mitigating circumstances. If an offer is made, it will be at the standard level (or contextual level if the applicant is eligible). Mitigating circumstances cannot be considered in relation to English Language results.