

British Values in the Veterinary Practice

Central College of Animal Studies (CCOAS) promotes British Values in the classroom environment. Employers and clinical coaches in the veterinary practice should also promote these British Values to their students. It is an Ofsted requirement for all of those involved in teaching and training students to be aware of the Core British Values. They can also be linked to the RCVS Code of Professional Conduct (CoPC), the RCVS Standards Framework for Veterinary Nurse Education and Training and the following CCOAS policies: the Fitness to Practise and Study policy; Disability and Discrimination policy and the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion policy.

What is Core British Values?

Democracy – “opinions matter”. Students are encouraged to express their opinions. However, they are expected to remain professional at all times as per the RCVS Fitness to Practise Policy and RCVS Code of Professional Conduct for Veterinary Nurses.

Respect – “we look after each other and the practice”. Veterinary staff all work together as a team. Everyone supports and respects each other at work and ensures that as per the RCVS Code of Professional Conduct the profession is not brought into disrepute. Students should be respected in the practice but also students should show respect to all those working in the practice regardless of their job role or status.

Tolerance – “we accept each other’s differences”. Working with the general public can bring cultural and religious differences with regards to veterinary care. Students should respect that there are differences beyond what they believe is right or wrong. Clinical coaches should encourage students to be aware and accept differences that they may come across in the veterinary practice. Some situations may be more sensitive than others such as euthanasia of a healthy animal. When necessary, further time may be required to discuss with the student about the differences and opinions they may face.

Liberty – “we are free to make choices”. If a student does not feel comfortable carrying out a task, then they should express this to their clinical coach or member of staff they are working with. This is extremely important in situations where the student feels they are not competent at the skill and the animal’s welfare could be at risk.

Rule of Law – “we keep to the rules”. Students should be made aware of practice policies and staff rules as per the staff handbook. Students are taught about the laws in the Veterinary profession that they must abide by at all times along with the consequences if they don’t. The RCVS introduced the Fitness to Practise Policy for students and, once students become registered veterinary nurses, then they are expected to follow the Code of Professional Conduct.

Including these in the veterinary practice?

Core British Values can be included in the general day to day duties of working in a veterinary practice. The students CSL RCVS behavioural tool includes elements of these to help and encourage students to improve throughout their time as a student in practice. Clinical coaches will work closely with the student and be able to guide them appropriately.

Clinical coaches should ensure they are familiar with the RCVS Fitness to Practise Policy for their students.

If any members of the veterinary team have any concerns about their student, then they should contact the Liaison Officer at the college for Exeter, Kent or Suffolk.