VetSet2Go

Building veterinary employability

VetSet2Go is a collaborative project to define the capabilities most important for employability and success in the veterinary profession, and create assessment tools and resources to build these capabilities.

Welcome to the first newsletter for our 2.5-year VetSet2Go study, which began in August 2015 and has gained traction over the past nine months, during the scoping, planning and initiating phase. We have begun to engage stakeholders across Australia and NZ, in the UK and recently also in the USA.

It is timely for us to share the progress made by our five subprojects. We have already published several journal articles, presented at seminars and conferences, and started planning an inaugural Veterinary Employability Forum. We look forward to your participation in this initiative.

—Martin Cake, Project Leader

The project design

The project design involves research and development in **Phase 1** (2015-17) to create the veterinary employability framework. **Phase 2** (2017-18) will see translation and pilot application of this framework into self- and multisource assessment tools to guide reflective development of employability capabilities, and dissemination of enabling resources via the dedicated project website.

Several members of the project team

Case studies subproject
(Lead: Melinda Bell / Murdoch)

Case studies matching employer/employee pairs are being explored through semi-structured interviews, to investigate the graduate's transition to the workplace and the capabilities that contribute to a successful transition.

Melinda has interviewed 9 matched pairs of employers and their recent graduate employees, from a wide variety of clinical contexts including small animal, emergency, intensive industry, abattoir/government practice, mixed practice and unusual pet practice. She is looking to complete the interviews within the next month, and has commenced iterative coding of the interview transcripts.

Employer expectations subproject
(Lead: Dan Schull / UQld)

The purpose of this subproject is to explore how employers approach the selection of new graduate veterinarians for employment. Using semi-structured interviews, and sampling for maximal variation, this study aims to explore of the nuances of, and rationale behind, employer perspectives, opinions and decision-making processes.

At this stage, we have completed almost all of the interviews and iterative coding and preliminary analysis is underway. So what have we found? In addition to exploring the selection tools and processes utilised, and motivations / rationale for employing new

graduate veterinarians, this study has illuminated a large number of desirable attributes sought by employers when selecting of new graduate veterinarians for employment. There have also been some surprises, including those attributes considered to be undesirable by employers.

Extending on previous quantitative work, our study has allowed us to explore and characterise these attributes, and how each is appraised and evaluated by employers during their selection process.

Veterinary resilience subproject
(Leads: Michelle McArthur/UAdel & Susan Matthew/WSU)

Final year students and recent graduates are being surveyed and interviewed to understand the factors contributing to resilience in the transition to practice. A longitudinal study will explore lived experiences of resilience from graduation to becoming established in practice.

Data gathered so far encompasses final year students' motivations to be a veterinarian, resilience, self-efficacy, coping strategies and future plans. Work is continuing on creating a quantitative survey of motivations to be a veterinarian, and creating an improved measure of veterinary resilience.

Client expectations subproject
(Lead: Susan Rhind / Uni of Edinburgh)

This subproject is addressing the almost complete absence of data around what

Quotes from stakeholder interviews

*"[…] you need to be satisfied with work, and that you're doing well at work, but you are also getting the **satisfaction out of your whole life**. Are you able to do hobbies, are you able to see family, see friends, have a social life, whatever that means to you?"—**Recent graduate***

*"I guess the important qualities that allow the transition from a student to a vet are **resilience** and knowing that you've got to persist."—**Recent graduate***

*"The ability to **manage stress** and not bleed it out onto others is important."—**Employer of a recent graduate***

*"You could probably learn **humility** […] I reckon it's probably one of the most important things, and that points to **teamwork**, and points to not thinking that you know everything."—**Employer of a recent graduate***

drives client satisfaction with veterinarians, particularly in the employability context (i.e. underpinning capabilities).

Client expectations are being characterised through focus groups and semi-structured interviews, exploring the capabilities and behaviours influencing positive or negative experiences from veterinary interactions. Findings will guide development of a validated survey tool to be used in an international survey of client expectations.

Stakeholder perceptions subproject (Lead: Melinda Bell / Murdoch)

The preceding subprojects will inform a multinational survey of stakeholders later this year—including employers, recent graduates, veterinarians and professional representatives—to find consensus around the factors perceived to be most important in employability.

A social-ecological map of the key stakeholders in veterinary employability

Stakeholder consultation

We have established a Local Advisory Group and engaged a remote Critical Friends group. The Local Advisory Group held their first round-table meeting at Murdoch University on 17 February 2016. We will consult stakeholders again later this year.

Project-associated journal articles

- Cake M., Bell M., Rhind S. et al. 2016. Which professional (non-technical) competencies are most important to the success of graduate veterinarians? A Best Evidence Medical Education systematic review: BEME Guide No. 38. *Medical Teacher* 38(6): 550-563.

- Cake M., McArthur M., Matthew S. and Mansfield C. 2016. Finding the balance: uncovering resilience in the veterinary literature. *Journal of Veterinary Medical Education* (Fall). Accepted.

Seminars and conferences

We have so far presented at:
- a West Australian Network for Dissemination (WAND) seminar at the University of Western Australia (6 November 2015);
- a University of Queensland local showcase (3 February 2016);
- a Networks Enhancing the Scholarship of Teaching (NEST) seminar at Murdoch University (30 March 2016); and
- an Australian Veterinary Association (AVA) conference (24 May 2016; best poster award).

We will soon present at:
- a VetEd Symposium at the University of Glasgow (7-8 July 2016);
- an Association for Medical Education in Europe (AMEE) Conference in Barcelona (27-31 August 2016); and

- an Australian Collaborative Education Network (ACEN) Conference in Sydney (28-30 September 2016).

Martin presenting at the NEST seminar

Veterinary Employability Forum

An inaugural Veterinary Employability Forum will be held from Wednesday 8 to Thursday 9 February 2017 at Peppers Salt Resort & Spa in Kingscliff NSW, near the Gold Coast.

This exciting and interactive event will present VetSet2Go's evidence and convene an expert panel to deliberate on the key elements and dimensions of a veterinary employability framework. We invite you to save the date for this forum.

How to get involved in VetSet2Go

Please register your interest via our website.

There will be opportunities to receive news, provide feedback, participate in surveys, contribute to the development of the veterinary employability framework, pilot resources and attend events.