



# Policy - bona fide veterinarian-client-patient relationship

## Policy statement

A bona fide veterinarian-client-patient relationship exists where each of the following occurs:

- The veterinarian has assumed responsibility for making professional judgements regarding the health and welfare of the animal(s) and the need for treatment, with the client's consent; and
- The veterinarian has sufficient knowledge of the animal(s) to make a preliminary diagnosis; and
- The veterinarian can monitor and treat the animal(s) appropriately to support the health and welfare of the animal(s); and
- The animal(s) in a bona fide veterinarian-client-patient relationship must have been directly examined by the veterinarian, or:
  - The animal(s) must have been seen recently enough for the veterinarian to have sufficient knowledge of the animal(s) as evidenced by the veterinary patient records to make a preliminary diagnosis. Recent enough is defined as in the last 6 months for companion animals and 12 months for large animals, or
  - Should the animal(s) not be able to be directly examined due to distance or other extenuating circumstances **and** there is no reasonable alternative for another veterinarian to directly examine the animal(s), the veterinarian may still acquire sufficient knowledge with appropriate due diligence to make a preliminary diagnosis. The veterinarian must document why the animal(s) could not be directly examined.

All other legislative requirements of veterinarians remain the same – as outlined in relevant legislation and Veterinary Surgeons Board of Queensland policies and guidelines. These include for example the requirement to maintain patient medical records and continuity of care arrangements.

## Background

The veterinarian-client-patient relationship is important as the basis for most professional interactions. Establishing and maintaining a bona fide veterinarian-client-patient relationship is essential when treating an animal particularly when prescribing and supplying restricted (s4) and/or controlled (s8) drugs and practising telemedicine.

## Scope

This policy applies to veterinarians registered to practice in Queensland or recognised (deemed to be registered under the National Recognition of Veterinary Registration scheme) to practice in Queensland, who are performing acts of veterinary science.

## Key relevant documents

- [Veterinary Surgeons Act 1936](#)
- [Veterinary Surgeons Regulation 2016](#)
- [Guidelines – Veterinary Patient Records](#)

## Document management and control

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