



PROPORTIONALITY OF DISCIPLINARY PROCESS

We have considered the proportionality of our Disciplinary Processes.

As a Voluntary Register, RAMP has no access to statutory powers.

Consequently, it has to create the best in-house process appropriate for these occasions.

To set the standard at that of a legal contest is dis-proportionate for a voluntary register.

1. The level of harm that must be curtailed and censored is relatively low within the Scope of Practice authorised by RAMP compared to the only organisation permitting treatment of animals – the RCVS. Any harm outwith the standard set by RAMP for its registrants must be dealt with by other legal processes following the law of the land, which will make RAMP's disciplinary actions secondary.
2. The degree of discipline that can be administered by a voluntary register is severely limited, being highly dependent on the registrant's willing cooperation with any decisions because of the lack of statutory powers to enforce its will upon a registrant.
3. The ability of any disciplinary process to work competently is likewise dependent on the registrant's acceptance of the authority of the process. Non compliant practitioners are likely to drop their registration and escape any sanction, and a voluntary register is powerless to prevent this. It is also powerless to prevent them from practicing either on or off the register.
4. Attempts to pursue a such legalistic standard are likely to be counter-productive:
 - It is likely to turn applicants away and therefore reduce the effectiveness of RAMP in setting workable standards that enhance practice and improve animal welfare.
 - It is also likely to create a 'no smoke without fire' feeling in observers, which is unfair to all concerned when there are no powers of independent investigation to present impartial evidence.

To set the standard too low would allow the Register to appear a toothless token gesture rather than a professional method of regulation.

1. RAMP was founded with the intention to set new standards of practice to improve animal welfare because of DEFRA's 2015 findings of multiple competing philosophies, qualifications, courses and course providers that may be creating confusion for animal owners and potentially putting animal welfare at risk.

2. These new standards are deliberately set high, rather than at the previous industry average. This was deliberate policy, aiming to reduce the wide variation in quality of practice found, while raising the bar to a level recognisable and acceptable to veterinary surgeons who might wish to refer animals to registrants. Consequently, acceptance onto the Register now explicitly requires several actions and commitments from applicants, and defaulting on these triggers a Disciplinary process.

The Disciplinary process now developed has some important features:

1. RAMP has only one final sanction – that of de-registering a registrant. This cannot directly impact the individual's ability to earn money in practice, only their ability to present RAMP as credentials.
2. This sanction can be followed by a public announcement of the action together with a summary of the reasons, within the laws of libel and slander, and within confidentiality policies for third parties.
3. Any intermediate sanction cannot be enforced and will only be successful with the willing cooperation of the registrant. These responses might include additional training to remove a problem in competence of practice (as many professional organisations will require), counselling from a 'critical friend' (like doctors), or other agreed action – such as work shadowing or specific courses.
4. RAMP can inform other organisations – particularly any professional association that a registrant belongs to – of the outcome of a Disciplinary process, as an additional sanction, but it cannot demand any particular response from any association.
5. The approach chosen by RAMP will be monitored for appropriate proportionality and may be adjusted if the RAMP Council finds a lack that undermines public confidence in the aims of the Register to safeguard animal welfare, informed consent by owners and professional conduct standards.