

RAMP

NEWSLETTER

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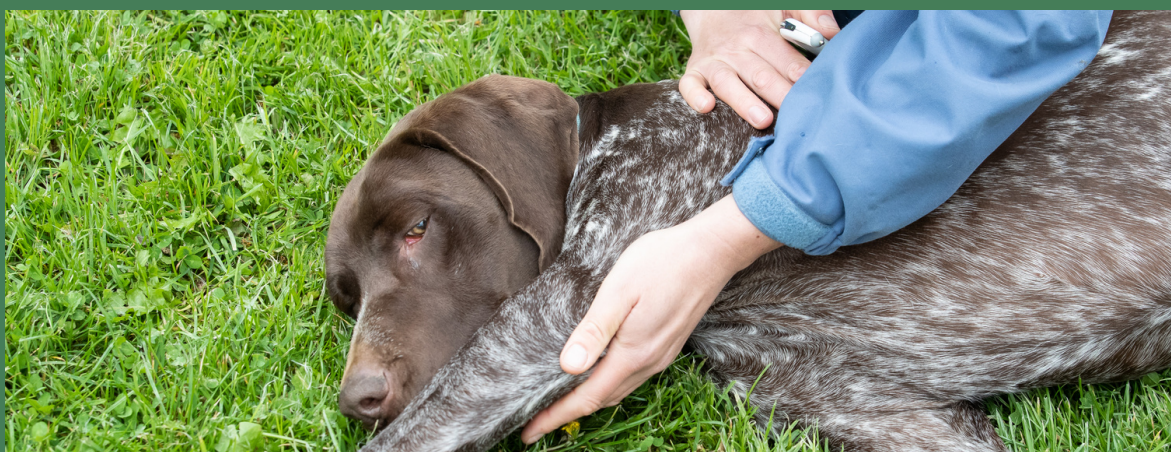
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Welcome to our first newsletter for Professional Associations. As part of the RAMP development program, we aim to offer an online forum annually to each of the Professional Associations (PAs) who have members eligible for RAMP registration and newsletters with updates each May and November. Hopefully this will keep you informed of the work RAMP is doing throughout the year.

As a relatively new organisation RAMP has transitioned from foundation to development status, with the focus on consolidating and improving the transparency of our Polices. We are aware that often the work to create infrastructure to run an efficient organisation and the sensitive nature of negotiations can be invisible to the Registrants and those thinking of joining the Register. The past two years have been challenging but RAMP hopes you have felt supported by the up to the minute efforts our Council have made to keep you informed of the developments in practice due to the challenges of the Corona virus.

A main concern for RAMP this year is the reorganisation of the regulation of the veterinary healthcare industries by the Royal College of Veterinary Surgeons (RCVS). RAMP surveyed the views of our Registrants and then composed a comprehensive consultation to the RCVS representing the views of animal MSK Practitioners, we are waiting to hear what advice was submitted to DEFRA by the RCVS. We continue to ask eligible practitioners to support RAMP by registering, As Regulators we are filling a gap not covered by the PA's however hold many of the same values, but we need increased numbers to wield the maximum political influence possible to help us defend these values.

To give us the best chance of setting high standards of care RAMP feels it important to come together with a common cause of improving patient care and maintaining the integrity of the three core professions by maintaining communications with many of the human based Professional Associations and regulators including GOSc, GCC, and the HCPC who already administer competent Regulation.

RAMP continues to work with several Higher Education Institutions this year to widen the choice and improve the standards of education on offer to students wishing to become animal practitioners eligible for RAMP registration. Due to the widening scope of available formal education, we have established a new Pathway Route application for students to combine formal education programs to reach RAMP entry criteria, which will provide full scaffolded learning and ensure minimum standards of education for all registrants.

Much of the marketing planned at events has been cancelled but we are present at this months London Vet Show which boast a footfall of 10,000 veterinary professionals, so be sure to ask your vet to visit us and find out more about RAMP. One of the less pleasant duties is processing complaints, thankfully this year there have only been a few but RAMP has been active in fully investigating and resolving those following our Complaints process by our Complaints officer and full Council. We can and often do challenge Practitioners who are not on the Register by contacting their Professional Associations if we receive complaints regarding their practice as it is important PA's advise their members accordingly.

This year RAMP launched a new website full of lovely animal images and the public search for RAMP registrants. The IT system behind the website is less efficient and to that end RAMP is commissioning a new build which will be running early 2022 and will hopefully manage a smooth renewals process. On the subject of renewals RAMP delayed renewals for the past two years to ease the burden of Covid on income, more about renewals later.

And finally thank you to all RAMP Council members, all of the work above is completed with a voluntary Council, all run busy practices, life's and work voluntarily for RAMP in order to keep the price of registration to a minimum.

Wishing you all a successful 2022

Jo Paul
Acting President

COUNCIL NEWS

Nominations for RAMP Council 2022 are now invited!

If you would like to help steer RAMP through the next 2 years, then please consider coming forwards for Council. We require a minimum of two Osteopaths, a Physiotherapist, a Chiropractor, and a lay person to replace members completing their terms of office in January 2022.

For Practitioner professions, you need to be a RAMP registrant with a minimum of 5 years post graduate experience and have experience in the animal field of your profession for at least 3 years. You will have an interest in Regulation, to drive forwards the professions by setting and maintaining professional standards and preferably have some experience lecturing within your profession. The Council must maintain total independence and impartiality so RAMP can not accept nominations from Practitioners who have permanent employment within HEIs or other MSK Associations, you are expected to put RAMPs values before any other association involvement you may have.

Council meets approximately six times a year (at the moment via Zoom) and each member is asked to take on a particular task eg applications, audit, complaints or marketing. A full list of roles is available on application. There is no remuneration for Councillors, but expenses are paid for attending meeting etc

This is an exciting time to be involved in RAMP but also a busy time. Being on Council is sometimes a thankless task and you will never please all of the people all of the time. However, if you are passionate about the values RAMP advocates of promoting highly skill Practioners, maintaining and developing the integrity of each profession to deliver the best care to each animal then you will find being an active member of RAMP Council a wholly rewarding experience.

Please register an interest before Dec 5th, 2021, with info@rampregister.org. a shortlist of eligible Practioners will be produced by Dec 16th and presented to RAMP Registrants for voting prior to the AGM in January 2022.

ELEANOR ANDREWS



RAMP is sorry to announce the early resignation of our 2021 President. Eleanor has been a hard-working member of the RAMP team since inception and has filled many roles culminating as President. RAMP wholeheartedly thank Eleanor for all her input and wish her well in all future endeavours.

Our Vice President Jo Paul will fill the post as Acting President until our AGM when a new permanent President will be elected.

RCVS CONSULTATION UPDATE

As your representative to Government and the RCVS, RAMP is contributing to the current wholesale Government review of veterinary standards, qualifications and 'delegation of skills'. Council is actively progressing the acceptance and integration of the 3 professions with veterinary teams and government, to encourage more potential registrants to join. Only if we have the majority of MSK practitioners on our Register will we have the ear of RCVS when negotiating to preserve the professional standards that we currently represent.

Further, it will encourage more training courses to adjust their teaching to align with RAMP's Gold Standard and thereby raise standards of graduate competence. It will also reassure the RCVS and DEFRA that our professions are working to similar standards in different skill-sets for the benefit of animals.

We would like to reassure you that we are actively working to represent your interests in the potential changes that modernisation of the Veterinary Surgeons act may bring. We are aware that much of the work we do is invisible to you but we want to confirm to you that we are in discussions with both DEFRA and RCVS to represent the professional qualities and standards. In support of RAMP's efforts DEFRA recently released this statement:

"We welcome the initiative that allied professional groups such as the RAMP Register (Register of Animal Musculoskeletal Practitioners) are undertaking to develop their contribution to the wider vet-led team. Introducing regulation to highly skilled professions will encourage the continued improvement of standards for animal welfare. DEFRA has received the recommendations of RCVS legislative review (Royal College of Veterinary Surgeons) and will continue to work with bodies representing the allied professions, including RAMP, to explore how to best expand the role of the wider vet-led team".

We are grateful for your continued support of the work we are doing. While it is important that we explain to you how things are developing, it also requires us to work quietly and in a low key way while in negotiations. We understand from a source close to the Government that this process could continue for another 5 years so patience is required but we will continue working hard.

Vav Simon
Past President

Education standard clarification and Application Route changes

RAMP's Gold Standard makes a commitment to the animal owning public that all our Registrants are educated to the equivalent level of a new graduate in one of the Professions in human practice.

Initially on DEFRA insistence RAMP was obliged to have a grandfathering window of 2 years when anyone earning a living by treating animals must be given the opportunity to prove competence by reaching standards similar to this but not necessarily by presenting formal education. An arduous process of setting standards was completed by the Founding Council to assess all applications submitted for RAMP registration. Many applicants clearly met standards, many did not reach minimum standards and subsequently were not admitted to RAMP. Some were asked to complete further CPD to fill gaps in their knowledge and were then admitted. Thereafter every Registrant is viewed in the same way and is expected to maintain RAMP gold standard of practice.

On closure of the grandfathering window all applications either evidenced formal education in animal therapy or evidenced standards via Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) route which reached RAMP standards but were not necessarily from a single formal course or via Recognition of Prior Experiential Learning (RPEL) where applicants completed a rigorous process including a series of case studies to prove they met standards.

During a review of the RAMP educational standards and application processes, it was found that both applicants and HEIs were unclear of how to meet the standards in the RPL application route. RAMP now prides itself in the transparency of its policies and therefore a new Pathway route is now in place to replace the RPL route. The Pathway route is based on the educational pathway completed by a student in a course leading to registration in the human based Professions. Several human based BSc courses have been mapped and the levels of education, relevant topics and the hours of education (both academic and practical) have all been mapped and converted into a hypothetical veterinary program for Physiotherapy and are still being completed for Chiropractic and Osteopathy.

The courses that RAMP have accredited (AEP) all meet these standards and the courses that are recognised (REP) partly meet these standards but can be combined with other programs that while not actually assessed by RAMP have an academic learning level verified by a Recognised Awarding Organisation (RAO) and publicly available module specifications.

In this way applicants can present several courses via the Pathway route to evidence formal education scaffolded to cover the topics that are wholly relevant to a RAMP core profession.

RAMP will still accept RPEL applications which will be sent to an independent educational specialist for processing but in view of the increase in the opportunities for formal education, this route will only be open to Practitioners in practice before Sept 1st 2021.

If you have any questions regarding the educational standards for entry or you have a course you may want to have assessed, please contact Education Officer: Jo Paul education@ramregister.org or Applications Officer: Sarah Sharp applications@ramregister.org

New AEP Courses

RAMP Accreditation and Recognition of training programs is quickly becoming accepted as a quality mark by potential students and industry. Our Educational Officer is available to advise HEI's where their course may fall short of RAMP standards and what they can add to attain RAMP status. This year RAMP is delighted to add The University of Liverpool Veterinary Physiotherapy MSc, Animal Courses Direct Level 6 Small Animal Physiotherapy with Hydrotherapy and The McTimoney College Manipulation (Osteopathy) MSc to our list of Accredited Courses. Successful completion of these course fully meets the new educational standards required by RAMP and allow graduate automatic entry to RAMP. RAMP continues to work with several other HEI's to achieve RAMP accreditation standards and recognition status to those that deliver shorter courses or courses that only deliver specific topics on the educational pathway mapping. Our aim is to continue to add HEI programs with accreditation from Recognised Awarding Organisations to the RAMP portfolio, signposting students to HEI's that deliver courses certain to lead to RAMP eligibility.



Regulatory bodies and Professional Associations

What's the difference?

Professional Associations (PA) represent the Practitioners in one profession or a different faction of a profession and as such have their own individual standards and protocols specific to their membership. Some PA's require higher educational standards than others and will quite rightly defend and promote the values of their organisation and support their members in their profession. They tend to be interested in the development and CPD of their members and as such can advise on and provide CPD. If their members keep to the standards of the organisation the PA's should protect them if there is a question over their competency or practice.

RAMP is a Regulatory Body (RB) who is primarily tasked with protecting the public and their animals. That is done by setting minimum educational and professional standards that Practitioners must achieve and maintain to Register. Practitioners that are willing to be exposed to this scrutiny are added to the Register which is publicly visible and promoted by RAMP. The public can make complaints regarding the practice of a Registrant and RAMP will investigate any complaints fully. RAMP is a voluntary register, so any sanctions deemed necessary following a fully considered complaint are voluntary on the part of the Practitioner. If a serious complaint is validated the only action RAMP can take is to remove the Registrant from the Register, it is this process that maintains the integrity of the Register.

Because RAMP recognises Practitioners from Chiropractic, Osteopathy and Physiotherapy it is seen as an organisation representing the whole MSK professional industry by DEFRA and therefore is seen as being representative when commenting on professional standards and how the whole industry should be regulated so as such it is approached for comment by both DEFRA and the RCVS.

RAMP depends on eligible Practitioners to join the Register and add their voice to the political debate if we are going to have the influence to maintain the integrity of the three core professions in animal practice in the current review of the industry.

If you are eligible and concerned about the future of your profession in animal practice, you are urged to join and support your industry in the negotiations.

What happens to my fees?

RAMP Councillors are commonly asked what do RAMP do with the application and renewal fees? The answer is easy and overviewed in the Presidents review on page one, simply we administer the activities undertaken by the organisation. In addition, we employ part time admin help and many of you will have contacted Sharon over the years for help with renewals etc. We are trying very hard to streamline the admin for both Sharon and Registrants and are developing a new admin system behind the website which although is very costly, should be a one-off large expense.

The more we can digitalise the basic processes and save on admin costs, then the more funds we can allocate to marketing RAMP to clients, vets, and potential Registrants. We do try and attend as many events as possible but like everyone this has been frustrating this year. However, we are attending the London Vet Show and have spent some funds on stand backdrops and branded give aways which will hopefully filter the RAMP brand into your local Vet practices very soon and be used for more events in 2022. We have also developed an information pack for vets which can be downloaded by Practitioners to send to their local vet practices and owner sporting associations, this will be available by the beginning of the year.

A major role for RAMP is to clarify and influence the legislation within the industry and to that end RAMP occasionally must take and pay for legal advice. We are attempting to gain accreditation for our educational standards and need to be transparent regarding where RAMP funds are spent and so have RAMP accounts regularly audited by an accountant. Your fees go to directly paying these professionals.

Last but not least, you get the experience and time of RAMP Councillors for free other than their very basic expenses, all forfeit time to work to ensure the success of RAMP, without the generous contribution from them RAMP could not function at the level of fees presently charged.

Renewals

One-month free registration!

In 2020 due to the lock down and uncertainty over income RAMP voted to defer renewals from 1st April to 1st of July. You told us you would appreciate this being continued into 2021 and we agreed not everyone was back to normal practice.

The 2022 renewals should return to 1st April 2022 and remain at £65; however, we acknowledge it has been a short year and are prepared to change the renewal date to 1st May 2022. This will be a permanent change and will give you an extra month to complete your CPD and overall gives you one free month Registration.

RAMP does ask you to file your renewals carefully and on time, again the majority of you do but those that don't sometimes cost RAMP more in admin time than the renewal fee itself, therefore it has been voted by Council that the late renewal fee is increased to £110 and those that do not renew by the late deadline of 1st June and are therefore removed from the Register, will be asked to pay the application fee plus the renewal fee (£130) to cover admin and IT support should they wish to return to the register.



Website

In an attempt to streamline admin processes a new website and admin system was commissioned and launched in 2020. RAMP is pleased with the frontend but the admin system behind has created some problems. The present system is a conundrum as it appears to work seamlessly for around 90% of the users for renewals and CPD storage but creates endless challenges for others. Also with the changes in the application processes we need to update and simplify the application process.

Therefore, it has been decided to commission the build of a new admin system which should be functional for 2022 renewals. This is a major expense and like all IT projects we go into the process having completed all due diligence but with bated breath, however it is essential for the ongoing cost-effective administration of RAMP.



RAMP Contact email :info@ramregister.org