CONSTITUTION OF THE ASSOCIATION OF VETERINARY STUDENTS

1. NAME

a) The name of the Association shall be the Association of Veterinary Students (UK and Ireland). The association is a division of the British Veterinary Association.

2. AIM

a) The aim of the Association shall be: To improve veterinary student life and education by providing representation, support and encouraging engagement in wider issues of the profession.

b) The Association shall act as the UK and Ireland Member Organisation for the International Veterinary Students’ Association (IVSA)

3. MEMBERSHIP

a) Shall be open to all veterinary students currently studying for a degree which entitles them to become MRCVS on graduation, at one of the ten colleges in Great Britain and Ireland, namely at the University of Bristol, the University of Cambridge, University College Dublin, the University of Edinburgh, the University of Glasgow, the University of Liverpool, the University of Nottingham, the Royal Veterinary College, the University of Surrey and the Universities of Harper Adams/Keele.

b) Membership shall be by payment of an individual annual subscription from one of the following:
   - The individual veterinary school societies at each college
   - The individual veterinary school itself
   - An individual veterinary student

c) The subscription shall be fixed by 2/3 majority at a properly constituted general meeting. The AVS treasurer (assisted by the BVA Finance Director) will be responsible for the collection of the AVS subs.

d) An amount to pay the IVSA International membership fee is included in the subscription.

4. OFFICERS OF THE ASSOCIATION

The Officers of the Association shall be:

i) President
ii) Senior Vice President
iii) Junior Vice President
iv) Secretary
v) Treasurer
vi) IVSA President
vii) Welfare representative
viii) JAVS Editor (non-executive)
ix) Communications Officer (non-executive)
x) Grants & Sponsorship Officer (non-executive)
xii) IVSA Exchange Officer (non-executive)
xii) IVSA Promotions Officer (non-executive)
xi) IVSA Project Coordinator (non-executive)

5. UNIVERSITY REPRESENTATIVES

a) Each university shall be represented by a junior and senior rep, who will both sit on committee. The university of Nottingham April cohort veterinary students will have their own junior and senior AVS representatives, separate from the september cohort representatives.
b) Their duties will include:
i) Representing AVS at their university
ii) Acting as two-way communication channel between AVS and the student body
iii) Promoting AVS’ activities, and ensuring that all student members have access to AVS content & opportunities
iv) Liaising with the IVSA exchange reps at their universities, to help facilitate exchanges
v) Contribute to JAVS and distribute it around their vet school
vi) Organising safe transport to/from AVS events and ticket sales
vii) Ensuring that the AVS behaviour policy is signed by every student attending sports weekend
viii) Be the point of contact for their university during AVS events
ix) Organising elections at their vet school to ensure that a junior rep is elected in a timely manner
x) Attending tri-annual AVS meetings and engaging in their allocated sub-committee
c) If these duties are not fulfilled, the executive committee must provide 1 written warning to the Rep, to which the Rep must formally respond.
d) If after one more academic term, they still feel the Rep is under-performing, they are entitled to ask the Rep to stand down.
e) The Rep then has the right to appeal this decision, upon which a whole committee vote will occur. In the eventuality that a two thirds majority decision is not made either way, the president will have the deciding vote.
f) NOTE: Reps must attend 2/3 AVS meetings in each academic year to be eligible for a free sports weekend ticket, any exceptional circumstances will be considered by the executive committee.

6. SUB-COMMITTEES

a) The AVS committees shall be comprised of four sub-committees:
i) Policy & Student Engagement
ii) Member Benefits

iii) Welfare

iv) International Veterinary Students’ Association (IVSA)
   a. In addition to the IVSA subcommittee, individual universities should elect IVSA exchange representatives to facilitate group exchanges. These individuals should liaise with the IVSA exchange officer and AVS university reps, however they will not be part of the AVS committee.

b) Membership of each sub-committee shall be comprised of university reps and other AVS committee officers with the most even distribution between colleges as possible.

c) The aim of the AVS sub-committees shall be:
   i) Policy & Student Engagement:
      a. Ensuring accurate and effective representation of students by creating AVS policies that encapsulate our opinions on important issues.
      b. Engaging students in current issues relevant to the veterinary profession.
      c. Ensuring accurate representation of the student body by regular surveying and consultation of the student body.

   ii) Member Benefits:
      a. Identifying, providing and creating useful services and resources for all student members. These may be educational, careers or welfare related.
      b. Identifying and promoting diverse opportunities available to vet students.
      c. Providing student-friendly, up-to-date, generic advice to potential veterinary applicants.

   iii) Welfare:
      a. Promoting high standards of student welfare for all vet students
      b. Providing events and resources that promote positive welfare in all vet schools.
      c. Contributing to the development and promoting the available student support services provided by the VetLife
      d. Increasing awareness and encouraging debate of animal welfare issues in partnership with the Animal Welfare Foundation (AWF)

   iv) International Veterinary Students’ Association (IVSA)
      a. Acting as the point of contact for the communication with IVSA Global
      b. Promoting international issues and projects that impact on our future profession and members
      c. Encouraging involvement of veterinary students with international organisations
      d. Providing a means for communication and exchange between International and UK veterinary students
      e. Promoting opportunities for veterinary students to education in important areas outside traditional veterinary training.
d) The aims of each sub-committee should be reviewed by the sub-committee chair in order to remain up-to-date and relevant.

7. ELECTION OF OFFICERS

a) The President, subject to approval at the AGM, shall be the Junior Vice President of the previous year

b) The Senior Vice President, subject to approval at the AGM, shall be the President of the previous year

c) The Junior Vice President shall not be in her/her penultimate or final year of study

d) The three non-executive IVSA Officer Roles (IVSA Exchange Officer, IVSA Promotions Officer, IVSA Project Coordinator) shall be elected for a term of one calendar year. These officers shall be eligible to stand for re-election once, such that no officer in these three roles can undertake more than two consecutive terms for the same position. Each IVSA officer role has a handover period, lasting for one month after the handover meeting.

e) All other officers are for a two-year period and newly elected Officers should not therefore be in either their penultimate or final year of study. In exceptional circumstances, where no other candidates stand, nominations can be made for members in their penultimate year to hold the position for a one-year term.

8. ELECTION PROCEDURE

a) Reps & committee members will be limited to promoting only by sharing of posts from central AVS social media pages, and impartial emails highlighting voting opening. Candidates are permitted to promote their own running but must do so only by means accessible to all candidates. Any other forms of campaigning are not permitted, and the future of any candidate found to be utilising alternative campaigning methods will have their future in the election decided by the current President.

b) Election voting will commence online at the AGM and will continue online via an online server available to all members of the association. Voting will be open for one week, and each current member of the association, including Officers of the Association, shall have one vote for each officer position on the committee.

c) The President will have the casting vote if there are equal numbers counted.

d) Minutes of the AGM and elections hustings will be recorded and made available to all members.
e) In the event that an officer position receives no candidate nominations prior to the AGM (in the original or the re-opened nominations period), the AVS Executive shall have the power to call an additional election period to fill that post.

f) The additional election period shall not be within three weeks of the Annual General Meeting.

g) In the event of the additional election period being triggered, the AVS executive must communicate notice of nominations to all members. The nominations period shall be no less than three days.

h) The voting period shall be seven days in duration and the voting shall be carried out as per 7b, c, d.

9. FINANCIAL

a) The accounts of the Association shall be prepared by the Treasurer, approved by the BVA and published at the Annual General Meeting.

b) Each subcommittee should produce an annual budget in conjunction with the AVS treasurer, for approval by the AVS executive. This should be presented by the subcommittee chair at the Spring handover meeting.

10. GENERAL MEETINGS

a) Notices of all general meetings shall be posted not less than seven days beforehand, together with an agenda.

b) The quorum at general meetings shall be 1/50th of the membership of the Association.

c) An Extraordinary General Meeting may be called in response to the Secretary by not less than 1/50th of the total membership of the Association.

d) The AGM shall be held during the spring term of each year, unless in exceptional circumstances, this should occur at the Association of Veterinary Students’ National Congress [AVS Congress].

11. COMMITTEE CHANGES

a) Notification of changes of college representatives must be sent to the Secretary by the old representatives immediately following college elections.

b) Any change of address of the Officers and college representatives shall be sent immediately to the Secretary.

12. STUDENT REPRESENTATION ON NATIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL COMMITTEES
a) The Association’s nomination for representation at BVA Council shall be the PRESIDENT or his/her nominee.

b) The Association’s nomination for representation on the BVA Member Benefits Committee shall be the JUNIOR VICE PRESIDENT or his/her nominee.

c) The Association’s nomination for representative at the Veterinary Schools Council shall be the PRESIDENT or his/her nominee.

d) The Association’s nomination for representation at the EMS Coordinator Liaison Group shall be the PRESIDENT or his/her nominee.

e) The Association’s nomination for representation at IVSA global events shall be the IVSA PRESIDENT or his/her nominee.

13. ASSOCIATION EMBLEMS

a) The Association crest shall be a centaur bearing a trident in his left hand, destroying the serpent beneath.

14. TRAVEL EXPENSES

a) The Association will pay the travel expenses of all the committee members up to a maximum of the current second-class rail fare. This applies to all committee meetings other than those held at Sports Weekend and Congress.

b) Committee members should try to use saver fares and railcards, where possible.

c) The Association will only pay travel expenses of the Senior Vice President where he/she is still at veterinary school.

15. CONSTITUTIONAL AMENDMENTS

a) Any amendment to the constitution must be carried out by a two third majority at a properly constituted general meeting.

b) All proposed amendments and additions must be sent in writing to the Secretary, prior to the general meeting.

16. REMOVAL OF MEMBERS FROM AVS MEMBERSHIP

a) Where a member of the AVS behaves in a manner which is unacceptable to the committee, or brings the Association into disrepute, the committee, after a full investigation into the matter, shall have the power to instigate disciplinary action as follows:
b) Ban the member(s) from attending AVS events for a period of one year

   OR

c) Ban the member(s) from attendance at AVS events throughout their student life

d) For repeated ‘offences’ – ban the member(s) from AVS membership

e) The committee must make the decision at a committee meeting by a majority show of hands. The member(s) concerned may be offered the chance to speak to the committee prior to a decision being made but must not be present for the vote.

17. ELIGIBILITY FOR ATTENDANCE AT AVS EVENTS

a) Attendance at AVS events should first be limited to students studying for a degree which entitles them to become MRCVS upon graduation. Students on other degree courses shall not be allowed to attend unless an insufficient number of places have been filled. Students attending the host university are exempt from this rule, allowing students studying any veterinary-related degree to attend the event at the discretion of the host university organising committee.

Date of Approval: AGM 2021 - 07/02/21, hosted via Zoom, Chaired by Isobel Arthur