

Introducing professionalism to first year veterinary students

Carol Gray

LIVE Lecturer in Veterinary Communication Skills

BVSc Programme Director

Activity

- List 4 rules that YOU would like to see in a “Code of Conduct” for veterinary students
- 2 minutes
- Share results with one or two other people
- We will then take a few suggestions and compile a list



Background

2002-2006 BVSC600 Veterinary Communication Skills module

2006 on BVSC600 Professional and Communication Skills



The research

- White coat ceremonies (e.g. Wear, 1998, *Annals of Internal Medicine*)
- Honor codes (e.g., Langone, 2007, *Journal of Nursing Education*)
- Ownership of codes of conduct (e.g., Reitemeier, 1994, *Academic Medicine*)

Our students

- School-leavers
- Graduates
- Mature students

Therefore age range 17-35+



The session

Small group (20-25)

3 hours

Includes learning styles questionnaire, communication skills video and feedback

Professionalism introduced via a pairs exercise:

“What is the difference between a professional footballer and a vet/doctor/lawyer?”

Feedback and evidence discussed

Then focus on their lives as veterinary students



Small group work

- Organise into groups of 5 or 6
- Compile a list of rules for being “professional” as a student
- Present group findings
- Most popular suggestions used to formulate code of conduct for veterinary students
- Required to sign up to it for portfolio (hard copies distributed during lecture)

Examples

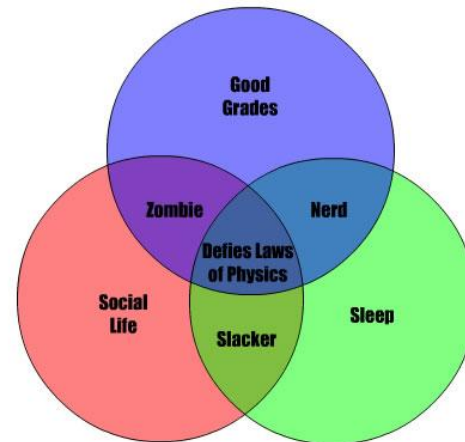
Extract from Code of Conduct for Liverpool Veterinary Students 2008/09

1. Always adhere to safety guidelines (biosecurity).
2. Don't be a bully.
3. Provide support and encouragement to others .
4. Be punctual for lectures and meet deadlines.
5. Treat other professionals with respect.
6. Always admit your mistakes.
7. Treat facilities with respect.
8. Respect others' right to learn.
9. Adhere to welfare standards for animals.
10. Remember you are always an ambassador for the faculty and the university.
11. Take responsibility for your own learning.
12. Be respectful to fellow students and lecturers.
13. Try to maintain a good work/social balance.
14. Dress appropriately.
15. Don't use illegal substances.

Some suggestions are *not* included!!

1. Work out a safe limit for alcohol consumption and stick to it
2. Don't get caught
3. Don't turn up for lectures with a hangover

Breakdown of Typical College Student Life



Ideas for improvement

Revisit these codes each year (at the moment, only the first year code is developed and used)

Compare with RCVS Guide to Professional Conduct, e.g., cross-reference the 10 Guiding Principles with rules for behaviour while on course