



VETERINARY PRACTICE BOARD WESTERN AUSTRALIA



Guidelines for the use of titles and Specialist Registration (Titles for veterinary specialists and non-specialists)

PREAMBLE

The *Veterinary Practice Act 2021 (Act)* requires that only veterinarians who are registered with the Veterinary Practice Board (the Board) as specialists may be referred to:

- a. as a “specialist” or “registered specialist”; and
- b. by a title or term that is capable of implying that they have specialist status, for example “Veterinary Ophthalmologist” or “Equine Surgeon”.

APPLICATION OF THESE GUIDELINES

These guidelines apply from and including 26 April 2022.

These Guidelines may be superseded by subsequent versions. To ascertain whether this version has been superseded, view the current version on the Board’s website at www.vpbwa.org.au.

It is the responsibility of veterinarians to be conversant with the current version of these Guidelines.

DEFINITIONS AND INTERPRETATIONS

1. Veterinarians who are not registered specialists but who are in government service or other similar circumstances, where a term is used which could be interpreted as inferring specialist qualifications but is a job title or description, and there is no commercial benefit derived from the use of the term by the individual or their employer, for example “Fish pathologist” or “Clinical pathologist”, are permitted.
2. Veterinarians who are not registered specialists but who undertake work in particular branches of veterinary medicine may:
 - a. use terms which define the branch of veterinary medicine in which they provide their services as long as they do not use terms capable of implying that they, as an individual, have specialist status. For example, they may use terms such as “Veterinary Ophthalmology Services” or “Equine Dentistry Services”;
 - b. describe themselves professionally by making reference to their area of interest, through the use of phrases such as “Practitioner / Veterinarian with an interest in ...”, for example “Practitioner with an interest in Ophthalmology” or “Veterinarian with an interest in Equine Dentistry”, but may not use phrases such as “Veterinarian with a special interest in....” or “Veterinarian specialising in....”.
3. The term “intern” may only be used by a veterinarian who is enrolled in a structured training program under the supervision of a registered veterinary specialist at a veterinary school or as approved by the Board.
4. The term “resident” may only be used by a veterinarian who is enrolled in a structured training program accredited or recognised by the Advisory Committee on Registration of Veterinary

Postal Address: Po Box 1721 Melville South WA 6156

Office: Suite 1, First Floor, Melville Professional Centre, 275 Marmion Street, Melville WA 6156

Telephone: (08) 9317 2353 **Email:** admin@vpbwa.org.au **Website:** www.vpbwa.org.au

Specialists and under the supervision of registered veterinary specialists, with a view to becoming eligible to sit examinations to qualify as a veterinary specialist.

PRACTICE NAMES

There are additional requirements where the name of a veterinary practice is capable of giving the impression all veterinary surgeons working there are specialists. For example, “Dental Veterinary Specialists” or “Equine Surgeons”. In these circumstances only veterinarians who are registered veterinary specialists, interns or residents may be employed at the practice.

DISCLAIMER

This document (printed, electronic or any other medium) cannot be regarded as legal advice.

Although all care has been taken in preparing these Guidelines they do not replace advice specific to the reader’s circumstances. Where necessary, advice must be sought from competent legal practitioners. Neither the authors nor the Veterinary Practice Board of Western Australia accept or undertake any duty of care relating to any part of these Guidelines.