

EAEVE Position Paper on Academic Autonomy and Independence in Veterinary Education

Introduction

The vision of the European Association of Establishments for Veterinary Education (**EAEVE**), is that veterinary education, based on high standards, research, and innovation, is the cornerstone of the veterinary profession. This profession serves Veterinary clinical practice, Animal Health & Welfare, Veterinary Public Health, and One Health, and is recognised by society for its contributions. EAEVE is committed to upholding the highest ethical standards, including integrity, equity, and transparency, in all our activities and decision-making processes, and to ensuring that the veterinary profession in Europe and beyond reflects the core values. These principles are deeply embedded within EAEVE's Vision, Mission and Values and enshrined in our Code of Conduct.

EAEVE affirms its unwavering support for the **autonomy of higher education establishments**, the ability of veterinary students, educators, researchers and professionals to operate free from external interference in pursuit of evidence-based medicine, academic freedom, and scientific integrity. It also upholds the **independence of veterinary academic programmes**, ensuring that future generations of veterinarians are educated through research- and evidence-based training.

Our commitment to institutional autonomy and research- and evidence-based education and practice

EAEVE strongly believes that the advancement of veterinary medicine depends on the ability of establishments and professionals to make decisions rooted in science, ethics, and the evolving needs of animals and society. Veterinary education must be protected from political, ideological, or commercial pressures that may hinder academic excellence or compromise public trust.

The autonomy of Veterinary Education Establishments (VEEs) is fundamental to:

- Advancing knowledge in veterinary clinical sciences, animal health, public health, and food safety;
- Maintaining high standards in veterinary training and practice;
- Encouraging research and interdisciplinary collaboration within the One Health framework;
- Ensuring that future veterinarians are equipped to serve society in an impartial, ethical, and scientifically rigorous manner.

EAEVE's Code of Conduct explicitly promotes:

- Respect for the diversity of individuals and establishments,
- Fair and unbiased treatment of all persons,
- A commitment to openness, dialogue, and transparency,
- Accountability for fostering an environment free from discrimination and harassment.

Independence as a foundation of scientific and professional integrity

As a profession-specific and one of the largest independent accrediting and evaluating associations, EAEVE is committed to upholding the principles of fairness, transparency, and academic self-governance. This independence allows EAEVE and its members to maintain high educational standards without undue external influence.

We recognise that robust veterinary education relies not only on technical training but also on the freedom to question, innovate, and teach according to evidence-based practices. This independence is vital for addressing complex societal challenges, including zoonotic disease prevention, antimicrobial resistance, climate-related risks to food systems, and Animal Health & Welfare, Veterinary Public Health, and One Health.

A place for ALL in the Veterinary World

EAEVE supports a veterinary profession that welcomes a diversity of experiences, perspectives, and roles. We reaffirm that **there is a place for everyone in the veterinary field** — be it in clinical practice, research, public health, education, economy or policy. We are committed to fostering environments that are respectful, inclusive, and empowering for all who seek to contribute to animal and human health and welfare.

Veterinary medicine is enriched by individuals from a wide array of backgrounds, all working toward common goals: protecting animals, promoting public health, and contributing to a safer, more sustainable world. Everyone who shares this mission should have the opportunity to participate, thrive, and lead.

Looking Ahead

As global challenges continue to evolve, the veterinary profession must remain resilient, innovative, inclusive, grounded in research-based training and committed to state-of-the-art practices. EAEVE will continue to advocate for the **autonomy of veterinary**

establishments, support the **independence of veterinary students, educators, researchers and professionals**, and promote environments that are open to all.

EAEVE continues to work with member establishments, partner associations and international organisations to exchange ideas, track expected changes and determine the necessary paths forward to protect the interests of our community.

By defending these values and working with cognate organisations internationally, we reinforce the scientific foundation of veterinary medicine, strengthen public confidence, and ensure that our work continues to benefit both animals and society globally.

Together, we shape excellence in veterinary education and build a profession - and a world - through autonomy and integrity.

EAEVE Executive Committee

Dublin, 13 June 2025