European College of Aquatic Animal Health

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10 years Strategic Plan 2025/2035

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Objectives:

- Promote research and heighten the competency of veterinarians in the multidisciplinary specialty of Aquatic Animal Health (AAH) in Europe. This

encompasses the comprehensive examination, diagnosis, treatment, and prevention of aquatic animal diseases, disorders or injuries, utilizing a holistic, evidence-based approach.
- Establish guidelines for post-graduate education, serving as prerequisites for becoming an EBVS® European Veterinary Specialist in AAH.
- Conduct examinations and certify veterinarians as EBVS® European Veterinary Specialists in AAH.
- Foster communication and knowledge dissemination about AAH among veterinary professionals and the broader public.

Mission:

The mission of the ECAAH is to promote the advancement of the field of aquatic veterinary medicine across Europe through post-graduate training, continuing education, and research. The College aims to cultivate a community of distinguished specialists and produce leaders in clinical practice, academia, and industry, thereby elevating the standard of care for aquatic animals.

Values:

- Professional Excellence - We uphold the highest standards in aquatic animal care and ethical practice.
- Advancement - We strive for continuously improve and innovate our field through the discovery and dissemination of knowledge.
- Community - We promote collaboration, mentorship, and a culture of service to the profession.
- Wellbeing - We prioritize the health, fulfillment, and work-life balance of our residents and members.

Goals and Strategies:

- Expand residency training opportunities across Europe:
    - Develop standard and flexible alternative residency tracks
    - Create modular/part-time formats to improve access
    - Recruit mentors and increase the number of training sites
    - Ensure a rigorous yet supportive training environment
    - Provide adequate resources and compensation for residents
- Enhance assessment methods to confirm clinical competency:
    - Supplement written exams with case-based assessment
    - Consider appraisal of practical skills
    - Consider tools to evaluate communication, collaboration, and professionalism
    - Require research outputs from all residents
    - Utilize multi-faceted assessment approach
    - Develop a sustainable approach to assessment
- Promote the value of ECAAH specialists to stakeholders:
    - Communicate benefits of specialists to veterinarians and aquatic animal farmers, as well as curators in public aquaria and other related positions
    - Position specialists as experts in AAH
    - Demonstrate the unique value specialists provide through collaborations
    - Create targeted marketing materials and social media campaigns

    - Develop partnerships with scientific organizations and aquatic facilities
- Support wellbeing of residents and diplomates:
    - Provide mental health resources and counseling
    - Offer continuing education on topics like work-life balance and burnout
    - Encourage mentors to monitor resident wellness and satisfaction
    - Regularly check in with diplomates and assess wellness needs
    - Facilitate community building and networking among members.

Key Activities and Implementation Plan:

- Establish working groups to implement strategic goals and initiatives
- Conduct annual surveys to assess training experience, member wellness, and organizational needs
- Collaborate with the European Board of Veterinary Specialisation to evolve assessment methods
- Host annual conferences to connect members and monitor progress
- Appoint spokespersons and engage high-profile veterinarians to promote the specialty
- Cultivate partnerships with veterinary organizations, facilities, and media
- Develop a timeline for the rollout of new residency programs and assessment tools
- Provide regular progress reports and adjust strategies as needed
- Ensure transparency and encourage member participation in decision-making processes.
- Increase outreach to the students at Veterinary schools about the specialisation on aquatic animals through ECAAH (this should be a common strategy with other colleges and EBVS) through specialised talks.
- Increase the presence of ECAAH in national and international forums on aquatic aspects with presence of young veterinarians (European Aquaculture Society conferences, WOAH, EAFP…).
- Increase the visibility of the college through general social media.
- Increase the collaboration with EAFP, WAVMA and particularly with FVE.
- Contact with EAEVE in order to help the association to increase the educational standards in aquatic animal health

With concerted effort across these strategic priorities over the next decade, the ECAAH will continue to excel in providing exceptional specialist training while building an inclusive and supportive college community, enabling members to thrive personally and professionally. This Strategic Plan lays the foundation for the ECAAH to solidify its status as the premier European organization advancing veterinary specialization on aquatic animal health in the next decade.