

VET19 - Guide for Delegates: Making a case for attending

This guide has been designed to provide you with a greater understanding of our conference so that you can communicate the value of participating in VET19 when attempting to gain attendance approval from your manager.

You are likely to need to convince your manager to invest their professional development funds in your attendance at the conference. The cost of attendance consists of the conference registration fee, travel costs and time-away-from-work costs. Most managers want justification for employees attending a conference. When you apply for approval to attend the conference, don't focus on how much you want to go. Focus on what you will bring back to the organisation – their return on investment.

This document provides useful information to help you to justify your attendance, alongside practical tips and recommendations to help you maximise your time at VET19.

Why attend?

Want to know how to sell the benefits of the Conference? Taking two days off work is a big commitment, especially in the veterinary industry. It can be hard to justify a day out of the clinic on company time. We at RCVS Knowledge have put together the benefits of attending the VET19 Conference for you to utilise in your professional setting.

Firstly, make sure the company is aware of the return of their investment in you. The veterinary and allied professions are in a unique position where new research is consistently revolutionising the field; we are here to help take you forward in your professional development. Your organisation has a responsibility to maintain your training, highlight the benefits that having a highly skilled member of staff brings both in reputation and to animal health care.

1. Be direct

Approach the topic with assertiveness, speak with confidence and clarity. Try opening with the sessions that appeal to your professional development most, or that you feel addresses any gaps in knowledge in your clinic. Use our template letter (on page 4) to help you put your request in writing.

2. Think strategically

Prepare your alternatives and counter-offer, perhaps suggest attending one day instead of two. Make a list of the vendors whose products may be beneficial to your practice to present to your manager. Find out what other industry competitors are attending the event to prove that it is a 'must-attend' event and suggest that networking with these competitors would be invaluable (see 'benefits' on page 3).

3. After the event

Have specific follow up objectives and strategies you plan to implement after the conference. Be prepared to relay the information you gained from the event, perhaps offer to do a short presentation on the most informative sessions you attended. Or write a written report detailing what you have gained from the event and how you will go forward in applying it to your current role.

The Benefits

Knowledge Benefits

Set out how your attendance at this conference will help meet your organisation's goals or needs. Try to be as specific as possible. Use these key questions to prepare before approaching your superiors:

- Which topics or specific sessions have particular relevance to your area of work?
- How topical is it?
- Will it be useful in the next year?
- What new skills or approaches do you intend to bring back?
- Which of the sessions are most relevant to CPD goals or your organisations' expectations of you?

The programme has been designed with multiple sessions, ensuring that there will be relevant content for everyone in the profession. Speakers will be selected from a competitive application process to deliver high quality conference content.

The conference will showcase exhibitors with tools or services you use or are evaluating for potential future use. This is an opportunity to collect first-hand information and to compare competing firms. This is your chance to collect information and evaluate multiple exhibitors at the same time, to enable you to make an informed decision, quickly.

Team Building Benefits

Set out how this conference will enable you to meet and interact with veterinary healthcare professionals in a variety of roles and organisations from around the world. You will be able to find out what your peer organisations are talking about and planning for, and how they are accomplishing specific goals, activities and strategies. Where else will you find so many colleagues facing the same issues as your organisation?

Benefits from Employee Engagement

There are many studies which show that employers benefit from employees who are excited about their work and loyal to their profession. Employee engagement is a win-win situation. If you, the employee, are able to pursue your professional passion; both your employer and you will benefit.

Individuals who are engaged are more likely to be satisfied, enthusiastic, dedicated, have higher morale and less burn-out, plus they are less likely to leave their job (MacLeod, D; Clarke, N (2009). *Engaging for success: enhancing performance through employee engagement. A report to government*. Surrey: Office of Public Sector Information. pp 74-75).

Template Letter to Managers

This section provides you with a template letter that can easily be adapted by you, with your own specific reasons for wanting to attend VET19. Use and adapt this template as required.

Dear <Name>

I would like to attend VET19. This is the premier evidence-based veterinary medicine event in the world today. The conference will enable me to attend a number of sessions that are directly applicable to my work and allow me to network with a number of veterinary experts. Many of the presentations <Fill with examples of how the conference will help you professionally>. I am seeking approval for the registration fee and expenses for attending the conference.

The total costs for the conference is <use the below graph to calculate the total cost of the conference, adding a rough cost of accommodation and travel

Ticket type	Price
1 Day Ticket	£200.00 (+VAT)
2 Day Ticket (inc. social event below)	£370.00 (+VAT)
2 Day Ticket Early Bird (inc. social event)	£340.00 (+VAT)
Drinks Reception & Awards only (27 June)	£20.83 (+VAT)