



# The AMTRA Project



**AMTRA** is an independent regulatory body whose task it is to ensure that the marketing and distribution of animal medicines in the UK is undertaken in a responsible manner by AMTRA qualified persons. This organisation accept enrolments of persons wishing to become SQPs under the current Veterinary Medicines Regulations and hold the various SQP registers. The training is based on self-study (the AMTRA Training Manual and soon AMTRA Moodle) perhaps with the support of in-company training or a commercial revision course delivered by one of a number of approved institutions. Most students find it highly advantageous to pay to participate in one of these **optional, non-compulsory** taught courses provided by a specialist educational centre or trainer. A list of these course dates and their locations is currently available on the AMTRA website ([www.amtra.org.uk](http://www.amtra.org.uk)). The end goal for a 'student' SQP is to complete and pass the necessary exams, demonstrating their knowledge and competence in the various modules. They have two years from their enrolment date in which to do this.

Harper Adams University College has worked with AMTRA in various roles for approximately twenty years but our capacity as an independent Higher Education institution has been crucial in fulfilling the criteria set out in the **DEFRA Code of Practice** as issued by the Secretary of State under the **Veterinary Medicines Regulations 2005**. It sets down the standards that must be complied with by AMTRA and by SQPs who are registered with AMTRA having passed the required examinations. These individuals can supply the veterinary medicinal products classified as POM-VPS and NFA-VPS within the limits of their qualification from registered retail business premises.



The AMTRA **suite of modules** was developed to provide a means of accrediting learning undertaken as part of a professional requirement. Existing SQPs have from April 2006 to October 2008 in order to complete their conversion. This is the initial time frame the conversion project has been estimated to last for but it continues to develop and it is assumed that new students will continue to enrol beyond this deadline.

As soon as the project was launched we have been kept busy assessing cohorts of new SQPs. In January 2008 there were **seven hundred and seventy-two newly qualified individuals** (since July 2006) ranging across the full compliment of SQP categories, with a third of them eligible to prescribe/supply – VPS animal medicines to food-producing, equine and companion animal species and a further third specific to the retail of companion animal – VPS products.

Between now and August 2008, examinations will be taking place on average twice a week at one of **seventeen venues** across the UK. The latest of which to join us in this provision are Sparsholt College, Moulton College and Bridgwater College who will also be offering revision courses prior to examination. Details of these can be found at [www.amtra.org.uk](http://www.amtra.org.uk).

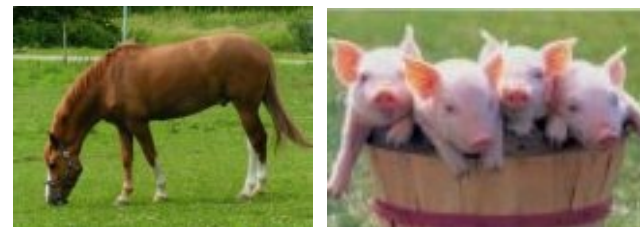
## AMTRA

Queries regarding any of the AMTRA SQP examinations can be directed to the AMTRA Project Office at Harper Adams University College (Tel: 01952 815485). You can also contact AMTRA directly on (01394) 411010 or e-mail: [info@amtra.org.uk](mailto:info@amtra.org.uk)

**AMTRA Assessment Centres**

- University of Highlands & Islands
- Scottish Agricultural College
- Scottish Agricultural College
- Scottish Agricultural College
- Askham Bryan College
- University of Lincoln
- Moulton College
- MYF Training Ltd.
- Writtle College
- Plumpton College
- Sparsholt College
- College of Agriculture, Food and Rural Enterprise
- Harper Adams University College
- Lantra House
- Trinity College
- Bridgwater College
- Bilston College
- Duchy College
- Lynwood School of Veterinary Nursing

We have been encouraged by the **excellent performance** shown by those people who have completed the Conversion process. The top mark for the Merchant SQP Conversion so far is 92%! In January 2008 Harper Adams had awarded Higher Education credits to nearly a thousand existing SQPs following examination, of which approximately three quarters of them had gained a result of at least 50% (C grade).



**AMTRA Moodle** is the latest development to our work. It is an online learning resource, ideally suited to the work-based learning experience. It is based on the existing paper training manual, with additional self assessment MCQs and web-links which provide comprehensive details of the animal health industry and the organisations involved. It has been developed at Harper Adams following a team effort from our own academic experts, e-learning and IT specialists. It is being launched for students currently.

Student SQPs about to apply to AMTRA to sit examinations and to a training provider for a revision course, should ensure they are thoroughly familiar with the contents of the **SQP Training Manual** beforehand. Existing SQPs applying to take the Conversion exam can find useful revision aids on the AMTRA website, in the form of sample questions and answers, illustrating the format, style and type of questions which may be included as well as downloadable versions of the current Code of Practice and Veterinary Medicine Regulations, the latter being on the VMD website ([www.vmd.gov.uk](http://www.vmd.gov.uk)).



From the end of this year, SQPs will be required to complete compulsory Continuing Professional Development (CPD) and Harper Adams will be supporting AMTRA by acting as one of the CPD providers.

As with any new initiative of this size, we have come across and will no doubt continue to face numerous challenges posed during the set-up, maintenance and development stages. So, we have learnt many lessons along the way in relation to administration and implementation of assessment specific to work based learners, use of various HAUC IT systems, working with external organisations to fulfil both parties' needs and efficient time management strategies. Where appropriate, it is the intention to share with colleagues involved in other such projects the experiences and knowledge gained on these matters.