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Route to feline practice specialism

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I WRITE in response to David Godfrey and Elise Robertson (*VR*, 21/28 January 2022, vol 192, pp 84–85), who are two outstanding feline clinicians and exemplary advocates for the species. In the *Vet Record* supplement ‘Are cats always the underdogs?’ (*VR*, November 2022) I really should have mentioned the American Board of Veterinary Practitioners and the ability to gain this credential in the subspecialty of feline practice. This is an excellent credential for aspiring veterinary felophiles to work for and gain. Godfrey and Robertson described the benefits of this credential perfectly.

However, the RCVS will not accept this as being equivalent to a diploma from the American or European colleges of veterinary internal medicine (ACVIM, ECVIM) and hence will not accept that it, on its own, justifies specialist status. While I do not agree with this supposition (since gaining this credential proves the candidate to be an outstanding feline clinician), I understand that this is the case. If I am wrong, please correct me.

So many of my students desperately want to be feline-only clinicians, but while the pathway to many other single species specialisations is relatively straightforward (eg, equine medicine, cattle medicine, rabbit medicine and so on), that is not possible for cats. If you want to work with cats, you are forced to specialise on dogs too, or be denied specialist status. This is particularly important if you want to train residents, as they have to be supervised by ECVIM or ACVIM diploma holders. If we cannot train residents, how do we get more feline medicine specialists?

We have more than 10 million pet cats in the UK, their needs are different from those of dogs and they deserve to be cared for by feline-focused clinicians in general practice, in referral practice and within university teaching hospitals too.