



**DOCTOR OF VETERINARY
MEDICINE PROGRAM**
COLORADO STATE UNIVERSITY

Colorado State University
Doctor of Veterinary Medicine Program
Definition of Veterinary Professionalism*

Veterinary professionalism consists of those behaviors by which we – as veterinarians – demonstrate that we are worthy of the trust bestowed upon us by our clients and the public.

1. **Veterinarians adhere to high ethical and moral standards.** Professional work has a moral value that compels veterinarians to behave ethically in their personal and professional lives. Veterinarians have a duty to do right and to avoid doing wrong.
2. **Veterinarians respond to patient, client and/or societal needs.** It is the veterinarian's duty to serve as the patient's advocate while recognizing client interests. The veterinary profession best meets its obligations when it attends actively to its duty to address societal needs.
3. **Veterinarians embody core humanistic values.** Veterinarians demonstrate core humanistic values including honesty and integrity, compassion and empathy, respect for self and others, and trustworthiness in all interactions with patients, clients, colleagues and others.
4. **Veterinarians hold themselves and their colleagues accountable.** Veterinarians reflect upon their actions and decisions as one mechanism to hold themselves accountable. Implicit in the relative autonomy granted to the veterinary profession is that its members will set and enforce standards of practice.
5. **Veterinarians commit to excellence and advancing the field.** Veterinarians maintain the highest standards of excellence through the continuing acquisition of knowledge and the development of new skills. Veterinarians advance the body of knowledge in the profession through support of efforts to improve the health of animals, people and the planet.
6. **Veterinarians enhance respect for the profession.** Veterinarians conduct themselves in an exemplary manner and through their actions enhance the public's understanding of, and respect for, the profession.

**The definition of veterinary professionalism borrowed heavily from the work of Herbert M. Swick, MD (Toward a Normative Definition of Medical Professionalism. Academic Medicine. 2000;75:612-616).*