Job Description - New Graduate Veterinarian

So now you are a vet, what are you going to do with your skills and knowledge now? Do you want to experience first hand, the joys of helping those animals that really need it? Do you want to get to know an extremely special and different breed of dog and cat? Do you want to experience a new culture, soak up the sunshine, snorkel and dive in the azure waters of the Gulf of Thailand? Come to Thailand and volunteer some time with the Koh Tao Animal Clinic.

The Koh Tao Animal Clinic is a non-profit animal clinic on the island of Koh Tao in the Gulf of Thailand. Two Veterinary Nurses, or a Veterinarian and Nurse, a Veterinary Assistant permanently staff the clinic, while additional veterinary help is provided sporadically on a voluntary basis. The two qualified staff members are responsible for first opinion consultations, administration of the required treatment (ranging from medication to surgery) and caring for hospitalized animals. They have sole charge of the clinic, and are required to maintain accounts and computer records of all their work as well as keep the clinic stocked with medicines. They also travel the island to provide on-site care for stray animals, continuing the Koh Tao Animal Clinic’s vaccination program, treating all skin diseases and providing emergency care. The standard procedures carried out by the qualified staff are:

- Spay/Neutering
- Vaccinations
- Skin treatments
- Sedations
- Wound suturing
- Wound cleanups (there are many maggot infested wounds on the island!)
- Consultation and treatment for illnesses
- Intravenous Fluid Therapy

Volunteering veterinarians help with our spay/neuter program, and with any surgical cases pending since the last veterinarian visit. They usually volunteer for 2 or 3 days a week and the rest of the time they can enjoy the island and have a wonderful vacation. While soaking up the atmosphere, vets also have the chance to make an enormous difference to the animal population of the island – which, in turn is greatly appreciated by the community of Koh Tao.

With regard to new graduates, it is essential that their surgeries are assisted and supervised on arrival, as the performance of a spay in field conditions, without gas anesthesia and with the high incidence of *Ehrlichia canis* infection leading to low platelet numbers and therefore excessive bleeding, is by far the most difficult way to learn! For this reason, the Koh Tao Animal Clinic will only allow surgeries to be performed by those new graduates who will commit to a minimum of 8 weeks, with the initial weeks coinciding with a visit from an experienced veterinarian who is willing to supervise and train the new vet. Following supervised surgery, the experienced surgeon and the new graduate should discuss and decide which procedures the new graduate would be capable to continue alone. The dates of experienced veterinarians vary a lot, and each visit would need to be individually arranged. Surgical notes are provided outlining the Koh Tao Animal Clinic’s protocols, and experienced nurses familiar with out conditions will assist with
surgeries – their authority should be respected with regard to the specific needs of an island environment such as this.

If your visit is planned for less than 8 weeks, or an experienced veterinarian is not available for supervision, the newly graduated veterinarian will be very welcome to assist the nurses with their daily outpatient and inpatient care. There are still huge amounts to be learned with regard to medical care, including the importance of nursing with regard to recovery from illness and the clinic has a selection of reference material to assist with this learning process.

This position requires that you are independent, motivated, and determined to make even the smallest difference. There will be periods when the clinic is very busy and you will have lots of consultations and hospitalized patients, this time will require organization and commitment to the clinic and the job description you have agreed to fulfill. The clinic occasionally has periods when it is slow and fewer people come into the clinic for consultations and treatments. During this time it is essential that you remain motivated and initiate projects that you might not have time for regularly. Please keep in mind that if you are not busy with patients the clinic should be cleaned and dusted from ceiling to floor, including all shelves and cupboards. If this is finished then determine other tasks that may have been neglected during the busy times. Please make yourself familiar with the clinic’s Code of Conduct and immediately following reviewing it and your job description sign our letter of agreement so all parties are aware of the standards and requirements set out.

Working on Koh Tao is truly an amazing experience and we are fortunate enough to be able to do what we love on a tropical island, but please remember this is a job and you are being asked to treat your time with us as you would in any working environment elsewhere. The charity works very hard to raise money to support our cause and much of that money goes to wages; so please be respectful and responsible as a member of the Koh Tao Animal Clinic.

Thank you and welcome to Koh Tao!