



Practice guide to PSS assessments

Version – 15072021

Contents

PSS assessment checklist.....	3
Practice guide to PSS assessments.....	4
Introduction.....	4
Getting set up for the assessment.....	4
Arranging the assessment.....	5
Preparing for the assessment	6
The assessment day.....	8
Receiving your report and feedback	8
Assessment fees and invoice.....	9
Completion	10
Useful links	11

PSS assessment checklist

Below is a list of the key actions that you will need to complete in advance of your PSS assessment:

Pre-assessment

- Get set up for the assessment on Stanley, including by selecting the Species and Accreditations to be assessed
- Arrange the assessment date with my Assessor
- Upload all the required documents to Stanley by the document deadline. See [Preparing for the assessment](#)

Post-assessment

- Submit the post-assessment evidence by the deadlines provided. See [Receiving your report and feedback](#)
- Pay the assessment invoice (where applicable)

Practice guide to PSS assessments

Introduction

The Practice Standards Scheme (PSS) is a voluntary initiative to accredit veterinary practices in the UK. Through setting standards and carrying out regular assessments, the Scheme aims to promote and maintain the highest standards of veterinary care.

A PSS assessment involves a [PSS Assessor](#) visiting your practice to confirm that you are meeting all the requirements of your chosen [accreditation level](#). There is also a pre-assessment document upload and review element to the assessment, as well as a post-assessment evidence review for any requirements not met. If there are multiple premises in your practice group, the assessments for all premises will be arranged together and this should reduce the time spent at each premises.

In May 2021, the PSS [published the new version](#) (version 3) of its requirements following a five-yearly review by the [Practice Standards Group \(PSG\)](#). Version 3 (now version 3.1 for Equine) will be used for all assessments carried out from October 2021 onwards.

A standard PSS assessment does not include assessment of the optional PSS Awards. You will need to achieve accreditation / re-accreditation before you can apply for an Award. However, your PSS Assessor will be happy to discuss the Awards with you and advise you on what needs to be done to achieve them. Further information about the [Awards](#) can be found on our website.

This guide has been produced to assist you with preparing for your assessment and understanding what it will involve for you.

Getting set up for the assessment

Stanley (www.stanley.org.uk) is the online system that is used to manage the PSS assessment process, including the pre-assessment document upload and review, generation of the assessment report, and the post-assessment evidence review.

An 'assessment event' is used to manage your assessment on Stanley. This can be found in your 'PSS events' area (it will either be listed as a 'Routine', 'Initial', 'Medicines' or 'Upgrade accreditation' assessment, depending on the type of assessment that you are undergoing).

There are some steps that you need to follow on Stanley to get set up for your assessment, including logging in and selecting the Species and Accreditations that will be assessed. This will need to be done before we can assign an Assessor for your approval, and before you can start preparing for the assessment.

Sections 2 and 7 of the Getting to know Stanley guide will provide you with full details on how to log in to Stanley and get set up for your assessment. You can also watch the 'Logging in' and 'Pre-inspection stage' video guides on our website: <https://www.rcvs.org.uk/how-we-work/video-guides/>.

Note:

- **You must be assessed to at least Core Standards for each species treated at your premises. Please ensure that you select the correct Species and Accreditation levels when getting set up for the assessment.**
- **If you do not select the Species and Accreditation levels, we will select it for you based on your current accreditations held or the species treated at your premises.**

Top tips:

- **Each premises in your practice group will have its own 'assessment event'. To access the events for your branches, log in as the principal premises, go to 'PSS events' and use the 'Practice structure' or 'Quick change premises' features to navigate to another premises.**

Arranging the assessment

An Assessor will be assigned by us to carry out your assessment and their details will be sent to you on Stanley for approval. This will usually be done within 2-3 months of the assessment. For further instructions on approving the Assessor, please refer to section 7 of the Getting to know Stanley guide, or the 'Pre-inspection stage' video guide on our website.

Note:

- **If you do not actively approve the Assessor within 5 days of them being assigned, they will be automatically approved.**

After being approved, the Assessor will make initial contact with you by telephone or email to introduce themselves and to arrange a mutually suitable date and time for your assessment. This will also be an opportunity for you to ask any questions about the process on the assessment day.

The length of the assessment visit itself will depend on factors including the presence/quality of the pre-submitted paperwork, the level of accreditation the practice premises is pursuing, the number of premises in the group, and how many team members the assessor speaks to on the day. The assessor should be able to give more precise timeframes when they contact you to arrange the assessment.


Top tips:

- **We will use the practice contact details you provide on [RCVS 'My Account'](#) throughout the assessment process, so please ensure they are kept up to date.**
- **Our main contact throughout the assessment process will be with the principal premises for your practice group. Please forward any information and resources to your branch premises as needed.**

Preparing for the assessment

You will need to mark requirements as 'Confirmed as practised' on Stanley once you have checked that you are meeting them (and before you can upload the required documents).

For some of the requirements, there are 'required documents' that need to be in place for the requirement to be met. We ask you to upload some of these required documents to Stanley so that they can be reviewed by your Assessor in advance of the assessment. In the PSS Modules and

Awards documents, these are indicated with a document upload symbol () , and on Stanley they are listed as 'Documents required to be uploaded before Pre-Inspection Review'.

The remaining documents will need to be available for review on the assessment day.

For further instructions on confirming requirements and uploading documents, please refer to section 8 of the Getting to know Stanley guide, or the 'Pre-inspection stage' video guide on our website.

Note:

- **It will not be possible to assess the PSS Awards at your assessment, so please do not apply for an Award within your assessment event. You may still wish to look through the Awards requirements whilst preparing for your assessment, but these will not be assessed.**
- **Please contact us immediately if you need to re-arrange your assessment. Apart from in exceptional circumstances, we will charge a cancellation fee where an assessment is cancelled by the practice less than 14 days before the assessment date agreed by the practice. For assessments cancelled less than 28 days before the assessment date agreed by the practice, we reserve the right to charge a cancellation fee where appropriate.**

Top tips:

- **Only upload the 'Documents required to be uploaded before Pre-Inspection Review' to Stanley. The remaining documents will be looked at on the assessment day.**
- **For the pre-assessment document review, generic documents such as SOPs may only be uploaded once to the principal premises and for the main species type.**
- **Only click 'Ready for pre-inspection re-review' once *all* the pre-assessment documents have been uploaded**
- **Your Assessor may leave feedback on the documents and may ask you for additional information, so check back on Stanley for this ahead of your assessment**

The assessment day

During the visit your Assessor will check the remaining documents, look at facilities and equipment, and talk to practice team members. They may also wish to talk with your clients in the waiting room and, with permission, observe consultations.

You are not expected to be perfect on the day of the visit – you will be given time to correct any issues found after the assessment visit. Remember that your Assessor is also available for you to ask advice and to share best practice, so please do take the opportunity to ask them questions.

Top tips:

- **It is helpful to have a key person appointed for the assessment to show your Assessor around and to answer queries. This should be someone with a suitable level of knowledge of your practice, such as a Head Nurse or a lead veterinary surgeon.**
- **Your Assessor can witness the destruction of Controlled Drugs. If you require this, please make them aware at the start of your assessment and have the necessary equipment ready.**

Receiving your report and feedback

Your assessment report will be released to you on Stanley within 4-6 weeks of the assessment. The report will contain general feedback and recommendations from your Assessor, and it will also list any requirements that were not met at the assessment. For these requirements, there will be feedback from your Assessor explaining why the requirement was not met and what needs to be done to resolve it. You will also be asked to provide evidence by a specified deadline (usually within 1, 3 or 6 months of the report date) to show that the requirement is being met.

After you have received your report, you will need to submit the required evidence to Stanley by the specified deadlines. It is essential that these deadlines are met, so that we can be assured that the issues have been resolved and that you are meeting the requirements.

Note:

- **Each premises will receive its own assessment report, and you will need to upload the required evidence for each premises.**
- **Please do not take measures to resolve issues until you have received your assessment report. Some of your Assessor's feedback may change following an internal review process, and we would not want you to expend time and / or money unnecessarily.**
- **Where deadlines are not adhered to or evidence is not provided, we will refer your practice to the Review Group for the Scheme to make a decision on further action; this could involve bringing your next routine assessment forward, or carrying out a re-assessment or spot check of your practice.**

Top tips:

- **When uploading evidence, please select 'yes' in response to 'Has the issue been resolved?' to flag to your Assessor that evidence has been uploaded**
- **Remember to click 'Ready for post-inspection re-review' once *all* the evidence due by a deadline has been uploaded**

Your evidence will be reviewed by your Assessor and, if the issues have been resolved, the relevant requirement(s) will be marked as met. Where further information is still required, an updated report will be generated on Stanley with additional feedback and revised evidence deadlines.

For further instructions on viewing your assessment report and submitting evidence, please refer to section 10 of the Getting to know Stanley guide, or the 'Post-inspection stage' video guide on our website.

Assessment fees and invoice

If your practice is undergoing a Routine assessment to gain re-accreditation, you will have one day of assessment included for your practice group through your annual renewal fees. However, we will charge for any additional assessment days over and above this, as well as for any Assessor expenses.

If your practice is going through an Initial assessment, an Initial assessment fee will be payable, plus any Assessor expenses.

The PSS fees are outlined on our website here <https://www.rcvs.org.uk/how-we-work/fees/>.

The invoice for your assessment will be sent to you after the assessment day, around the same time as you receive your assessment report.

Note:

- **Payment of your assessment invoice will be due within 30 days of the invoice date. We cannot complete your assessment and award your accreditations until payment has been received.**

Top tips:

- **Stanley asks you to confirm payment of the assessment fees upon submission of your pre-assessment documents. However, this can be ignored as the assessment invoice is only sent after your assessment.**

Completion

Your assessment will be complete once your Assessor has marked all the outstanding requirements as being met. You will be notified of this by your administrator and, once any outstanding invoices have been paid, you will be sent a digital copy of your accreditation certificate, along with copies of the accreditation logos.

Useful links

- Stanley, the online PSS system www.stanley.org.uk
- Stanley video guides <https://www.rcvs.org.uk/how-we-work/video-guides/>
- Getting to know Stanley guide <https://www.rcvs.org.uk/document-library/getting-to-know-stanley-a-guide-for-veterinary-practices/>
- Modules and Awards documents and Change documents for each species, plus PSS rules <https://www.rcvs.org.uk/setting-standards/practice-standards-scheme/>