

Pre-registration practical examination guidance

The RCVS pre-registration examination is designed to ensure that individuals who have not achieved an RCVS Accredited Qualification are competent against a range of RCVS Day One Skills. This includes:

- Student Veterinary Nurses enrolled with the RCVS completing a qualification which holds RCVS provisional accreditation.
- Holders of veterinary nursing qualifications issued outside the UK who have had their qualification and experience assessed as suitable for entering the Pre-registration examination.

This guidance provides details about entering the examination, the examination day, and the results process.

An OSCE is a multi-station practical examination where students have a fixed period of time to complete a series of complex and non-complex practical tasks. The examination covers the following topics:

- Assessment and Nursing Care
- Communication
- Dressings and Bandages
- Supporting Veterinary Anaesthesia
- Veterinary Diagnostic Imaging
- Veterinary Laboratory Techniques
- Veterinary Theatre Practice

The examination is designed to assess your skills, competences and practical application of clinical situations detailed in the RCVS Day One Skills for Veterinary Nurses. The examination is held up to three times a year in the UK. The examination dates and submission dates will be provided to you.

The content of the examination reflects current clinical procedures undertaken in the UK. These may differ from other countries and therefore you should ensure that you are familiar with the methodology you are required to follow.

The examination consists of ten OSCE stations. You have a maximum of ten minutes to complete each station. The scenario and a marking scheme are made available to you beforehand. It is strongly advised that you spend time in a UK veterinary practice going through these tasks and ask veterinary nurses to observe you. You will almost certainly be familiar with most of the techniques but the equipment available in the UK may differ.

Entry requirements – Educated outside the UK

To be eligible to enter the Pre-registration OSCE you must first have achieved a qualification, which has been accepted by the RCVS, and been informed that you need to pass the examination.

Entry requirements – UK students

UK Students studying on a course with provisional accreditation may enter the examination prior to completion of their qualification, but only once they have passed all modules referenced to the RCVS Day One Skills and RCVS Day One Competences, including the completion of 1,800 hours of clinical experience. If you have not completed the required hours, contact us to discuss the possibility of you being permitted to enter the examination.

It should be noted that once you achieve your qualification your student status will end. You may continue to work in veterinary practice for the purposes of preparing for the examination but must enroll for a Period of Supervised Adaptation (PSA) if your role requires you to deliver nursing care or undertake surgical procedures. Individuals registered for the PSA must be supervised in the same way that they would have been when they were enrolled as student veterinary nurses.

For further information email prereg.vn@rcvs.org.uk

Entering the examination

You must complete the online application form (supplied separately) and make the payment. Please note that your entry will not be accepted until the payment is received. If your payment is late, then you may not be able to enter the examination.

We will email you to confirm your application has arrived. Once all applications have been received, we will confirm the date and time of your appointment along with the password you will need to open your examination results.

If your examination fee is being paid by your college, we will be able to send an invoice on receipt of a written request to do so. The request must contain the names and RCVS number of each of the applicants.

Please note the focus of the examination is normally small companion animals kept as pets in the UK. If you have a specific equine qualification, please discuss with us at least 4 months before the examination. You will be provided with a handbook containing the possible Equine OSCE stations

Maximum candidate numbers

Our examination centre is always booked for two days, this allows us to examine a maximum of 40 candidates. If we exceed this number, we will try to accommodate everyone by arranging further examination sessions, but this is not always possible. Priority is given to those who enter the examination first. You are therefore advised to enter the examination as soon as possible.

The examination day

You must attend the examination at your allotted time. You will be given a briefing before the exam. It is important to arrive at least thirty minutes before your start time. The Examination will last for 2.5 - 3 hours.

You are required to bring 3 pairs of surgical gloves in your size. This is to ensure that you have correctly fitting gloves of a familiar type should any of the tasks require them.

You must bring your **passport** or driving licence as identification (national ID card for EU citizens also accepted). This must be an up-to-date, valid document. **If you arrive without the correct identification, you will be turned away from the examination** (if in doubt about the admissibility of your photo identification please contact the RCVS).

If you hold a qualification issued outside the UK you must bring your original qualification certificate(s) and Passport to the examination to be checked. If you do not bring your certificate(s) then you will be able to sit the examination but will not be able to enter the Register until these have been seen. This may mean that you will be required to bring them to the RCVS offices in London.

Normally a maximum of ten candidates will sit the exam at the same time. There may be several groups. Where applicants attend the same college, we will try and place them in the same group so that they can travel to the examination together.

When you enter the examination room you will see 10 screened booths. You will be assigned the first task. The task scenario will be placed on the chair outside.

An electronic timing system will be used. You will hear an announcement instructing you to read the scenario. You will be given approximately two minutes to do this. You will then be instructed to enter the booth. The examiner may provide you with additional instructions and the announcer will tell you to start the task.

After eight minutes you will be told that you have two minutes remaining. After 10 minutes you will be told to stop what you are doing and leave the station. Once all candidates have left the stations you will be moved to the next station. There will be a pause between stations to allow the examiners to complete their marking and reset the station. You will be told when to read the next scenario. This will continue until all the tasks have been completed.

Short comfort breaks may be requested, but we ask that you keep these to a minimum because the entire examination circuit will be paused until you return to the room.

You are required to carry out the patient care in the way you will when you are a Registered Veterinary Nurse (RVN). We do not use live patients; instead, we use veterinary models, which have been adapted for the purpose of the examination. You are expected to provide the treatment as if the patient is a real animal.

You will be told if the patient is conscious or not.

At each OSCE station there will be one or more skills to complete. Inside each station you will find a copy of the scenario and all the necessary equipment required to complete the skill. This may include a model patient and hospital record. Infection control equipment (hand gel, aprons, and gloves) will be available if you are expected to use them.

The examiner will assess you against the published marking criteria. You are being assessed on your practical skills. Some candidates find it useful to talk while completing the task, but unless specifically requested in the scenario you will not be marked on your verbal explanation. You must not talk to the other candidates while in the examination room.

You may leave the booth when you have completed everything you need to do. Do not worry if you complete the task early. Finishing early does not necessarily indicate that you have done something wrong; however, you should check that you have not forgotten to do something before leaving the station.

Once you have completed all the stations you will be allowed to leave the test centre. Your results will be sent to you by email within 4 weeks of the examination. We normally provide you with 24 hours notice that results are being published.

OSCE stations are revised from time to time. No changes will be made in the four weeks prior to the examination. The date of the last update is detailed on each OSCE station.

Video recording

During the exam, RCVS may take a video and audio recording of candidates within an OSCE station which will then be assessed at a later date or used for quality assurance processes.

This Data will be processed in compliance with the General Data Protection Regulations and Data Protection Act 2018.

We will be processing this data on a public task basis to carry out our functions in the public interest i.e. in order to administer the Pre-registration examination and ensure its integrity.

The data will be stored for no longer than is necessary and technical and security measures are in place to ensure the data remains strictly confidential. Videos will normally be deleted after any examination appeals have been concluded.

For further information on how RCVS processes data and if you have any questions then please see our online privacy policy <https://www.rcvs.org.uk/privacypolicy/>

Disposing of waste

It is your responsibility to familiarise yourself with UK veterinary waste requirements. Helpful information is available on our website <https://www.rcvs.org.uk/news-and-views/news/hazardous-waste-responsibilities/>

Equipment

All equipment required to complete the examination will be provided with the exception of surgical gloves. You may bring pens, scissors and calculators if you wish, but these will be provided where required.

Calculations

Many of the OSCE stations require you to complete a calculation. These often relate to drug dosages. The way the dose rate is presented is taken from the manufacturers data sheets. You are not required to remember dose rates. These will be provided. You will either be provided with scales to weigh the patient, or the weight will be contained on the patient record. **You will also be provided with the concentration of the drug i.e. 10mg/ml.**

If you are unfamiliar with the way that manufacturers dose rates are written then it is advisable to view examples published in the Noah datasheet compendium, BSAVA formulary or online. We have also provided some examples below.

The use of calculators in the practical examination is permitted. These will be provided where required.

Examples of information you could be provided to calculate a dose of medication / drug to administer to a patient.

- 5 mg/kg bodyweight, corresponding to 1 ml/5 kg bodyweight, daily by subcutaneous injection for 5 days.
- 10 mg/kg bodyweight, corresponding to 2 ml/5 kg bodyweight, once daily by intramuscular injection for 10 consecutive days.
- 2.5 mg/10 kg bodyweight (equivalent to 0.5 ml/10 kg), twice daily for 10 days to be given orally in tablet or capsule.
- 1.7 mg/10 kg bodyweight (equivalent to 0.34 ml/10 kg), three times daily via intravenous injection.
- 50 mg/kg bodyweight per day (i.e. 0.4 ml/kg bodyweight), preferably given in two equally divided doses (i.e. 25 mg equivalent to 0.2 ml/kg bodyweight twice daily) for 5-7 days.
- mg/kg/day split into two equal doses to be administered subcutaneously.

- mg/kg body weight (i.e. 0.4 ml/10 kg bodyweight) given in one dose orally (liquid)
- 5 mg/kg body weight (0.2 ml/kg bodyweight) orally diluted in water, twice daily for 7 days.
- 40 mg/kg bodyweight daily by subcutaneous injection for 5 days.
- 0.10 ml/kg bodyweight twice daily for 10 days to be given orally as tablet or capsule.

Examples of information you could be provided with to calculate Intravenous fluid therapy rates

You will be provided with the following information.

Maintenance rate calculations	X mls/kg/day
Drip factor	X drops/ml
Other information	Administer the fluid over a period of X hours

Example of information you could be provided with to calculate a fresh gas flow for Anaesthesia

You will be provided with the

- Weight of the patient
- Tidal Volume
- Respiration rate

You will not be provided with the system factor

You must show your workings on the sheet provided and remember to include the units

Passing criteria

In order to pass the examination, you need to achieve and pass a minimum of 7 stations and achieve a minimum total score. Each of the steps within the OSCE is weighted. This means that some steps attribute one mark towards your final score while others contribute up to ten marks. The more important the step, the higher the mark. Steps where patient safety is paramount will be worth more marks. Due to the different complexity in each OSCE station the pass marks differ. RCVS use the Angoff method to set the pass mark. Pass marks are not published ahead of the examination, but you will be provided this information with your results.

Feedback

You will receive a summary report and copies of each of your mark sheets as completed by the examiner. This will detail the score you achieved in each OSCE station and your total score. The passing score for each station will also be provided.

Examiners

Examiners are Registered Veterinary Nurses (RVNs) or veterinary surgeons. All examiners receive training and attend standardisation sessions. The role of the examiner is to assess candidates carrying out the task. The examiner will observe you and complete the mark sheet as you progress through the task.

Dress code for the examination

You should wear the uniform you wear at work. It does not need to be a particular style or colour. Your shoes should enclose the whole foot. Open toe shoes or sandals are not permitted. The uniform and shoes should be clean and free from obvious dirt and stains. Hair should be clean and tidy. Long hair should be secured off the face. Nails should be clean and well-manicured (short), false nails and varnish should be removed. **It is advisable to remove all jewellery.** This is because a number of stations have marks attributed to this. If you are unable to remove your jewellery, then you will not achieve the marks.

How to prepare for the OSCE

The RCVS publishes the OSCE station scenarios and marking criteria. You can find a copy at the end of this document. Examiners accept that there may be several ways to complete each skill. You should refer to textbooks to confirm the methodology used in the UK. There are no specific books based on the OSCE examination for veterinary nurses. Many of the veterinary nursing textbooks and journals contain acceptable methods for carrying out each practical skill.

If you are a **Student Veterinary Nurse** or registered for the **Period of Supervised Adaptation (PSA)**, you are likely to be working alongside Registered Veterinary Nurses (RVNs). These nurses will have taken OSCE examinations. Talk to them about their experiences.

Use the checklists provided to practice the OSCE stations and become familiar with the marking criteria. When you are ready, ask others to observe you and provide you with feedback on your performance.

Colleges offering veterinary nurse training in the UK often run revision courses. A list of colleges can be found on the RCVS website. You are advised to attend at least one revision course before entering the examination. You should inform the college that you are entering the RCVS Pre-registration examination and ensure that they will be able to cover the skills required during the revision session.

The RCVS has developed some support material which is available via the RCVS Academy <https://academy.rcvs.org.uk/>. To access please use your RCVS login and password which was provided to you during your enrolment/application process. If you qualified outside the UK select the **Career Development tab** and **working in the UK for veterinary nurses**. The OSCE support material is located in part 2 of the veterinary nurse course. If you studied in the UK then select the tab for **Students & Newly Qualified** and **VN pre-registration examination support**. The courses are the same, but they contain different information about entering the examination.

If you complete the course and wish to join the online group meeting to discuss the OSCE stations shown in the activity, then please complete the form in the Academy.

The RCVS does not predetermine the pass rate and it is possible for all candidates to pass. Most candidates are successful the first time, but the examination is challenging and therefore you should ensure that you are fully prepared before you enter the examination.

The facilities at MYF Training are leased to the RCVS. Their staff are not involved in the development of the examinations and **cannot** provide tours of the facilities beforehand. Please direct all questions to the RCVS examinations team.

Reasonable adjustment

If you have any special educational or other needs/disability, which may require special provision to be made in the examinations you can apply for adjustments to be made in your examination.

Applications must be received at least two months before your examination. You will receive a letter confirming the adjustments we will make. If you have been permitted to have adjustments made, then you should indicate this on the examination entry form. Assessments for special educational needs made before you were sixteen must have been made within two years of the application for entry to the examinations or an updated report will be required. If the report was made after your sixteenth birthday, then no updated report will be necessary, even if it is more than two years old.

If you believe that you will have difficulty completing any of the OSCE stations due to an issue with the equipment provided, for example an allergy or other unavoidable challenge, you should notify the RCVS before the examination entry closing date.

A current medical letter must accompany applications made for medical reasons.

Mitigating circumstances

If you wish to notify the RCVS of circumstances, which may have unduly affected your examination performance, you must do so within 5 days of sitting the examination. You must use the appropriate form, which can be obtained on request from the RCVS or at the examination centre.

The RCVS will give consideration to personal circumstances (such as illness or serious personal problems) which occurred unexpectedly and immediately prior to, or during, the examination. We will also take into consideration events occurring during the examination itself (such as undue disturbance). If we consider that such circumstances have unduly affected your performance, your mark may be adjusted, or the examination attempt may be nullified. You should note that adjustment of marks applies only in the case of borderline failure.

Illness cannot be used as a reason for special consideration – if you are unwell, you should withdraw from the examination and re-apply when you are fit to sit.

Examination results enquiry and appeals

If you have an enquiry concerning the accuracy of your examination results you must submit the Examination Enquiry form within 14 days of the results being published. The form can be obtained from the RCVS. There is a fee for the enquiry, which will be refunded if the investigation identifies an irregularity in your examination.

If you are not satisfied with the result of the enquiry or you feel that an enquiry is not necessary, you may submit an examination appeal. Examination appeals may be made only against the **conduct and conditions** of the examination **and not against the marks awarded**. An appeal must be made, in writing and using the RCVS Appeal Form available from the RCVS, within 28 days of the date of the letter advising of your examination result or 14 days after the letter informing you of the result of your enquiry.

Candidates awaiting the outcome of an appeal or investigation are advised to enter future examinations. If the appeal is successful, the RCVS will refund examination fees and all out of pocket expenses.

Re-sitting the examination

You are permitted to re-sit the examination as often as you like. You will be required to pay the full fee for each examination attempt. You will, however, be required to provide evidence that you are taking remedial action before entering your fourth and subsequent examinations.

Payment, withdrawal and refunds

Receipt of your payment does not indicate your entry has been accepted. In some instances, there may be follow-up action required:

- a) If notice of withdrawal is received in writing at the RCVS **on or before** the closing date for the receipt of entries, a full refund of the fee, subject to a deduction of 10% for administrative costs, will be made.
- b) If notice of withdrawal is received in writing at the RCVS **after the closing date for entries but no less than 10 working days** before the date on which your practical examination is due to be held, a 50% refund will be made.
- c) If you withdraw **less than ten days before the examination or fail to appear** at the examination, you will not be entitled to a refund of any portion of the fee paid (except as provided below).

In special circumstances, consideration will be given to a full refund if there are medical or compassionate reasons for withdrawal or failure to appear for the examination. Any such refunds will be subject to a deduction of 10% for administrative costs.

Contacting the RCVS

Please contact the RCVS Veterinary nursing Examination team on 020 7202 0788 or prereg.vn@rcvs.org.uk