



# Certificate in Advanced Veterinary Nursing (CertAVN) framework

For consultation  
January 2025



## A review of the Certificate in Advanced Veterinary Nursing (CertAVN) framework



**As a responsible regulator with quality assurance at the heart of everything we do, we have a commitment to regularly review our standards for the Certificate in Advanced Veterinary Nursing (CertAVN) to ensure they remain up-to-date, fit for purpose and reflect the latest developments in the educational landscape.**

The CertAVN was first launched in May 2019 as an advanced professional qualification allowing veterinary nurses at all stages of their careers to develop their professional skills and knowledge in a designated area of the veterinary nursing profession. The modular style framework for the Certificate leads to awards in a variety of subject areas.

As with other standards frameworks, we will continue to review the CertAVN framework on a five-yearly basis to ensure that course providers are supported to best provide contemporary

and innovative approaches to education for CertAVN students, while being accountable for the delivery and management of accredited programmes.

We welcome constructive and specific feedback on our proposals from veterinary nurses at all stages of their careers, the wider veterinary team, and educators who will be delivering the programme, as well as employers of current and potential CertAVN holders. Your insights will help us ensure that the standards continue to enable veterinary nurse educators to deliver the best training and support possible for CertAVN students.

### **Introducing a new standard**

A key change we are proposing is the introduction of a new standard covering learning culture which encompasses the previous sustainability standard. We would particularly welcome feedback in this area.

We are grateful to the members of the task and finish working group set up to develop the changes and all other stakeholders and contributors for the development of this new proposed framework

Please do take the time to read through the CertAVN framework in full before undertaking the survey. If you have questions about the document or how to respond to the survey, please contact the RCVS Nursing Team on [vetnursing@rcvs.org.uk](mailto:vetnursing@rcvs.org.uk).

### **Sue Howarth RVN**

Chair, VN Education Committee



# Standards of accreditation

Standards for accreditation are set under the following:

1. **Curricula and assessment**
2. **Educators and assessors**
3. **Learning culture**



# Standard 1

## Curricula and assessment

Curricula and assessments are designed, developed, delivered and evaluated to ensure candidates achieve the RCVS Certificate in Advanced Veterinary Nursing.

### Requirements

#### **1.1 Curricula to remain relevant in respect of contemporary veterinary nursing in a subject specific area.**

*This may be evidenced through:*

- a. Curriculum framework mapping
- b. Schemes of work
- c. Assessment plans
- d. Timetables
- e. Curriculum documents
- f. Module descriptors
- g. Academic handbooks

### **1.2 Curricula and assessment weigh theory and practice learning appropriately to the programme.**

*This may be evidenced through:*

- a. Schemes of work
- b. Assessment plans
- c. Module descriptors
- d. Timetables
- e. Assessment schedules
- f. Assessment matrix
- g. Online platform

### **1.3 A range of appropriate assessments are delivered, ensuring the intended learning outcomes are fully and suitably assessed.**

*This may be evidenced through:*

- a. Assessment strategies
- b. Assessment rationale
- c. Example assessments
- d. Programme specifications
- e. Module documents
- f. Assessment matrix
- g. Academic integrity policy and procedure

### **1.4 Curricula and assessments are developed and evaluated by suitably experienced and qualified educators and/or practitioners who are accountable for ensuring the curriculum incorporates relevant programme outcomes.**

*This may be evidenced through:*

- a. CV and CPD records
- b. Academic handbooks
- c. Procedure for monitoring delivery and assessment
- d. Marking descriptors and rubrics
- e. Programme outcomes

### **1.5 Curricula are structured and sequenced to enable students to manage their theory and practice learning experience effectively.**

*This may be evidenced through:*

- a. Teaching plans
- b. Online platform
- c. Course information documents
- d. Schemes of work

- e. Assessment schedules
- f. Assessment matrix
- g. Student feedback

**1.6 Processes are in place to establish a high degree of validity and robustness to support the decisions made based on the results of the assessment.**

*This may be evidenced through:*

- a. Assessment matrix
- b. Academic regulations
- c. Assessment handbooks
- d. Role of the external examiner
- e. External examiner reports
- f. Example assessments
- g. Reasonable adjustment policy

**1.7 Moderation processes are in place and demonstrate that assessment is fair, reliable, and valid, and the integrity of the assessment is upheld.**

*This may be evidenced through:*

- a. Academic regulations
- b. Assessment handbook
- c. External examiner report
- d. Schemes of work
- e. Module descriptors
- f. Internal examiner and assessor procedures
- g. Fitness to study policy
- h. Reasonable adjustment policy
- i. Assessment outcomes data

**1.8 Adjustments are provided in accordance with relevant equalities and human rights legislation for all assessments.**

*This may be evidenced through:*

- a. Equality, diversity and inclusion policy
- b. Disability policy
- c. Health and wellbeing policy
- d. Appeals procedure
- e. Fitness to study policy
- f. Reasonable adjustment policy
- g. Mitigating circumstances policy
- h. Records of reasonable adjustment
- i. Student support plans
- j. Individual learning plans

### **1.9 The required facilities and resources are in place for the delivery and assessment of the curricula.**

*This may be evidenced through:*

- a. Campus map
- b. Consumables list
- c. Library resources
- d. IT resources
- e. Evidence of suitable and sufficient delivery areas
- f. Online learning platform

### **1.10 Curricula and assessments are reviewed by an external examiner who has sufficient standing, credibility and breadth of experience within the discipline.**

*This may be evidenced through:*

- a. External examiner CV
- b. External examiner CPD records
- c. External examiner recruitment criteria
- d. External examiner reports





## Standard 2

# Educators and assessors

Theory and practice learning and assessment are facilitated effectively and objectively by appropriately qualified and experienced professionals with necessary expertise for their educational and assessor roles.

### Requirements

#### **2.1 Are appropriately qualified and experienced and always act as professional role models.**

*This may be evidenced through:*

- a. Staff CVs
- b. Staff CPD records
- c. Job descriptions
- d. Person specifications

#### **2.2 Receive relevant induction, ongoing support, education and training.**

*This may be evidenced through:*

- a. Staff induction procedure
- b. CPD policy

- c. CPD records
- d. Mechanism for obtaining feedback
- e. Appraisal procedure

### **2.3 Have supported time and resources to enable them to fulfil their roles in addition to other professional responsibilities.**

*This may be evidenced through:*

- a. CPD policy
- b. Staff CVs
- c. Staff availability
- d. Teaching allocations

### **2.4 Receive and act upon constructive feedback from students and stakeholders to enhance the effectiveness of their teaching, supervision and assessment.**

*This may be evidenced through:*

- a. Feedback policy
- b. Evaluation of academic practice
- c. Employer consultation
- d. External examiner reports
- e. Module reviews
- f. Stakeholder feedback

### **2.5 Appropriately share and use evidence to make decisions on student assessment and progression.**

*This may be evidenced through:*

- a. Moderation reports
- b. External examiner reports
- c. Course design rationale
- d. Exam boards

### **2.6 Teaching, learning and assessments are developed and evaluated by suitably experienced and qualified personnel relevant to the subject area.**

*This may be evidenced through:*

- a. Marking allocation
- b. Job descriptions
- c. Person specifications
- d. Qualification development procedures



## Standard 3

# Learning culture

Education and training is valued and promoted in a safe and inclusive way across all learning environments, with diversity, inclusion and civility at the forefront. Programmes must also demonstrate a clear commitment to sustainability and promotion of the values of the *Code of Professional Conduct* at all times.

### Requirements

#### 3.1 Prioritise the wellbeing of people.

*This may be evidenced through:*

- a. Staff inductions
- b. Staff reviews
- c. Nominated staff members for wellbeing
- d. Pastoral support
- e. Staff or student codes of conduct
- f. Wellbeing policy
- g. Wellbeing initiatives
- h. Peer reviews
- i. CPD records
- j. Risk assessments related to health and wellbeing

### **3.2 Ensure students and educators understand how to raise concerns or complaints and are encouraged and supported to do so in line with local and national policies without fear of adverse consequences.**

*This may be evidenced through:*

- a. Minutes of student meetings
- b. Minutes of student representative meetings
- c. Programme/qualification handbooks
- d. Induction policy and timetables for students and staff
- e. Complaints procedure
- f. Whistleblowing policy
- g. Social media policy
- h. Safeguarding policy
- i. Wellbeing policy
- j. Staff code of conduct
- k. Student code of conduct
- l. Malpractice/maladministration policy

### **3.3 Ensure any concerns or complaints are investigated and dealt with effectively, ensuring the wellbeing of people and animals is prioritised.**

*This may be evidenced through:*

- a. Complaints review board
- b. Complaints procedure
- c. Accredited education institution (AEI)/delivery site fitness to practise policy
- d. Safeguarding policy
- e. Wellbeing policy
- f. Examples of complaints
- g. Malpractice/maladministration policy

### **3.4 Ensure incidents are fully investigated and learning reflections and actions are recorded and disseminated.**

*This may be evidenced through:*

- a. Minutes of meetings
- b. Clinical audit reports
- c. Complaints procedure
- d. Disciplinary policy
- e. Risk assessment and policy reviews
- f. Accident records
- g. Evidence of outcomes/actions and dissemination
- h. Examples of incidents or complaints
- i. Continuing professional development plans and records

### **3.5 Promote student engagement with the RCVS Code of Professional Conduct for Veterinary Nurses to develop open and honest practitioners, who work with integrity within the confines of Schedule 3 of the Veterinary Surgeons Act (1966).**

*This may be evidenced through:*

- a. AEI/delivery site fitness to practise procedure
- b. Student feedback
- c. Module/qualification handbook
- d. Monitoring of teaching and learning
- e. Learning logs
- f. Reflective diaries
- g. Tutorial records
- h. Learner reviews
- i. Student handbook

### **3.6 Promote evidenced-based improvement in education and veterinary nursing practise, developing practitioners who use this concept as a grounding principle in their daily work.**

*This may be evidenced through:*

- a. Research committee meetings
- b. Programme/qualification level intended learning outcomes
- c. Module/qualification handbooks
- d. CPD policy
- e. Secondment policy and examples
- f. Guest (expert) speaker timetables
- g. Journal clubs
- h. Clinical audits
- i. Clinical governance
- j. Quality improvement policies and procedures
- k. Inter-professional research opportunities

### **3.7 Demonstrate a reasonable commitment to environmental sustainability, including consideration of the impact of delivering the programme on the environment.**

*This may be evidenced through:*

- a. Environment sustainability policy
- b. Waste disposal contracts
- c. Accreditation with external partners e.g. green credentials
- d. Training practice (TP)/TP approval and monitoring records
- e. Sustainably sourced materials
- f. Evidence of internal teams/groups promoting environmental sustainability

### **3.8 Receive constructive feedback throughout the programme to promote and encourage reflective learning.**

*This may be evidenced through:*

- a. Feedback policy and procedures
- b. Feedback records
- c. Evidence-based professional practice procedures
- d. Module/qualification descriptors
- e. Programme/qualification handbook
- f. Assessment examples
- g. Formative assessment procedures
- h. Learner reviews

### **3.9 Ensure that recruitment, selection, and retention of students is open, fair, and transparent, and includes measures to understand and address underrepresentation.**

*This may be evidenced through:*

- a. Selection criteria for admission
- b. Recruitment documentation
- c. Copies of student certificates
- d. Accredited prior learning (APL) and recognised prior learning (RPL) policies
- e. Equality of opportunity policy
- f. Interview records
- g. Self-assessment reports
- h. Widening participation strategy and plan
- i. Application process
- j. Interview/selection process

### **3.10 Proactively identify and act on areas for improvement, regularly measuring programme performance and outcomes.**

*This may be evidenced through:*

- a. External academic consultation
- b. Employer consultation
- c. Review of programme performance
- d. Module reviews
- e. Student intake figures
- f. Stakeholder feedback
- g. Student feedback

### **3.11 Provide evidence that adequate market demand and finances are in place and are sufficient to sustain and develop the programme and have been approved by the AEI.**

*This may be evidenced through:*

- a. Budget
- b. Self-assessment reports
- c. Institution's annual report containing audited accounts
- d. Budgetary forecast for the programmes
- e. Evidence of actual and/or projected income sources
- f. Evidence of demand for the programme (market demand)
- g. Marketing strategy
- h. National student survey
- i. End of programme evaluation
- j. Justification for critical student numbers e.g. business planning documentation

### **3.12 Where an AEI plans to make any changes to its provision, including assessments, the RCVS must approve all changes prior to implementation.**

*This may be evidenced through:*

- a. Correspondence with RCVS regarding proposed changes
- b. Process for programme changes



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