



RCVS Standards Framework for Veterinary Nurse Education and Training

September 2024

RCVS | SETTING
VETERINARY
STANDARDS



Introduction

Our standards set out the professional values, knowledge, skills, and behaviours required of accredited education institutions (AEIs), delivery sites and training practices (TPs).

These standards aim to provide AEIs and TPs with the flexibility to develop innovative approaches to all education for student veterinary nurses, while being accountable for the local delivery and management of accredited programmes in line with the *RCVS Standards Framework for Licence to Practise Veterinary Nurse Qualifications*. Accredited institutions may offer various academic and flexible educational routes.

AEIs must be accredited against these standards to award any RCVS licence to practise veterinary nurse qualification.

AEIs are responsible for working with delivery sites and training practices to manage the quality of their educational programmes. Overall responsibility for the day-to-day management of the quality of any educational programme lies with an AEI, in partnership with delivery sites and training practices which provide opportunities for clinical experience (placement or employed) to veterinary nursing students.

Before a programme can be run, an accreditation process takes place through which we check that the proposed programme meets our standards. Examples of evidence have been provided, however, this is not an exhaustive list, and AElS can offer their own evidence appropriate to the requirements. Additionally, it is important to note that the Standards Framework is outcomes focused; AElS must, therefore, be able to demonstrate how the relevant policies and procedures are applied in the context of the veterinary nursing provision.

Animal health and welfare and public safety are central to our standards. Students will be in contact with patients and their owners throughout their education and it is important that they learn in a safe and effective way. This is a key element of the role of the clinical supervisor, referenced throughout the Standards Framework, and it is thus imperative that all requirements related to personnel involved in the training of student veterinary nurses includes consideration of clinical supervisors.

Through our quality assurance (QA) processes we check that education programmes meet our standards, and that delivery sites and training practices are managing risks effectively. Using internal and external intelligence we monitor risks to quality in education and training; this intelligence gathering includes analysis of system regulator reports.

AElS are monitored and we have processes for collecting, analysing, and responding to any risk intelligence we receive regarding educational programmes, including concerns raised with us directly by students. AElS are also required to self-report any risks or concerns that could affect the quality of programme delivery and, therefore, animal health and welfare and public protection.

We strongly encourage people, including all educators, employers, and students, to take part in QA events, where they will be asked to share experiences of veterinary nurse education and suggest improvements.

With grateful thanks to the Nursing and Midwifery Council (NMC) for allowing us to adopt the structure and format of the Standards of Proficiency for Registered Nurses.

We would also like to take the opportunity to thank all the stakeholders that contributed to the development of the new framework.



Standard 1

Learning culture

Standards

The learning culture prioritises the safety of people, including clients, students and educators, and animals, enabling the values of the *Code of Professional Conduct* to be upheld.

Education and training is valued and promoted in all learning environments, with diversity, inclusion and civility at the forefront and a clear commitment to sustainability.

Requirements

Accredited education institutions, together with delivery sites and training practices, must:

1.1 demonstrate that the safety of people and animals is a primary consideration in all learning environments

This may be evidenced through:

- a. Health and safety policy
- b. Clinical and delivery site audits
- c. Staff induction policy
- d. Equality, diversity, and inclusion policy
- e. Standard operating procedures
- f. Risk assessments
- g. E-safety policy
- h. Safeguarding policies and procedures
- i. Student inductions
- j. Policy for onsite animals utilised for veterinary nurse education
- k. Fire safety protocol
- l. Radiation Protection Advisor (RPA) reports
- m. Compliance with IRR 2017

Guidance:

This requirement is essentially the core elements of health and safety. It also needs to demonstrate the considerations across all learning environments, such as campuses and training practices, but also the online or virtual learning environment. In essence, it applies to everywhere that student veterinary nurses undertake learning and assessment.

There are no elements of this requirement that AEs, delivery sites or TPs should struggle with, as it is expected that health, safety, and welfare are always well considered.

Evidencing this requirement may include a number of policy documents. However, it is important that compliance with the policies is also established. For example, if the AEI health and safety policy stipulates that all risk assessments are reviewed annually, but the evidence submitted shows that they were last reviewed two years ago, it raises a question of compliance with the policies.

1.2 prioritise the wellbeing of people.

This may be evidenced through:

- a. Peer reviews
- b. Continuing professional development (CPD) policy
- c. CPD records
- d. Staff inductions
- e. Staff reviews
- f. Nominated staff members for wellbeing
- g. Pastoral support
- h. Staff code of conduct
- i. Wellbeing policy
- j. Wellbeing information (physical and online)
- k. Wellbeing initiatives
- l. Mental Health First Aider training
- m. Mental health support procedures
- n. Risk assessments for display screen equipment/workstations

Guidance:

The importance of supporting and developing health and wellbeing cannot be underestimated and, whilst Requirement 1.1 allows AEs, delivery sites and TPs to demonstrate health and safety compliance, this requirement encourages the compassionate approach expected for everyone working in the veterinary and educational professions. A thorough assessment of needs for students and staff should be considered as routine.

AEs, delivery sites and TPs are expected to demonstrate their commitment to wellbeing and the supportive services they can offer. Evidence of access to these resources is also required, which could include data from counselling or employee assistance programmes or be as simple as a flexi-working request to accommodate childcare requirements.

1.3 ensure that facilities and physical resources, including those used for clinical learning, comply with all relevant legislation including UK animal care and welfare standards.

This may be evidenced through:

- a. Training practice (TP) and auxiliary training practice (aTP) lists and risk assessments
- b. Veterinary Medicines Directorate (VMD) registration
- c. Policy for storage and disposal of POM-Vs
- d. Standard operating procedures
- e. Policy for onsite animals utilised for veterinary nurse education
- f. Facility audits
- g. List of locations where qualifications are delivered
- h. Schedule of quality monitoring activity
- i. Inventory of clinical equipment and consumables
- j. Student feedback
- k. Secondment agreements

Guidance:

This requirement focuses on the legislative expectations for AEIs, delivery sites and TPs. Similarly to Requirement 1.1, it must include consideration of the online or virtual learning environment.

VMD registration must be included for AEIs using POM-Vs for training purposes; the VMD accepts that training providers have slightly different requirements, and the RCVS will discuss this with AEIs and delivery sites as required. VMD registration is mandated for all TPs, and this should be checked by the AEI at initial approval.

Where on-site animal collections are used for student veterinary nurse training, the legislative compliance must be demonstrated. If there is an on-site animal collection, but it is not used for student veterinary nurse training, this evidence is not required, although that should be clearly indicated in any application or information submitted to the RCVS. Additionally, if staff animals are used for student veterinary nurse training, there must be appropriate policies and risk assessments in place and applied.

1.4 ensure clients understand the remit of the student veterinary nurse's involvement in the care of their animals and have the opportunity to withdraw consent.

This may be evidenced through:

- a. Standard operating procedures
- b. Poster regarding consent
- c. Consent guidance within pre-operative paperwork
- d. Website content
- e. Consent forms
- f. TP/aTP approval and monitoring records

Guidance:

Similarly to human healthcare, it is important that clients know and understand who is responsible for, and involved with, the care of their animals. It is, therefore, their prerogative to withdraw consent for those in training to be involved in the care of their animal, as is the case in human healthcare. Nonetheless, promoting the importance and value provided by TPs remains an important part of assuring clients that student veterinary nurses are working under constant, direct supervision, as dictated by Schedule 3 of the Veterinary Surgeons Act, and thus are supported by regulated professionals. This requirement is not encouraging AELs, delivery sites or TPs to indicate that student veterinary nurses provide a lower level of care, but rather to encourage clients to engage with the training process and be assured that their animal will receive the excellent standard of care that should be expected.

1.5 maintain confidentiality in all aspects of the provision, ensuring client, public and animal safety and welfare is promoted.

This may be evidenced through:

- a. Job descriptions
- b. Staff reviews
- c. Student feedback
- d. Monitoring of teaching and learning
- e. General Data Protection Regulation policy
- f. TP/aTP approval and monitoring records and risk assessments
- g. Social media policy

Guidance:

Maintaining confidentiality is a requirement of UK legislation, when considered in the context of student veterinary nurse training, educational establishments, and TPs. AELs, delivery sites and TPs should be able to clearly demonstrate the processes they follow to comply with data protection regulations and confidentiality procedures, be that two-stage authentication for accessing the computer system, or locked filing cabinets for paperwork.

It is also likely that educators and assessors will use case examples from their own clinical experience, which can provide valuable insight for student training, but must adhere to data protection requirements. Likewise, when student veterinary nurses log case examples on their RCVS Day One Skills recording platform, they must ensure that confidentiality is upheld, and patients and clients cannot be identified from the written description.

1.6 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

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- d. Induction policy and timetable 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

Guidance:

This requirement, along with Requirements 1.7 and 1.8, demonstrates the process to be followed for concerns and complaints. Whilst it is hoped that this is not a regular occurrence, it would be highly unlikely for an AEI, delivery site or TP to never receive a concern or complaint, and thus redacted examples can be submitted.

This first step in the process is simply demonstrating the process for a complaint submission, which is accessible and clear.

1.7 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. AEI/delivery site fitness to practise policy
- d. Safeguarding policy
- e. Wellbeing policy
- f. Examples of complaints
- g. Malpractice/maladministration policy

Guidance:

This is the second step in the process and should include a lot more detail regarding the application of the process.

This requirement mandates that concerns and complaints are fully and effectively addressed, in other words, they are not dismissed without investigation. However, it must also be clear that those who have submitted the complaint, as well as those who are the subject of the complaint, are treated fairly. Supportive mechanisms should be in place for everyone involved whilst the investigation is being conducted.

It is imperative, however, that animal welfare is never compromised; if a concern or complaint is submitted relating to student misconduct in a TP there must be a full investigation prior to the student recommencing work or placement hours.

1.8 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

Guidance:

This final step in the process promotes the learning culture expected of AElS, delivery sites and TPs; everyone makes mistakes, but how that is dealt with and learnt from will have a significant impact on the future career of the individual involved.

It is expected that learning action points are instigated for those involved, with a clear commitment to improving their behaviour and aiming to prevent future mistakes. Incidents could include accidents, near-misses, breaches in confidentiality, uncivil behaviour; these examples are not an exhaustive list.

Some incidents, unfortunately, will be sufficiently serious to warrant withdrawal from the course or suspension of employment. In this scenario, it is still expected that learning actions are undertaken, to reduce the risk of the behaviour being repeated by other students or team members.

1.9 promote student engagement with the RCVS Codes of Professional Conduct to develop open and honest practitioners.

This may be evidenced through:

- a. AEl/delivery site fitness to practise procedure
- b. Student feedback
- c. Module/qualification handbook
- d. Monitoring of teaching and learning
- e. RCVS Day One Skills recording tool
- f. Learning logs
- g. Reflective diaries
- h. Tutorial records
- i. Learner reviews
- j. Student handbook
- k. Clinical practice handbook

Guidance:

The *RCVS Codes of Professional Conduct* should be considered and referenced from the very beginning of student veterinary nurse training. This requirement references both of the Codes, i.e. for veterinary nurses and veterinary surgeons, in recognition of the different professionals who will be involved with the training of student veterinary nurses and ensuring that everyone knows and understands what is expected of RCVS-regulated professionals.

1.10 develop a learning culture that is fair, impartial, transparent, fosters good relations between individuals and diverse groups, and is compliant with equalities and human rights legislation.

This may be evidenced through:

- a. Monitoring of teaching and learning
- b. Staff training records
- c. CPD records
- d. Self-assessment reports
- e. Student feedback
- f. External examiner reports
- g. Equality, diversity, and inclusion policy
- h. Reasonable adjustment policy
- i. Conflict of interest declarations
- j. Complaints procedure
- k. National Student Survey (NSS) results

Guidance:

This requirement recognises the need for compliance with equalities and human rights legislation, ensuring that everyone is treated fairly and equally. Promotion of equality, diversity and inclusion is a key element of these standards, and it is expected that all AEs, delivery sites and TPs engage with these initiatives.

1.11 utilise information and data to promote and enhance equality of opportunities and widening participation.

This may be evidenced through:

- a. Self-assessment reports
- b. External examiner/advisor reports
- c. Student feedback
- d. Stakeholder feedback
- e. Minutes of staff and/or student meetings
- f. National Student Survey (NSS) data
- g. Office for Students (OfS) data, access, and participation plans
- h. Office of Qualifications and Examinations Regulation (Ofqual) conditions of recognition reports

Guidance:

Following on from Requirement 1.10, this offers an opportunity to demonstrate how feedback and data collection processes are informing improvements with regard to access to learning. UK educational regulation mandates this approach, and it is expected that all AELs are actively seeking to improve access and participation. Most delivery sites will also have data and information which can be evidenced here, although it may be more difficult for TPs; safe and effective recruitment strategies could be considered as an example. Other educational regulators, for the devolved nations, for example, can also be included as examples, likewise the Institute for Apprenticeships and Technical Education (IfATE).

1.12 work to promote inter-professional education and inter-professional practice and support opportunities for research.

This may be evidenced through:

- a. Programme/qualification level intended learning outcomes
- b. Module/qualification handbooks
- c. Secondment policy and examples
- d. Guest (expert) speaker timetables
- e. Research committee meetings
- f. Expert witness documentation
- g. Group project work
- h. Knowledge summaries
- i. Poster presentation
- j. Clinical supervisor training and standardisation

Guidance:

This requirement offers a critical opportunity for programmes and practices to develop the concept of team-based healthcare in the veterinary professions. No one individual can undertake the care of patients on their own, thus developing the recognition and respect for all roles is an important part of patient care.

Inter-professional education can include the use of external expertise, or those who are not RCVS registered but contribute to animal healthcare, such as hydrotherapists or behaviourists. Additionally, this could include co-teaching, peer-teaching, or peer-assessment, however, do be mindful that sitting students in a classroom together does not necessarily engender the inter-professional concept.

Inter-professional practice will most likely be undertaken in the TP, where student veterinary nurses are supported by a wide variety of team members. Opportunities for students to observe different types of practices can also assist with this aim.

The promotion of research opportunities can empower students to consider their own work for publication, or work with other professionals to assist with ongoing research. Equally, educators and assessors should be supported to work towards research aims.

1.13 promote evidence-based improvement in education and veterinary nursing practice.

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

Guidance:

It is imperative that student veterinary nurses are supported and empowered to understand the concept of evidence-based veterinary nursing and veterinary medicine. This should be considered from the outset of their training and strengthened throughout the programme.

Educators and assessors are expected to consider the current evidence base and ongoing developments when writing course content and assessment aims. This should encompass clinical as well as educational and pedagogical developments.

The personnel in the TPs should be maintaining their awareness of ongoing clinical developments, for example, by reviewing recent publications and considering improvements to practice. Additionally, the clinical supervisors are well placed to support with developments for the practical assessments, in reflection of current practice.

1.14 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 eg green credentials
- d. TP/aTP approval and monitoring records
- e. Sustainably sourced materials
- f. Evidence of internal teams/groups promoting environmental sustainability

Guidance:

Whilst this is not a new concept, it has not been explicitly mandated in the Standards before now. It is accepted that AEIs are likely to have more resources at their disposal than some of the smaller delivery sites and the TPs, thus this requirement expects a reasonable

consideration of sustainable approaches, which can be built upon in the coming years. Consideration of this important topic could be included in lesson content, aiming to inspire student veterinary nurses to take a proactive approach in creating a sustainable future for the professions.



Standard 2

Governance and quality

Standards

There are effective governance systems that ensure compliance with all legal, regulatory, professional, and educational requirements and clear lines of responsibility and accountability for meeting those requirements.

All learning environments optimise safety and equality, taking account of the diverse needs of, and working in partnerships with, students and all other stakeholders.

Requirements

Accredited education institutions, together with delivery sites and training practices, must:

2.1 comply with all relevant legal, regulatory, professional, and educational requirements.

This may be evidenced through:

- a. Office of Qualifications and Examinations Regulation (Ofqual) report and action plans
- b. Council for the Curriculum Examinations and Assessment (CCEA) report and action plans
- c. Qualifications Wales report and action plans
- d. Scottish Qualifications Authority (SQA) report and action plans
- e. Office for Standards in Education (OFSTED) report and action plans
- f. Office for Students (OfS) report and action plans
- g. Quality Assurance Agency (QAA) report and action plans
- h. RCVS quality monitoring reports and action plans

- i. External examiners reports and action plans
- j. Written confirmation of programme validation
- k. Minutes of validation/accreditation event and evidence of any conditions to have been addressed
- l. Evidence of RCVS pre-accreditation support
- m. Quality improvement plan
- n. Curriculum mapping to meet RCVS Day One Competences, Skills, and Professional Behaviours
- o. Curriculum mapping document to QAA Subject Benchmark Statements for Veterinary Nursing (HEI)
- p. Institute for Apprenticeships and Technical Education (IfATE)
- q. RCVS annual self-assessment reports

Guidance:

As detailed by the evidence list, this requirement demonstrates that AEIs and delivery sites abide by UK regulation as required by the specific type of programme. This will likely include evidence that the AEI is compliant with the General Conditions of Recognition.

Where an AEI validates a programme delivered at a partner delivery site, the validation process must be clear, and evidence of the validation approval provided. If validation has not yet been undertaken, a planned date must be provided, and this requirement will only be met once validation is approved. If the validation has already been granted, it is expected that a condition is included referencing the need to address RCVS requirements.

The mapping documents for the *RCVS Day One Competences, Skills and Professional Behaviours* are suggested as evidence in order to demonstrate that the governance and quality processes have checked that the qualification meets RCVS requirements. The QAA Subject Benchmark statements are only required for HE programmes. Module / unit paperwork is not required for this requirement.

2.2 provide all information and evidence required by regulators in a timely manner, i.e. within published timescales.

This may be evidenced through:

- a. Completed action plans from regulatory, professional, and legal bodies

Guidance:

It is imperative that evidence and documentation is received by regulatory bodies in accordance with their published timescales; completing the requisite action plans, for example, will demonstrate compliance with this requirement.

For existing programmes, providing evidence of liaison and communication with regulators, during auditing procedures, for example, can also be used as evidence. Submissions of data returns to regulators could also be used as an evidence example.

2.3 comply with the RCVS Code of Professional Conduct for Veterinary Nurses.

This may be evidenced through:

- a. Module/qualification documentation
- b. Programme/qualification curriculum
- c. Monitoring of teaching and learning
- d. Schemes of work/syllabus
- e. Student and clinical supervisor handbooks
- f. RCVS Day One Skills recording platform sampling records
- g. Professional behaviour evaluation records
- h. Tutorial reviews

Guidance:

This requirement differs from that in Standard 1 in that this exclusively references the *Code of Professional Conduct for Veterinary Nurses* and aims to ensure that the *Code* is embedded throughout the qualification. It is expected that the governance and quality processes include checks to ensure that this is the case.

2.4 comply with the RCVS Veterinary Nurse Registration Rules.

This may be evidenced through:

- a. Adequate clinical practice provision/employment
- b. Documented programme structure
- c. Programme/qualification handbook

Guidance:

The **RCVS Veterinary Nurse Registration Rules** stipulate the mandatory requirements which qualifications must include, such as the hours required in clinical practice. It is expected that the governance and quality processes include checks to ensure that this is the case.

2.5 adopt a partnership approach, with shared responsibility, evidenced by a memorandum of understanding (MOU) between the accredited education institution and the delivery site and between the delivery site and the training practice. This must be regularly reviewed and clearly stipulate the roles, responsibilities, and regulatory requirements.

This may be evidenced through:

- a. Memoranda of understanding
- b. Quality assurance procedures
- c. Risk assessments
- d. Review meeting minutes
- e. TP/aTP handbook
- f. Clinical supervisor handbook
- g. Delivery site approval and monitoring records and action plans

- h. TP/aTP secondment documents
- i. Written agreement with examination sites (AOs)
- j. Communication regarding changes of accredited AEI

Guidance:

There are various different models of veterinary nurse qualifications, thus the evidence requirements will vary depending on the specific approach utilised.

Where an AEI validates a programme delivered at a partner delivery site, there must be an MOU in place detailing how the relationship is managed, who undertakes which elements of the agreement and what the expectations are.

AEIs, or their delivery sites, must also have a MOU in place with the TPs they approve, or that they utilise as a secondary affiliated TP (see Standard 6). These MOUs also need to include the relationship details, who undertakes which elements of the agreement and what the expectations are.

All MOUs need to be reviewed at a regularly specified point, for example annually or biannually, and include details of role requirements. It is also expected that site inspections are undertaken at regular intervals, assuring all parties that the learning environments remain safe, effective, and fit for purpose.

2.6 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

Guidance:

Linking back to Standard 1 (Requirements 1.10 and 1.11), promotion of equal, diverse, and inclusive approaches is an expectation of all veterinary nurse qualifications. This requirement considers those previous requirements in the context of student recruitment and how AEIs and delivery sites are assured that recruitment, selection and retention is fair.

This will include examples of recruitment processes, such as the interview process if utilised, with accessible options, as well as the follow up selection processes and how that

is managed in a fair and inclusive way. The retention of students can be evidenced by consideration of how the AEI or delivery site supports students with additional needs, and thus promotes programme completion by potentially underrepresented groups.

2.7 have entry criteria for the programme that includes evidence that the student has a capability in numeracy, literacy, and science, written and spoken English and mathematics to meet the programme outcomes.

This may be evidenced through:

- a. Programme/qualification specification
- b. Prospectus
- c. Website
- d. Social media
- e. Careers leaflets
- f. Equivalence policy
- g. Work experience requirements

Guidance:

The RCVS does not set entry criteria for veterinary nurse qualifications; these must be set by each AEI and be specific to the type of course. For example, a Foundation Degree will have different entry criteria to a Bachelor's Degree. Additionally, the entry criteria must be relevant for the programme outcomes and ensure that the basic science, mathematics, and English language requirements are considered.

AEIs utilising an apprenticeship pathway must ensure that the entry criteria do not contradict that specified by IfATE.

AEIs utilising UCAS for the application process should consider the standard points requirements for similar programmes.

All programmes are expected to have accepted equivalencies, enabling students who have not undertaken the typically expected qualifications to have access to the course. It must be clear what can be considered for equivalency and why, although it is accepted that not every example can be included, and some applicants will need to be considered on a case-by-case basis. The process for checking qualifications should be clear.

AEIs and delivery sites must validate qualifications provided for the entry criteria; this ensures there are no obstacles to programme completion at a later point.

2.8 demonstrate a robust process for the recognition of prior learning (RPL).

This may be evidenced through:

- a. RPL policy
- b. RPL documentation
- c. RPL decision recording
- d. RPL guidance on website
- e. Examples of RPL mapping

Guidance:

The RCVS does not stipulate what should be included in RPL policies and processes, rather that each AEI has a robust policy which can be effectively applied. It is accepted that RPL can be challenging for veterinary nurse qualifications, thus each AEI must have a clear rationale for its approach.

The RPL policy may be applicable to the whole AEI, or there may be a separate approach for the veterinary nurse qualifications. The RPL policy must also consider the UK educational regulatory requirements for the specific type of programme.

RPL in this context can also accommodate the following:

- APL – accredited prior learning
- RPEL – recognition of prior experiential learning
- APEL – accredited prior experiential learning

2.9 provide accurate and accessible information to students enabling them to understand and comply with relevant governance processes and policies.

This may be evidenced through:

- a. Student induction processes
- b. Student handbook
- c. Programme/qualification handbook
- d. TP/aTP handbook
- e. AEI/delivery site fitness to practise policy
- f. RCVS enrolment guidance
- g. RCVS registration guidance
- h. RCVS Code of Professional Conduct references within relevant documentation
- i. Reasonable adjustment policy
- j. Online learning platform

Guidance:

Different AEIs, delivery sites and TPs will have differing approaches to achieving this requirement; providing students have the opportunity to access the relevant information it is not mandated as to how this is managed. This may include printed handbooks, or online inductions, depending on the AEI and the access requirements of its students.

It is expected that AElS, delivery sites and TPs will ensure that the required information is updated as necessary and remains relevant to each cohort of students. AElS will want to ascertain that students can understand the information they are accessing; this is routinely checked by panel members and RCVS personnel during accreditations and quality monitoring.

When providing evidence to the RCVS, AElS may wish to consider providing direct access to the online or virtual learning platform.

2.10 have robust, effective, fair, impartial, and lawful fitness to practise procedures to swiftly address concerns, and, where appropriate, notify the RCVS, as the regulator, about the conduct of students that might compromise public and animal safety and protection. The procedure must include disclosure of criminal convictions that may affect registration with the RCVS.

This may be evidenced through:

- a. AEl/delivery site fitness to practise policy
- b. Fitness to study policy
- c. Appeals procedure and policy
- d. Academic malpractice policy
- e. Academic integrity policy and guidance
- f. Student code of conduct
- g. Induction processes
- h. Student interviews
- i. Student recruitment policy
- j. Annual criminal conviction declarations
- k. Whistleblowing policy
- l. Fitness to practise meeting minutes

Guidance:

delivery site; it is not acceptable to reference the RCVS guidance without a supportive, institution specific policy or procedure. This must include a clear statement that the RCVS will be notified of concerns as required. If the policy is an AEl, or delivery site, wide policy, this may be covered with reference to the PSRB requirements.

Student veterinary nurses must be informed about the importance of disclosure of criminal convictions, and how this may affect their ability to register upon completion of the programme. It is suggested that AElS and delivery sites revisit this discussion at multiple points throughout the programme. Student veterinary nurses should be supported to be honest about any criminal convictions, acting with the integrity expected of registered professionals. Nonetheless, it is likely they will be worried about the impact of disclosing, and they must be supported with this.

TPs must also be aware of, and follow, the AEl fitness to practise policy, empowering students to work within the scope of the Code and their capabilities.

2.11 confirm that students meet the required programme outcomes in full and are eligible for academic and professional award.

This may be evidenced through:

- a. Board of examiners meeting minutes
- b. Student progression meeting minutes
- c. Exit award details

Guidance:

The academic award references the AEI qualification, which is awarded upon successful completion, whereas the professional award references the eligibility for student veterinary nurses to apply to join the RCVS Register of Veterinary Nurses. Students may complete their academic award but choose not to Register.

Additionally, if students cannot complete the professional elements, for example they cannot achieve the programme requirements relating to the RCVS Veterinary Nurse Registration Rules, they may only be eligible to be awarded an exit, or step-off, award. This should be clearly indicated and justified. Exit, or step-off, awards cannot utilise the term 'veterinary nursing' (or derivatives of this term) in the title.

The personnel responsible for awarding the qualification must be familiar with these requirements and the process must be clearly documented.

2.12 undertake regular reviews of all learning environments and provide assurance that they are safe, effective, and fit for purpose.

This may be evidenced through:

- a. Course reviews
- b. Student feedback
- c. TP/aTP quality monitoring records
- d. Risk assessments
- e. Health and safety policy
- f. Delivery site sampling policy
- g. AEI site visit or site review documentation for delivery sites and TP/aTP
- h. Memoranda of understanding
- i. External examiner reports
- j. Standard operating procedures
- k. E-safety policy
- l. Student training regarding online safety

Guidance:

Whilst this requirement appears to be similar to Requirement 1.1, and does relate to health and safety, this requirement is more relevant to the checks undertaken.

The AEI must be assured that campus reviews are undertaken, be that at the AEI or its delivery site. Likewise, AEIs and delivery sites must be assured that effective reviews are conducted of their TPs. This requirement is not referencing the specific checks which are undertaken, but a rationale and approach for the reviews, which are clearly documented.

2.13 have safe and effective recruitment processes in place to ensure appropriate personnel are recruited to support programme delivery.

This may be evidenced through:

- a. Staff development plans
- b. Staff in-house training records
- c. Job descriptions and/or person specifications
- d. Recruitment policy
- e. External examiner/advisor recruitment policy
- f. Safer recruitment policy

Guidance:

AEIs, delivery sites and TPs must be able to demonstrate that they can safely and effectively recruit when required. This is not about the current programme team, or recruitment of clinical supervisors, but demonstrating that an appropriate person specification can be written, effective advertisement is undertaken, and there is a clear onboarding and induction process.

2.14 where an accredited education institution is not yet fully accredited, or at the discretion of the Veterinary Nurse Education Committee, facilitate the attendance of the RCVS at a trial/mock OSCE/practical assessment at least one year in advance of the final summative assessment taking place for the relevant cohort of students.

This may be evidenced through:

- a. Proposed dates for trial/mock examination

Guidance:

This requirement is only relevant to new provision, with the exception of existing programmes that have made significant amendments to the practical assessments.

For existing provision, this requirement can be marked as 'not applicable'.

For new provision, or those making changes to the practical assessments, an indication as to when the mock assessment will likely run would be helpful.

The purpose of the examination trial is to check that the examination delivery can be completed in the way described in the policy and procedure documents. Given that this activity will take place a year before the first cohort sits the examination (for new provision) it may not be appropriate for students to take part. In this case consideration should be given to using newly-qualified nurses or clinical supervisors to play the role of the student.

2.15 where an accredited education institution 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

Guidance:

Veterinary nurse qualifications are accredited by Veterinary Nurse Education Committee; should a change be made to the accredited programme it is no longer the programme which was reviewed and accredited by the Committee. Thus, all changes must be reported to the RCVS, and then accepted by Veterinary Nurse Education Committee before they can be implemented.

It is helpful for AElS and delivery sites to have a standard process which is followed in this scenario, which should also consider other educational regulatory requirements and Competition and Markets Authority stipulations. Guidance can be provided by the RCVS as required.

2.16 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 programme
- e. Evidence of actual and/or projected income sources
- f. Evidence of demand for the programme (the market)
- g. Marketing strategy
- h. National Student Survey
- i. End of programme evaluation
- j. Justification for critical student number e.g. business planning documentation

Guidance:

This requirement should demonstrate that there is, or will be, sustainability of provision.

This covers the financial sustainability, for example, that the AEI, and delivery sites, can afford to run the programme, with all of the associated costs. This may be best evidenced by a profit and loss breakdown, clearly demonstrating income versus outgoings, and further planned developments.

Additionally, this requirement covers programme sustainability, such as a market demand for the programme with effective recruitment meeting the needs of the AEI. This should clearly

reference a critical number / critical mass consideration demonstrating at which point the modelling becomes unsustainable and the programme would not be able to run. It is accepted that new programmes may make a financial loss in the first few years; the AEI is expected to acknowledge this and agree to the modelling.

2.17 Where a delivery site chooses to transfer AEI, there must be effective communication between the AEIs regarding the risk status of the delivery site, to include any sanctions that may be in place, or any specific areas of concern.

This may be evidenced through:

- a. Communication examples relating to transferring delivery sites.
- b. Communication examples of changing partnership agreements.
- c. Student transfer planning and processes
- d. Memoranda of Understanding

Guidance:

For higher education institutions, this will likely be in the form of a change to the partnership agreement of a validating institution. For Awarding Organisations, this will likely occur when a delivery site chooses to transfer to a different Awarding Organisation. Awarding Organisations must also comply with the Ofqual General Conditions of Recognition in this regard, particularly in relation to issues of malpractice or maladministration. When a delivery site intends to transfer to a new AEI, the new AEI must contact the existing AEI to ascertain any existing or ongoing areas of concern. Equally, the existing AEI is expected to be forthcoming in its communications and provide this detail as required.



Standard 3

Student empowerment

Standards

Students are provided with a variety of learning opportunities and appropriate resources which enable them to achieve the *RCVS Day One Competences and Skills for Veterinary Nurses* and programme outcomes and be capable of demonstrating the professional behaviours in the *RCVS Code of Professional Conduct for Veterinary Nurses*.

Students are empowered and supported to become resilient, caring, reflective, and lifelong learners who are capable of working in inter-professional teams.

Requirements

Accredited education institutions, together with delivery sites and training practices, must ensure that all students:

3.1 are well prepared for learning in theory and practice, having received relevant inductions.

This may be evidenced through:

- a. Programme/qualification handbooks
- b. Pre-course guidance
- c. Induction timetables
- d. Induction materials for RCVS Day One Skills recording platform
- e. Clinical practice induction
- f. Online learning platform induction

Guidance:

Student veterinary nurses must receive relevant and effective inductions in order to safely study on campus and train in practice. The induction process is not prescribed, but should be relevant to the AEI, delivery site and TP, and cover health and safety processes as a minimum.

This is a good opportunity for AEIs and delivery sites to undertake initial assessments plans and review records of identified needs in order to tailor specific support moving forward.

3.2 have access to the resources they need to achieve the RCVS Day One Competences, Skills and Professional Behaviours for Veterinary Nurses, and programme outcomes required for their professional role.

This may be evidenced through:

- a. Practical equipment and consumables lists
- b. Onsite animals resource list and policy where utilised for veterinary nurse education
- c. Library resources
- d. Information learning technology resources
- e. Timetabled access to resources
- f. TP/aTP approval and monitoring records
- g. TP/aTP risk assessments
- h. Online learning platform

Guidance:

Whilst each veterinary nurse qualification may differ, the core components of the *RCVS Day One Competences, Skills and Professional Behaviours* will be the same. Each student veterinary nurse must, therefore, have access to the minimum resources required in order to achieve their qualification and professional award.

The resources and facilities available must also include the specific requirements for each programme, therefore if hydrotherapy is included in the course content, students must have access to hydrotherapy facilities.

Student veterinary nurses must also have access to the requisite facilities and resources in the TP, or have secondment agreements in place if undertaking their clinical training in an auxiliary TP.

3.3 are provided with timely and accurate information about curriculum, teaching, supervision, assessment, clinical practice, and other information relevant to the programme in an accessible way for students' diverse needs.

This may be evidenced through:

- a. Programme/qualification handbooks
- b. Student handbooks
- c. Timetables
- d. Schemes of work/syllabus
- e. Module/qualification handbooks
- f. Module/qualification descriptors
- g. Clinical practice correspondence
- h. Online platform access
- i. Assessment schedules

Guidance:

Relevant and accessible information must be available to students at all times. This is likely to be made available via an online or virtual learning platform, however, students should also receive prompt responses to queries as required for example, via online messaging or email.

3.4 work with and learn from a range of people in clinical practice, preparing them to provide care to a range of animals with diverse nursing requirements.

This may be evidenced through:

- a. Practice rota
- b. TP/aTP approval and monitoring records
- c. Expert witness forms/statements
- d. Handbooks detailing utilisation of expert witnesses
- e. Secondment agreements and examples

Guidance:

This requirement links well with Requirement 1.12, with a clear opportunity to advance inter-professional learning and practice. The veterinary team is expected to support student veterinary nurse training (see Standard 6), further promoting the team-based healthcare approach.

Student veterinary nurses also require access to a varied caseload in clinical practice, ensuring they have an opportunity to develop their skill capability across a range of patients. Secondment agreements should be in place for students who are undertaking clinical practice in an auxiliary TP.

3.5 are enabled to learn and are assessed using a range of methods, including technology enhanced and simulation-based learning appropriate for the programme as necessary for safe and effective practice.

This may be evidenced through:

- a. Programme/qualification handbooks
- b. TP/aTP handbooks
- c. Assessment schedules
- d. Programme/qualification assessment strategies
- e. Module/qualification descriptors
- f. Clinical supervisor handbooks
- g. List of clinical skills resources
- h. Artificial intelligence policy
- i. Virtual/augmented reality policy
- j. Academic integrity policy

Guidance:

Diversity of delivery and assessment methods can assist with student engagement, as well as offer supportive approaches for students with diverse needs. Remote, hybrid and blended learning approaches are becoming increasingly popular, with improved use of online and virtual learning platforms. It is expected that AEs and delivery sites utilise a robust framework that supports academic integrity and ensures fair and honest assessment practices.

Simulation based learning should be specifically considered when teaching emergency and first aid techniques, both on campus and in the TP. Online video platforms can also assist with teaching, however, this must be from verified sources.

3.6 are supervised and supported according to their individual learning needs, proficiency, and confidence.

This may be evidenced through:

- a. Individual learning plans
- b. TP/aTP student reports
- c. Reasonable adjustment policy
- d. Student support services
- e. Special educational needs support
- f. Clinical practice tutorial records
- g. Delivery team meeting minutes relating to student support/progression
- h. Personal tutor correspondence examples
- i. Professional behaviour evaluations

Guidance:

Student veterinary nurses will all have their individual, and different, needs and preferences. Some will have very limited experience of clinical practice, whereas others may have spent 10 years working as a veterinary receptionist or veterinary care assistant. Each student needs to be supported with their training from their individual starting point.

Likewise, students presenting with additional learning needs will likely require different support, at different times, which should be facilitated by educational needs experts.

3.7 are allocated and can make use of protected supported learning time including blended learning and recording completion of the RCVS Day One Skills for Veterinary Nurses when in practice.

This may be evidenced through:

- a. Timetables/schemes of work
- b. Audit of blended learning time
- c. Audit of RCVS Day One Skills for Veterinary Nurses recording tool
- d. Practice rota
- e. Memoranda of understanding
- f. TP/aTP handbook
- g. Clinical supervisor handbook
- h. TP/aTP annual monitoring records
- i. Tutorial records

Guidance:

All student veterinary nurses must be allowed time in the clinical practice setting to log skills on their RCVS Day One Skills recording platform; this should be reflected in the MOU (see Requirement 2.5). This is unlikely to be a set time each week, but a time allowance must be agreed to.

Where a blended learning approach is utilised, this should also have a time accommodation during clinical placement; this should also be reflected in the MOU.

3.8 are assigned and have access to a nominated academic tutor/lead for each part of the programme.

This may be evidenced through:

- a. Tutorial records
- b. Student feedback
- c. Programme/qualification specification
- d. Student handbook
- e. Personal tutor allocations
- f. Personal tutor timetables

Guidance:

Student veterinary nurses must have the support and guidance of a nominated tutor available to them whilst completing their qualification. This may be one tutor who supports the student for the duration of their programme, or a tutor who looks after specific cohorts. Likewise, this may be a different person responsible for the tutor role whilst students are undertaking their clinical practice requirements.

3.9 have the necessary support and information to manage any interruptions to the study of programmes for any reason.

This may be evidenced through:

- a. Student handbook
- b. Programme handbook
- c. Institutional regulations
- d. AEI/delivery site fitness to practise policy
- e. Student support plans
- f. Return to study plans
- g. Personal tutor records
- h. Withdrawal processes
- i. Suspension of study processes
- j. Confirmation of suspension/withdrawal to RCVS
- k. Exit award details

Guidance:

Students must have access to all of the required policies and procedures in order to make an informed decision regarding withdrawing or suspending their studies.

Should a student need to take a leave of absence from their studies, they should be able to suspend for a period of time and then return when they are able to, without penalty. If a student feels that they cannot continue with the qualification, then they may wish to withdraw rather than suspend. These options, including the consideration of special considerations and programme transfer, should be fully discussed with students prior to paperwork completion.

The RCVS **must** be informed of student suspensions and withdrawals. Following enrolment with the RCVS, student veterinary nurses are afforded specific allowances in accordance with Schedule 3 of the Veterinary Surgeons Act. If the student is not undertaking a programme of study, they are no longer considered to be a student veterinary nurse and their RCVS enrolment must be inactivated. Furthermore, when a student returns from suspension of studies, the RCVS must be informed in order that their enrolment is reactivated. Failure to inform RCVS when a student returns to study may affect their eligibility to register.

3.10 have their diverse needs respected and considered across all learning environments, with support and adjustments provided in accordance with equalities and human rights legislation and good practice.

This may be evidenced through:

- a. Equality, diversity, and inclusion policy
- b. Reasonable adjustment policy
- c. AEI/delivery site fitness to practise policy
- d. Fitness to study policy
- e. Learner support plans
- f. Examples of support/adjustment provided

Guidance:

As discussed in Requirement 3.6, student veterinary nurses will require different forms of support at different times during their training. This requirement promotes the support of this diversity, including considerations for diversity of religion, culture, and personal needs, as expected by legislative compliance.

3.11 are protected from discrimination, harassment, incivility, and other behaviours that undermine their performance or confidence.

This may be evidenced through:

- a. Equality, diversity, and inclusion policy
- b. Bullying and harassment policy
- c. Complaints policy and reports
- d. Student feedback
- e. Safeguarding policy
- f. AEI/delivery site fitness to practise policy
- g. Student charter
- h. Student code of conduct
- i. Professional behaviour evaluations
- j. Freedom of speech policy

Guidance:

It has been noted in **recent research** that this requirement is not being effectively managed, particularly in clinical practice. Whilst it is challenging to evidence that students are not being subjected to inappropriate behaviour, promoting positive clinical experiences, teaching, and training TP personnel about appropriate behaviours, and encouraging students to raise concerns (see requirements 1.6, 1.7 and 1.8) can only help to reduce these instances in future.

3.12 are provided with information and support that encourages them to take responsibility for their own mental and physical health and wellbeing.

This may be evidenced through:

- a. Student handbook
- b. Programme/qualification handbook
- c. Personal tutoring system
- d. Personal tutorial timetables and records
- e. Student support policy
- f. Student feedback
- g. Wellbeing lectures/sessions
- h. Wellbeing resources
- i. Induction timetable
- j. Meeting minutes from social groups
- k. Online resources

Guidance:

As discussed in Requirement 3.3, students must be provided with timely and accurate information relating to their qualification. Additionally, students must have access to wellbeing support (see Requirement 1.2). It is hoped that well informed students can make decisions that reflect their personal requirements at any given time, enabling them to promote their own health and wellbeing.

3.13 are provided with the learning and pastoral support necessary to empower them to prepare for independent, reflective professional practice.

This may be evidenced through:

- a. Personal tutorial records
- b. Evidence-based professional practice procedures
- c. Module/qualification descriptors
- d. Programme/qualification handbook
- e. Student feedback
- f. Assessment examples
- g. Guidance provided regarding the RCVS Day One Skills
- h. Professional behaviour evaluation policy
- i. RCVS Day One Skills moderation reports

Guidance:

AEIs, delivery sites and TPs should be able to demonstrate the progression of student veterinary nurses' ability to work independently, within the confines of the Schedule 3 allowances.

This could be demonstrated via students' increased ability to undertake independent research for assignments, for example. Additionally, it is expected that student veterinary nurses are able to reflect on their learning and assessment experiences; reflecting on practical training in the TP offers a good opportunity for this. Students should be able to demonstrate their ability to make reasoned decisions and defend their opinions, in an evidence-based manner.

Students should also be encouraged to reflect on assessment outcomes, particularly where re-assessment is required (see requirement 5.13).

3.14 have opportunities throughout their programme to collaborate and learn with and from peers and other professionals, and to develop supervision and leadership skills.

This may be evidenced through:

- a. Peer group work and assessment examples
- b. TP/aTP handbook
- c. Student representative meeting minutes
- d. Reflective logs

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- e. Professional behaviour tool
- f. Guest (expert) lecture timetable
- g. Mentor programmes
- h. Expert witness statements
- i. Documentation detailing guidance regarding expert witnesses
- j. Co-teaching and cross programme engagement

Guidance:

This requirement offers another opportunity to strengthen the examples provided for Requirement 1.12, promoting inter-professionalism and peer teaching and assessment. Student veterinary nurses can learn a lot from each other, from both the intra- and inter-cohort perspective. Inter-cohort peer discussions, teaching and assessment can also help to develop the supervision and leadership skills expected for this requirement.

Some students will also be keen to engage in student council type initiatives, which should be promoted and supported for those who are interested.

3.15 receive constructive feedback throughout the programme to promote and encourage reflective learning.

This may be evidence through:

- a. Feedback policy and procedures
- b. Clinical supervisor records
- c. Feedback records
- d. Evidence-based professional practice procedures
- e. Module/qualification descriptors
- f. Programme/qualification handbook
- g. Assessment examples
- h. Formative assessment procedures
- i. Clinical practice tutorial records
- j. Learner reviews
- k. Professional behaviour evaluations
- l. RCVS Day One Skills sampling records
- m. Clinical practice support records

Guidance:

Student veterinary nurses must receive feedback throughout the duration of their programme. This will be comprised of formative and summative assessment feedback, which should also include examination outcomes, as well as more developmental processes such as tutorials.

Students are expected to reflect on their outcomes and address any learning actions which need to be considered.

3.16 have opportunities throughout their programme to give feedback on the quality of all aspects of their support and supervision in both theory and practice with clear outcomes.

This may be evidenced through:

- a. Student surveys
- b. Student representative meeting minutes
- c. National Student Survey results
- d. Clinical practice evaluations
- e. Personal tutor records
- f. Newsletters
- g. Delivery team meeting minutes
- h. Student feedback policy
- i. Examples of feedback disseminated to students
- j. Online notice boards
- k. 'You said, we did' publications
- l. Action plans following student feedback events

Guidance:

As discussed above, student veterinary nurses must receive actionable feedback, and this requirement reflects the concept back to the educators and assessors. Feedback regarding teaching, learning and assessment must be proactively sought by the AEI and delivery site. Equally, feedback relating to the practical training component must also be sought.

Nonetheless, evidence of effective review and consideration of the feedback must also be available, with clear outcomes demonstrated. For example, if students have commented that they are struggling to find relevant journal articles, a library support session could be organised to help them with their search and review processes. It is accepted, however, that not all feedback can be reasonably addressed; in this scenario, a clear rationale is expected.

3.17 are empowered to develop their professional behaviours in line with the RCVS Professional Behaviour Evaluation.

This may be evidenced through:

- a. Completed professional behaviour evaluations
- b. Professional behaviour guidance to students
- c. Professional behaviour guidance to clinical supervisors
- d. Internal quality assurance sampling policy

Guidance:

This requirement supports the aims of Requirement 3.13, with regard to the development of the professional elements required of the qualification. It is accepted that some students will score quite low on the RCVS Professional Behaviour Evaluation, however, support and guidance should then be provided to help the student to progress and improve. All students must achieve a level 4 in the Professional Behaviour Evaluation by the time they have completed their qualification.

The **RCVS Academy Course for Clinical Supervisors** provides a detailed overview of the Professional Behaviours, what might be expected and how students can be supported to develop.



Standard 4

Educators and assessors

Standards

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

Requirements

Accredited education institutions, together with delivery sites and training practices, must ensure that all educators and assessors:

4.1 are appropriately qualified and experienced and always act as professional role models.

This may be evidenced through:

- a. Curriculum vitae
- b. 1CPD compliance where required
- c. Policy for recruitment and training of assessment staff/moderators
- d. Subject specific development
- e. Professional development plans
- f. Student feedback
- g. Monitoring of teaching and learning, walk through and teaching reviews
- h. Staff codes of conduct
- i. RCVS registration status of personnel (where required)

Guidance:

All personnel involved with the teaching and assessment of student veterinary nurses must be suitably qualified for their specific role; this does not mandate that all educators must be RVNs, sometimes utilisation of inter-professional expertise may be more appropriate (see Requirement 1.12).

This requirement indicates the necessity for student veterinary nurses to be supported by the right person, at the right time. Educators and assessors must, therefore, have the requisite qualifications and experience for the role they are undertaking. For example, an internal quality assurer (IQA) may not have a teaching qualification but should have IQA qualifications and experience. Clinical supervisors may have undertaken coaching and mentoring training, or they may have exclusively attended training at the AEI for the specific programme they are supporting.

4.2 receive relevant induction, ongoing support, education, and training which includes training in equality, diversity, and inclusion.

This may be evidenced through:

- a. CPD records
- b. CPD policy
- c. Professional development plans
- d. Annual appraisal documents
- e. Induction procedures
- f. Induction records
- g. Evidence of clinical supervisor training and standardisation
- h. Completed reviews of clinical supervisor suitability (CV, CPD, registration checks)
- i. Mental health first aid training
- j. Examiner training and standardisation procedures
- k. Unconscious bias training

Guidance:

All educators and assessors must be effectively inducted, in order to undertake their roles safely and in accordance with their role requirements. Following the induction period, ongoing review and support should be provided, identifying areas for development, with training made available to facilitate the required progression.

Regular training and updates relating to equality, diversity and inclusion is an expectation for all personnel and should be recorded in the 1CPD platform for regulated professionals.

Clinical supervisors must be trained and annually standardised; their access to equality, diversity and inclusion training will likely occur during the clinical supervisor training sessions.

4.3 have their diverse needs respected and considered and are provided with support and adjustments in accordance with equalities and human rights legislation and good practice.

This may be evidenced through:

- a. Staff induction policy
- b. Equality, diversity, and inclusion policy
- c. Recruitment policy
- d. Staff support services
- e. Disability policy
- f. Health and safety policy
- g. Maternity, paternity, and adoption policies
- h. Mentoring policy
- i. Menopause policy

Guidance:

As discussed in Standard 3 for students, educators and assessors are also likely to present with diverse needs and must also have access to the required and relevant support in order to undertake their roles. This requirement promotes the support of a diverse educational and assessment body, including considerations for diversity of religion, culture, and personal needs, as expected by legislative compliance.

4.4 have sufficient time allocation within contracted hours to fulfil all aspects of their roles.

This may be evidenced through:

- a. Staff timetables
- b. Workload allocation models
- c. Clinical practice rota
- d. Job descriptions and/or person specifications
- e. Tutorial records
- f. Schedule of planned assessments
- g. Clinical supervisor handbook
- h. Succession planning

Guidance:

All educators and assessors must be able to achieve the requirements of their role within the time allocation afforded within their contract, be that full time or part time. Educators and assessors should have time available for teaching, assessing, marking, tutorials, and other role requirements such as line management.

Clinical supervisors must also have the requisite time allowance, such as time afforded for teaching and assessment of the RCVS Day One Skills. This should be noted within the MOU (see Requirement 2.5).

4.5 respond effectively to the learning needs of individuals.

This may be evidenced through:

- a. Student feedback
- b. Student representative meeting minutes
- c. Personal tutorial timetables/minutes
- d. Clinical practice records
- e. Reasonable adjustment records
- f. Monitoring of teaching and learning
- g. Student support services
- h. Special educational needs support

Guidance:

As discussed within Standard 3, the student body will likely present with a wide range of needs and requirements. It is, therefore, imperative that the educators and assessors involved in their training know and understand how best to support students and have the capability to do so.

It is common for AEIs and delivery sites to address this requirement via Student Support Services, or similar, but the individuals who regularly interact with students must also be able to facilitate supportive mechanisms. This is also true for clinical supervisors and is likely another area that can be covered during clinical supervisor training.

4.6 are supportive and objective in their approach to student supervision, assessment, and progression, and appropriately share and use evidence to make decisions on student assessment and progression.

This may be evidenced through:

- a. Programme/qualification assessment strategy
- b. Schedule of planned assessments
- c. Clinical practice records/action plans
- d. RCVS Day One Skills recording tool meeting minutes
- e. RCVS Day One Skills internal quality assurance strategy
- f. Self-assessment reports
- g. Tutorial records
- h. Student progression meeting minutes
- i. Academic board meeting minutes

Guidance:

The progression process for student veterinary nurses must be clear and objective, following the academic regulations, or similar, of the AEI. This process should follow the assessment procedures and include an auditable trail of decisions.

Subjective decisions on assessment or progression should be avoided by educators or assessors, unless this is a part of a recognised system for awarding marks for the assessment type being used. For instance, a subjective global score might be used in

conjunction with an objective marking scheme for certain assessments. Evidence must be available to demonstrate the approach undertaken and how the subjective element supports the objective decision.

4.7 liaise, collaborate, and action constructive feedback generated by colleagues, students, and stakeholders to enhance their teaching and assessment and to share effective practice.

This may be evidenced through:

- a. Practice principal meeting minutes
- b. Standardisation meeting minutes
- c. External examiner reports
- d. Individual learning plans
- e. Monitoring of teaching and learning
- f. Student feedback
- g. Stakeholder feedback
- h. Meeting minutes with actions and dissemination plans
- i. RCVS or internal action plans and responses
- j. Examiner observations
- k. Quality improvement plan
- l. Self-assessment reports

Guidance:

Further to the feedback elements of Standard 3 (Requirements 3.15 and 3.16), the implementation of changes following feedback allows an opportunity to demonstrate the continual improvement of provision. Nonetheless, it will not only be student veterinary nurses providing feedback; information and data should also be sought from colleagues and wider stakeholders, such as TPs and external examiners.

All feedback should be constructively considered and applied as appropriate. This requirement specifies that the improvements should demonstrate progression of teaching and assessment practice. For example, OSCE examiners may provide feedback relating to a particular station, or a clinical supervisor may be given feedback following an observation in clinical practice. It would be expected that these processes are fully considered and addressed as required.

4.8 respond effectively to concerns and complaints about public protection and animal welfare and student performance in learning environments and are supported in doing so.

This may be evidenced through:

- a. Complaints procedure
- b. AEI/delivery site fitness to practise policy
- c. Retention records
- d. TP/aTP risk register
- e. Minutes of meeting, action plans and responses

Guidance:

This requirement is the final consideration relating to concerns or complaints, as discussed in Requirements 1.6, 1.7, 1.8 and 3.11. Educators and assessors must be supported with the application of the concerns or complaints procedure and ensure that the process is effectively followed. Additionally, they must be able to recognise when feedback constitutes a complaint, and act accordingly.

4.9 ensure the programme lead is a registered veterinary nurse (RVN) who has substantial experience of veterinary nurse education and training at a suitable level for the qualification(s) being delivered and holds a recognised teaching qualification.

This may be evidenced through:

- a. Curriculum vitae
- b. 1CPD compliance
- c. Succession planning

Guidance:

Further to Requirement 4.1, this requirement mandates that the programme lead holds specific qualifications and has the necessary experience to oversee the veterinary nurse qualification.

The teaching qualification must be at a level appropriate to the programme being delivered, for example, a programme lead for a Level 3 Diploma qualification must hold at least a Level 3 Diploma or higher themselves, whereas a programme lead for a BSc (Hons) programme must have undertaken at least a Level 6 qualification, or higher. Whilst the programme lead must be an RVN, their licence to practise qualification does not need to be at the requisite academic level for the programme they are leading, providing they have an additional qualification at the appropriate academic level; usually this would be the teaching qualification, but can be altogether different, such as an MBA.

It is also important that the AEI and delivery site have considered the succession planning for the programme lead role, in order that other members of the team can be developed and there is a deputy type role who can cover for periods of absence.

Programme leads are encouraged to train as RCVS panel members for accreditations, which can assist with their knowledge and understanding of both the processes and the Standards.



Standard 5

Curricula and assessment

Standards

Curricula and assessments are designed, developed, delivered, evaluated, and validated to ensure that students achieve the *RCVS Day One Competences, Skills and Professional Behaviours for Veterinary Nurses*, QAA HE Subject Benchmark Statements for Veterinary Nurses (HE) and outcomes for their accredited programme.

Requirements

Accredited education institutions, together with delivery sites and training practices, must ensure:

5.1 curricula are mapped and fulfil the RCVS Day One Competences and Skills for Veterinary Nurses, regulatory requirements, and programme outcomes.

This may be evidenced through:

- a. Programme/qualification specification
- b. Programme/qualification handbook
- c. Programme/qualification level mapping documents
- d. Module/qualification mapping documents
- e. Assessment material mapping/blueprint
- f. QAA HE Subject Benchmark Statements for Veterinary Nursing mapping
- g. Professional behaviour mapping

Guidance:

This requirement requires clear mapping and alignment of the RCVS and programme specific outcomes across the qualification. This is usually presented in a spreadsheet format. It is imperative the *RCVS Day One Competences, Skills and Professional Behaviours* are fully mapped to the relevant modules or units.

Additionally, HE programmes must include mapping to the most up to date QAA Subject Benchmark Statements for Veterinary Nursing.

5.2 programmes are designed, developed, delivered, evaluated, and improved based upon stakeholder feedback.

This may be evidenced through:

- a. Self-assessment reports
- b. Annual programme/qualification reviews
- c. Periodic programme/qualification reviews
- d. Regulatory reports
- e. Programme/qualification meeting minutes
- f. Quality and standards meeting minutes
- g. Stakeholder meeting minutes
- h. Action plans following stakeholder meetings
- i. Evidence of implementation of feedback

Guidance:

Evidence of stakeholder engagement must be provided, demonstrating the AEI's consideration of industry requirements and expectations. Evidence-based amendments and updates to the qualification should be clear, following this engagement process. Stakeholders can include students, TPs, the RCVS, and the public. Additionally, the external examiner can often provide a unique insight, with consideration of their own experience as well as AEI specific requirements.

All feedback provided from other regulators, such as educational regulatory bodies, can be included here as evidence of programme development in line with guidance and legislation.

5.3 curricula and assessments remain relevant in respect of contemporary veterinary nursing practice, with consideration of ongoing developments within the professions and international healthcare communities.

This may be evidenced through:

- a. Curriculum meeting minutes
- b. External examiner reports
- c. Stakeholder feedback
- d. Module/qualification documents
- e. Authentic and relevant assessment methodologies

Guidance:

Curricula, and the attributed assessments, must undergo regular review, with updates implemented as per Requirement 5.2. This process should be detailed and ensure that the student veterinary nurses completing the qualification will be effectively trained for working in practice as an RVN. Whilst the history of the profession is important, it is not expected that student veterinary nurses are taught or trained on techniques that are no longer utilised, such as manual x-ray processing.

The qualification should ensure that contemporary developments are also covered, for example, breed specific legislation, antimicrobial resistance, and refugee pets. An awareness of the wider healthcare community is also expected, such as vaccine development and the workforce crisis.

Contemporary assessments are also expected, ensuring student veterinary nurses are well equipped for their future roles, with a consideration of generative artificial intelligence and communication skills (see Requirement 5.6).

5.4 curricula and assessments are appropriately weighted in accordance with the type and length of programme.

This may be evidenced through:

- a. Programme/qualification specifications
- b. Mapping to the RCVS Veterinary Nurse Registration Rules
- c. Module/qualification mapping documents
- d. Timetables
- e. Assessment matrices
- f. Programme/qualification assessment strategies
- g. Learning outcomes

Guidance:

The module/unit weighting must be clear and relevant to the type and size of the attributed assessment(s). This will also correlate to the type of qualification, and the AEI specified approach to weighting of modules/units and assessments.

5.5 curricula provide appropriate structure and sequencing that integrates theory and practice at increasing levels of complexity, with due consideration of assessment timings and clear progression points.

This may be evidenced through:

- a. Programme/qualification structure
- b. Timetables/schemes of work
- c. Programme/qualification assessment strategies and schedules
- d. Clinical practice model
- e. Curriculum map (include vertical and horizontal integration)
- f. Programme/qualification handbooks
- g. Module/qualification documents
- h. Board of examiners/student progression meeting minutes
- i. Assessment blueprint

Guidance:

The curricula must provide a clear progression onto and through the relevant academic levels, such as development of student's capability from GCSE level up to Level 3, or from A-Level up to Level 6. The modules/units should be structured and sequenced in such a way that students are supported to develop their academic skill throughout the qualification, with the required clinical practice hours considered at a relevant point and level.

The learning outcomes must be at an appropriate academic level for the module/unit and type of programme; for example, it should be clear that due consideration has been given to Bloom's taxonomy and this is reflected in the wording.

Due consideration must be given to the assessment scheduling, ensuring that student veterinary nurses are not overwhelmed during specific assessment windows, or that the assessment requirements are overly burdensome.

The pathway for progression must also be clear; pre-requisites or co-requisites may be used to ensure that student veterinary nurses have the required knowledge, understanding and skill to progress onto the next module/unit or academic year. Trailing of modules/units should only be considered in exceptional circumstances.

5.6 a range of assessments, which align with the learning outcomes, are delivered, within the educational setting, to accurately measure the knowledge, skills and understanding outlined in the programme.

This may be evidenced through:

- a. Academic regulations
- b. Student feedback
- c. Module/qualification descriptors
- d. Moderation policies and processes
- e. Moderation meeting minutes
- f. Exam board minutes
- g. Examination rules
- h. Examination policy and procedure documents
- i. Examples of assessment materials for each different assessment methodology
- j. Assessment blueprint
- k. Programme/qualification assessment strategy
- l. Grading criteria and setting pass marks
- m. Statement of proposed interpretations and uses of the examination/assessment
- n. Assessment rationale
- o. Examiner handbook
- p. Student handbook
- q. Security policies
- r. Artificial intelligence policy
- s. Academic integrity policy

Guidance:

All learning outcomes must be fully and effectively assessed, with an appropriate assessment methodology. There is no prescribed approach as to what the assessment methodology should look like; it is expected that a variety of approaches will be utilised, considering the contemporary requirements of clinical practice.

The reflection of Bloom's taxonomy in the learning outcomes is also considered within the assessment methodology, i.e. that the wording indicates the appropriate academic level which can be assessed via the chosen approach. For example, the term 'demonstrate' could be considered for Level 3/4 practical assessments, whereas the term 'defend' could be used for a Level 6 oral assessment, such as debating.

5.7 at least one summative assessment must be in the form of an objective structured clinical examination (OSCE) or similarly robust, objective and evidence-based form of practical examination to test the safe and effective acquisition of a broad range of skills and competences outlined in the RCVS Day One Competences and Skills for Veterinary Nurses.

This may be evidenced through:

- a. Academic regulations
- b. Student feedback
- c. Module/qualification descriptors
- d. Moderation policies and processes
- e. Moderation meeting minutes
- f. Exam Board minutes
- g. Examination rules
- h. Examination policy and procedure documents
- i. Examples of assessment materials for each different assessment methodology
- j. Assessment blueprint
- k. Programme/qualification assessment strategy
- l. Grading criteria and setting pass marks
- m. Statement of proposed interpretations and uses of the examination/assessment
- n. Assessment rationale
- o. Examiner handbook
- p. Student handbook
- q. Security policies
- r. Artificial intelligence policy
- s. Academic integrity policy

Guidance:

The summative practical assessment must assess the student veterinary nurse's ability to work at the minimally competent level for contemporary practice.

There are a number of different ways to deliver an OSCE or practical examination. AElS must ensure that the design of the examination includes a circuit of stations testing a broad range of the RCVS Day One Skills under examination conditions. The length of the examination, number of stations and mark scheme design can be decided by the AEl, but the design must be

defensible. In order to minimise bias (see requirement 5.11) and increase validity it is usual to have a different examiner marking each station. Where the examination is designed with fewer examiners then extensive evidence is required to demonstrate that the examination is valid.

The summative examination should consolidate the RCVS Day One Skills assessments which take place in clinical practice. As such the completion of these assessments must be a prerequisite for examination entry.

5.8 students are assessed practically across clinical practice settings and learning environments as required by their programme with relevant observations undertaken.

This may be evidenced through:

- a. RCVS Day One Skills recording tool
- b. Monitoring of teaching and learning
- c. Student observation records
- d. Examination papers and mark sheets
- e. Student feedback records
- f. RCVS Day One Skills sampling plan
- g. Witness statements

Guidance:

The practical assessment of student veterinary nurses must be observed and documented accordingly. It is expected that students also reflect on these practical experiences, as per Requirements 3.7, 3.13 and 5.13. This is likely to be reflection on skill progression in the clinical practice setting, or reflection on their practising of the RCVS Day One Skills in readiness for the summative practical assessment (see requirement 5.7).

5.9 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. Examination policy and procedure documents
- b. Rationale for the design of examinations
- c. Moderation policies
- d. Assessment blueprint
- e. Mark schemes
- f. Validity data
- g. Reliability data
- h. Training and standardisation of markers
- i. Test and item statistical analysis mechanisms
- j. Statistical analysis of item level and question level data such as analysis of question difficulty
- k. Grading criteria and setting pass marks
- l. Standard setting documentation
- m. Mechanisms to detect plagiarism

- n. Assessment appeals policy
- o. Invigilation agreements
- p. Assessment validation reports
- q. Programme/qualification assessment sampling strategies
- r. External examiner/advisor feedback

Guidance:

Validity refers to the extent to which an assessment measures what it is intended to measure. AEIs need to have documents in place to show how the level of validity and robustness (reliability, fairness, and generalisability) is determined. This process will normally result in the production of a report or a number of documents confirming:

- how well the assessment contents align with the learning objectives;
- the process for designing new assessments including piloting or trialling;
- how training and standardisation of examiners, IQA staff and EEs is undertaken;
- any reviews or updates of the assessment method based on educational research, feedback from stakeholders and analysis of data;
- the data analysis or statistical methods used to analyse assessment data for reliability and validity. This could include item (question) difficulty, discrimination indices and internal consistency of the assessment.
- the invigilation processes;
- the security processes in place to ensure that academic integrity is maintained; and,
- methods for setting the pass mark.

The process for setting the pass mark is up to the AEI but it needs to be defensible. Where a standard pass mark is in place for all assessments the AEI needs to have strategies in place to ensure that the pass mark genuinely reflects minimal competence in the subject matter. For example, where the pass mark for an examination is 40% there must be a mechanism for checking that students passing the examination have reached the safe or minimal level of competence in the subject matter.

5.10 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. Student feedback
- b. Moderation meeting minutes
- c. Exam board minutes
- d. Moderation protocol
- e. Internal verification meeting minutes
- f. External examiner reports
- g. Responses to action plans
- h. Sampling strategy
- i. RCVS Day One Skills sampling plans
- j. Artificial intelligence acceptable use policy
- k. Academic integrity policy

Guidance:

Moderation processes are normally included in the AEI assessment procedures. Evidence should be available showing how this is applied to the different types of assessments being used. Examinations such as the OSCE are often not considered in generic AEI policies and therefore these may need to be documented separately.

Clear sampling plans should be drawn up showing how and when moderation will take place (pre-assessment and post assessment) and who will be involved.

The scope of the moderator needs to be clear especially where there is a discrepancy in the marks attributed.

5.11 mechanisms are in place to minimise bias in all assessments.

This may be evidenced through:

- a. Examination policies and procedures
- b. Examiner handbook
- c. Rationale for the design of the examination
- d. Invigilation arrangements
- e. Assessment validation reports
- f. Examiner standardisation processes
- g. Moderation processes
- h. Grading guides
- i. Examiner training
- j. Anonymous marking processes
- k. Grading criteria and setting pass marks
- l. Conflict of interest policy

Guidance:

This requirement covers the need to ensure that students' work is assessed fairly, and external factors do not interfere with the outcome of the assessment. Consideration should be given to the number of people involved with marking the assessment. Where anonymised (blind) marking is not possible then other mechanisms need to be considered such as standardised marking rubrics, double marking, increased moderation activity and calibration exercises.

5.12 adjustments are provided in accordance with relevant equalities and human rights legislation for assessments in theory and practice.

This may be evidenced through:

- a. Reasonable adjustment policy
- b. Mitigating circumstances policy
- c. Records of reasonable adjustment
- d. AEI/delivery site fitness to practise policy
- e. Student support plans
- f. Individual learning plans
- g. Equality, diversity, and inclusion policy

Guidance:

Requirement 1.10 outlines the need for a reasonable adjustment policy and Requirement 2.9 looks at how this is communicated to students. This requirement looks at the evidence of reasonable adjustments applied for assessments undertaken within the education and clinical environment.

5.13 students' self-reflections contribute to, and are evidenced in, assessments.

This may be evidenced through:

- a. Student feedback forms
- b. Tutorial reports
- c. Clinical practice reports
- d. Reflective logs
- e. Example assessments
- f. Quality assurance reports
- g. Professional behaviour evaluations
- h. Reflection opportunities
- i. Module/qualification descriptors
- j. RCVS Day One Skills recording tool audits

Guidance:

Reflection is an essential element of veterinary nursing practice, with consideration of the care provided to individual patients and ongoing skill development. Reflection is also a mandatory component of RCVS-registered professionals' CPD requirements.

It is imperative that student veterinary nurses are taught this important skill during their training. Students should be encouraged to revisit areas for improvement and be able to demonstrate improved outcomes following the reflective process.

Student veterinary nurses must, therefore, be provided with effective feedback via both formative and summative mechanisms, including examinations and assignments (see Requirement 3.15). This may be in individual or group tutorials, or more formal feedback forms following assessment. Encouraging students to include reflective considerations at re-assessment can also help to develop this skill.

5.14 there is no compensation between assessments that address the RCVS Day One Competences and Skills for Veterinary Nurses.

This may be evidenced through:

- a. Module/qualification specifications
- b. Candidate handbooks
- c. Student programme handbooks
- d. Example of a pass list
- e. Progression board/student progression meeting minutes

Guidance:

This requirement covers both intra- and inter-module/unit compensation considerations, in other words, student veterinary nurses must pass all elements of their qualification that address the *RCVS Day One Competences, Skills, and Professional Behaviours*. Where a module is not mapped to the RCVS requirements, compensation is permitted.

AEIs may require a derogation from the academic regulations in order to facilitate this requirement.

5.15 ensure modules/units that address the RCVS Day One Competences for Veterinary Nurses include unseen (closed book) examination as an element of the assessment strategy.

This may be evidenced through:

- a. Module/qualification mapping
- b. Assessment methods
- c. Assessment compensation policy

Guidance:

Each module that is mapped to the RCVS Day One Competences must contain at least one unseen assessment methodology. It is imperative that student veterinary nurses can demonstrate their ability to work without the aid of textbooks, journals, or the internet to work as an RVN.

Unseen, in this context, does not necessarily mean 'written examination', there are other unseen assessment methodologies that can effectively assess a student veterinary nurse's ability to apply knowledge, critique evidence or defend a moral standpoint.



Standard 6

Effective clinical learning

Standards

All students are provided with safe, effective, and inclusive clinical learning experiences. Each clinical learning environment has the governance and resources needed to deliver education and training. Students actively participate in their own education, learning from a range of people across a variety of settings.

Requirements

Accredited education institutions, together with delivery sites and training practices, must:

6.1 ensure clinical learning facilities are adequate to support and deliver the RCVS Day One Skills for Veterinary Nurses, across both delivery site and practice settings.

This may be evidenced through:

- a. TP/aTP lists including RCVS TP numbers
- b. TP/aTP approval and monitoring records
- c. Delivery site approval forms
- d. Consumable and equipment lists
- e. Memoranda of understanding
- f. TP/aTP risk rating and support approach
- g. Secondment agreements

Guidance:

This requirement relates to the practical training requirements for student veterinary nurses. The facilities and resources must be available for students at the AEI or delivery site, and in the TP. The RCVS does not mandate the facilities and resources required, rather the AEI is expected to consider the requirements for its own students, and to ensure the facilities will meet these requirements, and be assured that the RCVS Day One Skills can be effectively taught and assessed.

6.2 ensure that students are enrolled with the RCVS prior to undertaking clinical practice to comply with legislation.

This may be evidenced through:

- a. Enrolment policies and procedures
- b. Student handbook
- c. Clinical supervisor handbook
- d. Programme specification

Guidance:

In order to be deemed a 'student veterinary nurse' students must first be registered onto an accredited qualification and then enrolled with the RCVS, via the online enrolment system. Where there are any changes to a student's status, the RCVS must be informed immediately.

6.3 ensure students are actively learning and adequately supervised in all clinical learning environments.

This may be evidenced through:

- a. TP/aTP rotas
- b. Programme/qualification timetables
- c. Clinical practice records
- d. Job descriptions for educators, assessors, and support staff
- e. Student feedback
- f. Quality assurance reports
- g. Clinical practice evaluations
- h. Clinical supervisor risk rating and support approach
- i. Tutorial records
- j. Memorandum of understanding

Guidance:

The practical training of student veterinary nurses is an essential element of their journey towards their ability to apply to register, and they must have the full opportunity to learn from, and with, the practice team. AEIs, delivery sites and TPs must ensure that student veterinary nurses are actively involved in all aspects of patient care and veterinary practice, whilst ensuring they have the time and capacity to undertake their RCVS Day One Skills and log this progression accordingly (see Requirement 3.7).

Standard 6 – Effective clinical learning

The practical training must, however, be undertaken in accordance with Schedule 3 of the Veterinary Surgeons Act, therefore, student veterinary nurses must be supervised and, in the case of minor surgery, the supervision must be direct and continuous.

6.4 ensure clinical learning environments are provided for every student; these must be allocated for placement students. Clinical training must be undertaken within a RCVS listed training practice or auxiliary training practice, for a minimum duration of hours as stipulated in the RCVS Veterinary Nurse Registration Rules.

This may be evidenced through:

- a. Clinical practice lists
- b. Clinical practice allocation process for placement students
- c. Clinical practice allocation for placement students
- d. Memoranda of understanding
- e. Registers
- f. Record of employment
- g. Programme/qualification specification
- h. Timetables
- i. Programme/qualification structure
- j. Self-assessment reports and action plans
- k. Clinical practice handbook
- l. Internal quality assurance visit strategy

Guidance:

All student veterinary nurses must have the opportunity to train in an RCVS listed TP, or auxiliary TP, for at least 1800 hours, through either employment or via placement. All non-employed student veterinary nurses must have their placement sourced for them. It is accepted that developing the skills for future employment applications, such as writing a CV and attending interviews, is especially important, but the seeking and confirmation of a placement must be facilitated by the AEI.

6.5 all students must have sufficient time within the programme to achieve the RCVS Veterinary Nurse Registration Rules hours requirement, with the opportunity for contingencies if required.

This may be evidenced through:

- a. Timetables
- b. Planned clinical practice model
- c. Programme/qualification specification
- d. Module/qualification descriptors
- e. Individual learning plans
- f. Clinical practice lists
- g. Student handbook
- h. Clinical supervisor handbook
- i. Attendance/absence policy or procedure
- j. Interruption to study policy

Guidance:

As discussed above, student veterinary nurses must undertake at least 1800 hours of clinical training in an RCVS listed TP or auxiliary TP. This requirement must be embedded within the qualification. Nonetheless, there will likely be scenarios where students are required to be absent from their clinical practice, thus there must be sufficient opportunity for students to make up this time as required.

This must also be factored into the planned dates for the OSCE assessment; all RCVS Day One Skills, and the 1,800 hours in clinical practice, must be completed as entry requirement for the OSCE. If a student requires additional time in clinical practice, this should not affect their ability to enter the OSCE, unless a significant absence has been required.

6.6 ensure all students are allocated a clinical supervisor responsible for confirming competency in the RCVS Day One Skills for Veterinary Nurses. All clinical supervisors must be either an RVN or MRCVS (UK practising), be experienced and able to demonstrate an experienced level of clinical skills and ongoing professional development.

This may be evidenced through:

- a. CV
- b. Records of co-ordination and continuity of support and supervision
- c. Records of CPD to support role
- d. Job descriptions and/or person specifications
- e. TP/aTP approval and monitoring records
- f. Policy for recruitment and training of clinical supervisors
- g. Clinical supervisor checks made by the delivery site
- h. Process for allocating and changing clinical supervisors
- i. Clinical supervisor risk rating and support approach
- j. Memoranda of understanding
- k. RCVS registration checks
- l. Clinical supervisor succession planning

Guidance:

All student veterinary nurses must have a clinical supervisor who has sufficient time and capability to train and assess them in clinical practice. This should be reflected in the MOU between the AEI or delivery site and the TP (see Requirement 2.5).

There is no requirement for clinical supervisors to have been registered for a specific length of time, however, it is expected that they themselves are suitably qualified and experienced to support the training of student veterinary nurses (see Requirement 4.1). Where recently qualified professionals are utilised as clinical supervisors, they should be supported by more experienced team members in the TP or have a member of the AEI/delivery site team available to support their knowledge and experience.

6.7 maintain accurate records of student clinical learning environment attendance and when applicable, provide these to the RCVS.

This may be evidenced through:

- a. Registers
- b. Records of employment
- c. Records of training
- d. Records of absence

Guidance:

These records are a mandatory element of the registration process, and must, therefore, be correctly completed and signed by the relevant personnel. Where there has been a change in training practice principal, the RCVS must be informed immediately. Should this not happen, there will likely be a delay to the registration process.

6.8 ensure there is sufficient TP support available for all recruited students.

This may be evidenced through:

- a. Clinical practice allocations
- b. TP/aTP lists
- c. Memoranda of understanding
- d. Secondment agreements and records
- e. Evidence of communication with primary affiliated delivery sites
- f. TP/aTP visit strategy
- g. TP/aTP approval and monitoring records and action plans
- h. Self-assessment reports and action plans
- i. Training practice recruitment policy

Guidance:

As discussed in Requirements 6.4 and 6.5, student veterinary nurses must undertake at least 1,800 hours of clinical training in an RCVS TP, or auxiliary TP. In order to facilitate this, the AEI or delivery site must be able to demonstrate that all students are either employed or placed in a TP or auxiliary TP. It is recognised that some TPs can only support one student veterinary nurse at a time, whereas others can support multiple student veterinary nurses at once. Therefore, the number of training practices is less important than the ability to demonstrate the effective practical training of student veterinary nurses.

6.9 ensure the TP or aTP is an RCVS listed practice.

This may be evidenced through:

- a. TP/aTP lists with RCVS TP numbers
- b. Clinical practice allocations

Guidance:

The clinical practice must be listed with the RCVS as a TP or auxiliary TP. The criteria for approval are not set by the RCVS, but rather the AEI or delivery site determining that the practice meets the specific requirements for its qualification, be that species or equipment specificity.

6.10 ensure that use of TPs not affiliated to the AEI is agreed with the primary AEI, and a robust memoranda of understanding (MOU) is in place with the TP.

This may be evidenced through:

- a. Communication records
- b. Memoranda of understanding
- c. TP/aTP approval and monitoring records

Guidance:

It is not practical to assume that all students from a specific AEI or delivery site will be employed or placed in TPs affiliated to that AEI, therefore, it is accepted that student veterinary nurses will occasionally be employed or request placement in a TP not affiliated to their AEI or delivery site. In this scenario, the AEI or delivery site where the student veterinary nurse is undertaking their qualification is obligated to liaise with the AEI or delivery site to which the TP is affiliated. This must be clearly evidenced, and an additional MOU must be in place between the AEI or delivery site and the non-affiliated TP (see Requirement 2.5).

6.11 ensure clinical learning experiences are adapted to the student's stage of learning, competences, and programme outcomes.

This may be evidenced through:

- a. TP/aTP rotas
- b. Schemes of work
- c. RCVS Day One Skills recording tool audits
- d. Clinical practice records and action plans
- e. Individual learning plans
- f. Student handbooks
- g. Clinical practice handbooks
- h. Clinical supervisor training and standardisation
- i. Tutorial records
- j. Reasonable adjustment policy

Guidance:

Requirement 3.6 stipulates that student veterinary nurses are supported according to their individual learning needs, proficiency, and confidence. This requirement similarly mandates that the clinical learning is similarly adapted, according to the student veterinary nurse's individual requirements. For example, a student veterinary nurse who has worked in practice

for 10 years is unlikely to require the same initial level of instruction on cleaning a kennel, whereas a student veterinary nurse who has worked as hotel receptionist will likely be more confident with client care and managing appointments. Nonetheless, it is important that clinical supervisors are assured of a student veterinary nurse's capability, having practically observed them (see Requirement 5.8), before confirming competency.

6.12 the veterinary team contribute to the learning in the clinical environment in accordance with the RCVS Codes of Professional Conduct.

This may be evidenced through:

- a. Clinical practice records
- b. Staff codes of conduct
- c. Staff rotas/timetables
- d. Expert witness statements
- e. Team meeting minutes
- f. TP/aTP approval and monitoring records
- g. Memoranda of understanding
- h. TP/aTP risk assessments
- i. RCVS Day One Skills sampling strategy

Guidance:

Whilst all student veterinary nurses will be supported in the TP/aTP by a clinical supervisor (see Requirement 6.6), there will likely be times where the shift patterns do not align, or the clinical supervisor is on annual leave. Other members of the veterinary team can, in accordance with their skill and experience, assist with the training and assessment of the student veterinary nurse. This process must be clearly documented and auditable.



RCVS Standards Framework for Veterinary Nurse Education and Training

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