

THE NON-STATUTORY REGISTER FOR VETERINARY NURSES

INTRODUCTION

As you will be aware, the College is in the process of establishing a system for the regulation of veterinary nurses. This will bring the position of veterinary nurses more into line with that of veterinary surgeons. It will also ensure that veterinary nurses, in whatever field they choose to work by virtue of their qualification, will be able to demonstrate that their professional status is subject to the quality assurance of a Register.

NEW REGULATORY SYSTEM

It is hoped that the new regulatory system will be confirmed by a new Act of Parliament in time. In the meantime, the College is setting up a framework for the regulation of veterinary nurses under its powers to make Bye-laws. For that purpose, a new set of Bye-Laws has been published, a copy of which was sent to you, along with the *Guide to Professional Conduct for Veterinary Nurses*, in April 2007. These are also available to read and download at www.rcvs.org.uk

THE LIST AND THE REGISTER

Your name currently appears on the List maintained by the College of those veterinary nurses who are qualified and are entitled to perform certain veterinary procedures under Schedule 3 of the Veterinary Surgeons Act 1966 ("The Schedule 3 List"). The College is introducing a new section of that list, which will be known as "The Register". The Register will include the names of all those veterinary nurses who are subject to the new regulatory system.

"RVN"

All veterinary nurses whose names are included in the new Register will be able to use the title "Registered Veterinary Nurse" and the letters "RVN" after their name. Those on the Schedule 3 List whose names are not included in the new Register will continue to be able to use the title "Veterinary Nurse" and the letters "VN" (but will not be entitled to use the title "Registered Veterinary Nurse", nor will they be entitled to use the letters "RVN" after their name, nor will their names appear in the first part of the List of veterinary nurses published annually by the College).

It is hoped that new legislation will eventually require all veterinary nurses to be registered in order to practise.

THE PUBLICATION OF THE LIST

The *List of Veterinary Nurses* published annually by the College in book form will, from 2008, list all the Registered Veterinary Nurses in the first section and the non-registered

veterinary nurses in a later section. The College will continue to maintain a composite list of all certificated veterinary nurses (whether registered or not) who are entitled to perform veterinary procedures under Schedule 3 of the Veterinary Surgeons Act 1966.

ADDITIONAL RESPONSIBILITIES OF RVNS

Registered Veterinary Nurses will be required to comply with the *Guide to Professional Conduct for Veterinary Nurses* published from time to time and with Continuing Professional Development (CPD) requirements also published by the College from time to time. (The CPD requirements might include reading articles, attending study days or courses, research on the internet etc). If a Registered Veterinary Nurse fails to abide by the *Guide to Professional Conduct for Veterinary Nurses* or comply with the requirements for CPD, or otherwise falls below the standards expected of veterinary nurses, the College may issue him/her with formal advice or guidance.

With effect from 1 January 2010 (or sooner if a new Act of Parliament comes into force before 2010), non-compliance may additionally result in the removal of the Registered Veterinary Nurse's name from the Register and the Schedule 3 List, or other sanctions such as suspension from the Register and Schedule 3 List.

DISCIPLINARY AND SIMILAR PROCEEDINGS

The new system will involve a preliminary investigation committee and disciplinary committee to deal with cases where it is alleged that a Registered Veterinary Nurse is liable to have his/her name removed from the Register and Schedule 3 List.

A veterinary nurse's name may be removed from the Register for:

- conviction for a criminal offence which renders the Registered Veterinary Nurse unfit to practise,
- disgraceful conduct in a professional respect
- fraudulent entry on the Register.

Removal from the Register and Schedule 3 List will mean that the Registered Veterinary Nurse can no longer undertake veterinary procedures under Schedule 3 of the Veterinary Surgeons Act 1966 or represent themselves in any way as a Registered Veterinary Nurse.

A Registered Veterinary Nurse whose name is removed under the new regulations may later apply to be restored to the Register.

VETERINARY NURSES FOR WHOM ENTRY ON THE REGISTER WILL BE COMPULSORY

All veterinary nurses whose names were entered or are to be entered on the Schedule 3 List for the first time on or after 1 January 2003 will have their names included in the new Register.

VNS FOR WHOM ENTRY ON THE LIST WILL BE VOLUNTARY

As your name was entered on the Schedule 3 List before 1 January 2003, ***you are not obliged to be included in the new Register*** and you may continue to practise as a veterinary nurse and undertake veterinary procedures under Schedule 3 of the Veterinary Surgeons Act 1966 as before (so long as you continue to pay your retention fee and comply with the College's requirements in relation to the Schedule 3 List).

The College would, however, invite you to take this opportunity to become part of the new Register. This would enable you to use the title "Registered Veterinary Nurse", use the letters "RVN" after your name and have your name appear in the first part of the List of veterinary nurses published annually by the College.

CHANGE OF STATUS

In order to be included in the new Register, you will be asked to waive your rights set out in the Veterinary Nursing Bye-laws 2002 (Bye-law No. 3) which states that: "Any certificates awarded to veterinary nurses who qualified under Bye-laws which have been superseded by these Bye-laws remain valid."

By being included in the new Register, you will agree to be bound by the rules of the new regulatory system, including the right of the College to remove your name from the Register and Schedule 3 List in the circumstances described above. Once your name has been entered on the new Register, you will not be able to withdraw or retract your agreement to this change in status.

THE AGREEMENT

Attached are two copies of an agreement to have your name entered in the new Register. If, having read through these notes carefully, you would like to take this opportunity to be included in the Register, please additionally read through the enclosed agreement carefully, and if you wish to proceed, sign and date one copy and return it to the Registrar at the address below. You are, of course, fully entitled to take legal advice before signing the agreement if you wish. The second copy is for you to keep for your own records.

Finally, you will see that the agreement includes a declaration by you that you have no criminal convictions, cautions or similar matters recorded against you. If you are unable to sign such a declaration you should contact the Registrar. If you have convictions that are now spent by virtue of the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974, you may sign a declaration to the effect that you have no convictions.

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AGREEMENT TO TRANSFER TO THE REGISTER OF VETERINARY NURSES

1. I request that my name be entered in the Register of Veterinary Nurses as defined in Parts III and IV of the Veterinary Nursing Bye-Laws 2007 ("The Register").
2. I understand that, subject to paragraph 3 below, the Royal College of Veterinary Surgeons ("RCVS") will retain my name in the Register for so long as I (i) pay the prescribed retention fee; and (ii) comply with such other requirements relating to good standing and fitness to practise as are prescribed by the RCVS.
3. I understand that the RCVS will from 1 January 2010 be entitled to remove my name from the Register in accordance with Bye-Law 17 of the Veterinary Nursing Bye-laws 2007 (namely if I have been convicted of a criminal offence which in the opinion of the VN Disciplinary Committee renders me unfit to practise as a veterinary nurse; or if I am judged by the VN Disciplinary Committee to have been guilty of disgraceful conduct in any professional respect or if the VN Disciplinary Committee is satisfied that my name has been fraudulently entered in the Register).
4. I understand that removal of my name from the Register will automatically result in the removal of my name from the List maintained by the RCVS of veterinary nurses entitled to undertake veterinary procedures in accordance with Schedule 3 of the Veterinary Surgeons Act 1966 ("The List").
5. I understand that I will be entitled to use the title "Registered Veterinary Nurse" and the post-nominal letters "RVN" for such time as my name remains included in the Register.
6. I agree to abide by the Guide to Professional Conduct for Veterinary Nurses (including updates) published by the RCVS from time to time and to comply with the requirements set down by the RCVS from time to time in relation to continuing professional development for veterinary nurses.
7. I agree that, in consideration of the rights I will acquire under the Veterinary Nursing Bye-Laws 2007 by signing this Agreement, I hereby renounce absolutely and irrevocably all rights that have been accorded to me under previous Bye-laws of the RCVS relating to my status on the List.
8. I confirm that I have advised the Registrar of any matter recorded against me in relation to the following: any conviction or caution for a criminal offence, binding over, conditional discharge, or report to the Procurator Fiscal.
9. I confirm that I have not been refused registration or removed from the Register by any professional organisation, other than in circumstances which I have reported to the Registrar.
10. I understand that if I have advised the Registrar of any such matter as referred to in clauses 8 and 9 above, my name will not be entered on the Register unless and until such time as the VN Registration Appeal Committee has directed that it be so entered.

This agreement shall be governed and construed in accordance with English law and the parties hereto accept the exclusive jurisdiction of the Courts of England and Wales.

IN WITNESS whereof I have executed this agreement on theday of 2008

Name: _____

RCVS PIN: _____

Signature: _____

In the presence of:

Name of witness:
Please print _____

Signature: _____

Occupation: _____

Address _____

Please return this copy to:
The Registration Department
Royal College of Veterinary Surgeons,
Belgravia House,
62 – 64 Horseferry Road,
London SW1P 2AF

Office use:

Received:	
Transferred by:	
Date:	

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Name:

RCVS PIN:

Signature:

In the presence of:

Name of witness:
Please print

Signature:

Occupation:

Address

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Please retain this copy for your records