

REF. NO	C-VCG.1
TITLE	Clinical Governance in Veterinary Practice
CATEGORY AND VALUE	C – 10 CREDITS
NOTIONAL STUDY HOURS	100

INTRODUCTION

The concept of Clinical Governance as a systematic approach to maintaining and improving the quality of patient care and ensuring the accountability of human health systems came to be defined in the late nineties.

Reflecting increased expectations about the need to maintain high standards of veterinary competence and accountability, the RCVS Code of Professional Conduct now requires Veterinary Surgeons to “ensure that Clinical Governance forms part of their professional activities”. RCVS guidance highlights three particular approaches to quality improvement: patient safety, clinical effectiveness and patient & client experience.

Published literature on the application of clinical governance to veterinary healthcare systems is currently limited and in medical practice debate continues about the impact of clinical governance approaches on safety and effectiveness of healthcare. **Clinical Governance in Veterinary Practice** provides the opportunity for veterinary surgeons to engage in such debates and to explore the application of clinical governance principles to veterinary practice.

AIM

The aim of the module is to promote critical evaluation of the concept of clinical governance, how its principles apply in veterinary practice, and what value it has in terms of maintaining and improving the quality of veterinary health care

OVERVIEW

The module focuses on the principles and values of clinical governance. Candidates will have the opportunity to relate the theoretical basis of the principles underpinning clinical governance to its application in their own workplace, to consider implementation strategies, and to reflect on its effectiveness as a means of maintaining and continuously improving the quality of care. Detailed application of specific quality improvement activities such as clinical audit is covered in other modules.

LEARNING OUTCOMES

On successful completion of the module, successful candidates will be able to:

- Identify and appraise information on clinical governance pertinent to its application in veterinary practice.
- Explain the key concepts and principles of clinical governance.
- Discuss the relevance of clinical governance principles, values and processes to veterinary practice.

- Assess strategies for developing and sustaining clinical governance in veterinary practice, including factors which facilitate and impede implementation.
- Evaluate the impact of implementing clinical governance approaches in an area of practice familiar to them.
- Critically reflect on the effectiveness of clinical governance processes as means to improve the quality of veterinary care.

SYLLABUS

Candidates will be expected to explore aspects of clinical governance in its widest sense, using the following questions and themes as a framework for study:

1. KEY QUESTIONS

The module will cover key questions such as:

- What is Clinical Governance?
- Why is it important?
- How does it relate to the broader discourse on good governance in healthcare?
- What are the implications of requiring veterinary surgeons to “ensure that Clinical Governance forms part of their professional activities”?

2. KEY THEMES

The module will cover the following key themes, focusing on how they might contribute to improving accountability and the quality of veterinary care:

Clinical Effectiveness, research and audit

- Aiming to ensure the best possible outcomes.
- Applying Evidence Based Veterinary Medicine.
- Changing practice, developing new protocols, guidelines and standards, and implementing those already developed.
- Conducting research to develop the body of evidence available.
- Understanding the principles of clinical audit and how it can be used to improve patient care and outcomes through systematic review of care against explicit criteria and the implementation of change.

Risk management

- Assessing what can and does go wrong in patient care.
- Understanding why things go wrong.
- Learning from and reporting mistakes, near-misses and significant events.
- Putting systems and processes in place to reduce risk.
- Promoting a blame-free culture which encourages reporting of problems and learning from them.

People management

- Recruiting, managing, motivating and retaining staff.
- Promoting accountability.
- Encouraging team-working and good professional attitudes and behaviours.
- Identifying and addressing under-performance.
- Supporting education, training and continuing professional development, including performance appraisal.
- Providing good working conditions and monitoring staff health and wellbeing.

Information management and information technology

- Using Information & IT to ensure that patient data is accurate and up-to-date.
- Respecting confidentiality of patient data.
- Exploiting data in order to measure quality of outcomes (e.g. through audits) and to develop services tailored to practice needs.

Patient and Client Experience

- Ensuring that veterinary services provided suit the needs of clients.
- Ensuring that client feedback, including complaints, is used to improve services and that clients are involved in the development of services and the monitoring of outcomes.
- Using effective communication and feedback tools (such as newsletters, web-pages, questionnaires and staff communication protocols) to improve client involvement and experience.
- Developing effective personal communications skills within veterinary teams and between veterinary professionals and their clients.

3. APPLICATION AND IMPLEMENTATION QUESTIONS

The module will cover important questions concerning the application and implementation of clinical governance in veterinary practice, such as:

- How has clinical governance developed in the veterinary profession and are national guidelines desirable and practical?
- How can members of the veterinary profession best share data to help develop clinical criteria and standards?
- How can members of the veterinary profession use clinical governance to establish and sustain a learning culture?
- What are the advantages and disadvantages of different approaches to clinical governance?
- What skills are needed to implement clinical governance, and to address relevant issues such as leadership, culture, communication and team working?

ASSESSMENT

Module providers are responsible for deciding on assessment strategies and methods, subject to accreditation by RCVS. The following general guidance applies to assessment of this module:

- Assessment will be in accordance with the general requirement for the CertAVP qualification to be benchmarked against the Quality Assurance Agency's (QAA) "7" level in the national qualifications framework.
- Assessment will support the RCVS requirements for the module to be accessible to candidates from a wide variety of veterinary backgrounds and to focus on the veterinary aims of management and leadership
- Assessment will be aimed at encouraging learning and at measuring progress towards the intended learning outcomes of the module.

The following assessment methods might be appropriate to this module:

- A portfolio of work describing the application of clinical governance in a relevant area of practice, including evidence of resulting improvements in the quality of care.
- A reflective account of the learning journey undertaken in the module.