A NEW FRAMEWORK FOR THE DIPLOMA IN ADVANCED VETERINARY NURSING

The Veterinary Nurses Council has approved a new framework for the Diploma in Advanced Veterinary Nursing. The new framework will lead to awards in either small animal or equine nursing, or veterinary nursing education, and will be delivered by RCVS-approved colleges and their affiliated universities.

Underpinning advanced nursing practice

The Diploma will, as now, be open to Listed veterinary nurses who have at least a year of post-qualification experience. It remains an advanced award, and aims to:

- Provide advanced knowledge of the principles that underpin veterinary nursing practice.

- Assist nurses to apply knowledge of relevant normal and disordered physiology in the delivery of care and treatment

- Enable the study and development of advanced and/or specialised practical skills

- Foster skills of reflection, critical analysis and evaluation that may be used in day-to-day practise

- Enable nurses to appraise their practise in the light of well-founded evidence

Flexible, accessible study

We have designed the framework to allow maximum flexibility and choice for students. A series of core and option modules will be available, and it is envisaged that the course will be available in a variety of formats, including part-time and distance learning, in order to fit in with full-time VN work. VNs will be able to register either for the diploma award or for individual modules, which can be accredited towards the Diploma at a later date. This means that nurses can opt to undertake a short advanced level course in support of their CPD without necessarily committing themselves to studying for the whole award. The achievement of accredited modules will be recorded on the

RCVS VN database and nurses will be able to obtain a transcript. Those who achieve the full Diploma award will be able to use the appropriate post-nominal letters and will receive a distinctive badge and Diploma certificate.

Responsive to practice need

We have developed the four "core" modules, which will be undertaken by every student wishing to achieve the DipAVN, and some initial "option" modules. However, we expect to accredit further options as these are developed by course providers. This means that the framework will be highly responsive to the changing needs of veterinary practice and able to provide a variety of clinical specialist options.

Courses and assessment

The Diploma can be offered by any approved VN course provider, so long as the college has a university partner and the appropriate teaching and learning resources for this advanced programme. We expect to be conducting approval visits to prospective colleges/universities during the spring and summer of 2005.

Modules will be delivered at a minimum of CATs level 2 (second year undergraduate level) and will be internally assessed by course providers. Module assessments will be a mix of course work and examinations. In some instances, especially in the case of option modules, students will be required to undertake a number of hours in relevant practice. In some cases this can be undertaken in a general veterinary practice, but in others, for instance small animal intensive care, students may need to arrange suitable clinical placements in order to gain the necessary advanced experience.

The final assessment for those working towards the DipAVN award will be an external RCVS assessment. Students will produce an in-depth case-based dissertation to be examined by the RCVS. This final piece of work will draw together all aspects of the course. Students will be required to attend an oral examination during which they will be expected to discuss and be assessed on aspects of their dissertation.

DIPLOMA IN ADVANCED VETERINARY NURSING FRAMEWORK

Core Modules
Applied essential physiology
Systematic delivery of care
Evidence-based practice
Law, ethics and professional practice
Total 60 credits

Option Modules
Anaesthesia
Diagnostic imaging
Small animal intensive care
Small animal medical nursing
Small animal surgical nursing
etc
Total 60 credits

Final RCVS External Assessment
Dissertation + oral exam