

GENERAL GUIDANCE AND ASSESSMENT FOR ALL MODULES

STRUCTURE OF THE MODULAR CERTIFICATE

Candidates can choose to enrol for either the Certificate in Advanced Veterinary Practice (CertAVP), a designated qualification (eg CertAVP [Dermatology]), or for individual modules. All modules have a value of 10 credits (or 100 notional study hours), unless otherwise stated. 60 credits (or 600 notional study hours) are required for the full qualification. Notional study hours include direct taught-time as well as self-directed study time.

The full qualification is broken up into three sections: A, B and C. The A-Professional Key Skills module has a value of 15 credits and the B-Clinical Key Skills module has a value of 5 credits. All other modules have a value of 10 credits. For the full qualification, it is necessary to complete the A-Professional Key Skills and the B-Clinical Key Skills modules, along with another B module, which give a value of 30 credits. The remaining 30 credits can be made up from either B or C modules, or a combination of both.

In most cases a particular combination of modules will be required for the designated qualifications, which will be offered for the majority of disciplines and species. Unless otherwise stated, candidates will be required to complete a final synoptic assessment before being eligible to receive a designated certificate. However, this final assessment will not usually be necessary for the general certificate.

Candidates wishing to enrol for a designated certificate will additionally need to check the guidance and assessment information specific to that particular discipline or species.

GENERAL GUIDANCE NOTES

Before enrolling for any modules, candidates must fulfil the following criteria:

- a) Candidates must hold a veterinary qualification which would entitle them to register as a member of RCVS
- b) Candidates should have at least one year's experience working as a practising veterinary surgeon, and be able to provide evidence of CPD for that period. Candidates graduating in 2007 or later will be expected to have completed the RCVS Professional Development Phase (PDP). PDP counts as CPD for graduates in their first year of practice.
- c) Candidates should enrol with RCVS before being assessed for any modules. Enrolment will be valid for up to 10 years.

Candidates are advised to check for any additional criteria that may be specified in the module in addition to the above three points.

THE AIM AND LEVEL OF THE QUALIFICATION

AIM

The aim of the qualification is to provide a modular route to a recognised level of attainment for practising veterinary surgeons, so that they may perform as competent independent practitioners, delivering a consistently high standard of practice to their clients.

This qualification is not intended to be a specialist qualification and should not be used to specifically advertise referral services. Specialist referrals should only be handed by suitably qualified practising veterinary surgeons (for example RCVS Diplomates or RCVS Recognised Specialists).

The provision of a framework for continuing professional development and lifelong learning are additional advantages of the modular approach. A diagram showing the postgraduate qualifications framework is attached at the end of this document.

LEVEL

The qualification is pitched at the Quality Assurance Agency's (QAA) "M" level in the national qualifications framework. The following level descriptor is adapted from the QAA definition of qualifications at this level, and should be used as an indicator of the level required by all modules in the qualification.

- 1 Candidates will need to demonstrate –
 - (1) A thorough understanding of the knowledge base, and a critical awareness of developments, at the forefront of their area of professional practice.
 - (2) A comprehensive understanding of techniques applicable to their own area of practice.
 - (3) Originality in the application of knowledge, together with a practical understanding of how established techniques of research and clinical enquiry are used to create and interpret knowledge in their professional area.
 - (4) Conceptual understanding that enables them to –
 - (a) evaluate critically current literature and research in their professional area; and
 - (b) evaluate clinical methodologies and techniques, and develop critiques of them and, where appropriate to propose new approaches to professional practice.

- 2 Typically, holders of the qualification will be able to –
 - (1) Deal with complex issues in an organised and creative manner, make sound judgements in the absence of complete data, and communicate their conclusions clearly to veterinary colleagues and to non-veterinary audiences, including clients.
 - (2) Demonstrate self direction and originality in tackling and solving problems, and act autonomously in planning and implementing tasks in their professional area of work.
 - (3) Continue to advance their knowledge and understanding, and to develop new skills to a high level.
- 3 Holders of the Certificate will have the qualities and transferable skills necessary for professional veterinary work requiring -
 - (1) The exercise of initiative and personal responsibility.
 - (2) Decision-making in complex and unpredictable situations.
 - (3) The independent learning ability required for continuing professional development.

RECOMMENDED PREPARATION FOR ALL MODULES

Before embarking on any module, candidates are advised to plan a structured programme of continuing professional development to help them achieve their objectives. Involvement in networks or 'learning sets' of other candidates working towards the same or similar modules is encouraged and, where possible, RCVS will assist candidates who wish to be put in contact with others studying towards this and other related modules. Candidates are advised to find a suitable adviser/mentor to support them through the programme, especially if they are working towards it on a 'self-study' basis. This will be particularly recommended for those studying towards a designated certificate where a wide combination of modules is available to choose from. Candidates are free to choose their own advisers/mentors, or they may wish to enrol on a course offered by a university or by other CPD providers where tutorial or supervisor support is available.

OPTIONS FOR WORKING THROUGH MODULES

Modules may be taken in any order, although many candidates, particularly those who have graduated within the last 2-3 years, will wish to start with the Professional Key Skills

module (A-PKS.1) and work through a structured programme to complete B and C modules. The Clinical Key Skills module (B-CKS.0) should normally be taken in conjunction with one other B module, giving a combined value of 15 credits. However, if it is taken separately then it will require a separate assessment. Coverage of the Professional Key Skills module (A-PKS.1) may also be integrated with any of the species based B modules. Some candidates may prefer to take B and C modules before the A-PKS.1 module, and this approach could be appropriate for more experienced veterinarians, who should be able to produce evidence of their competence across a number of modules in an integrated fashion. It should be noted however that compliance with best practice for all the topics covered by A-PKS.1 will be expected throughout every module.

When combining modules, candidates will need to clearly indicate within their portfolios/case books which modules have been covered by the various pieces of work. A single case could, for example, be used to demonstrate coverage of professional and clinical key skills (the A-PKS.1 and B-CKS.0 modules) as well as specific clinical practice skills from one of the B modules. The required word-count should then be adjusted accordingly.

ASSESSMENT OF ALL MODULES

Universities are advised to check to see if the module(s) they plan to offer have specific assessment guidance. If no specific assessment guidance is given then the following assessment guidelines for each category of module will generally apply. It will be for universities (and their partners where appropriate) to determine the precise forms of assessment for each of the modules they are offering. This will be subject to accreditation by RCVS.

ASSESSMENT OF THE A-PROFESSIONAL KEY SKILLS MODULE

Assessment of the A-PKS.1 module might follow several different forms of assessment. One route for assessment that RCVS is suggesting will be in the form of open essays, with a total word count of around 10,000 – 15,000 words. The essays would cover all the topics in the module and require the candidate to reflect on and quote evidence from their own performance and practice, to demonstrate how they have applied their understanding of the topic in their work environment.

The objective is NOT to create 'perfect case books', but to show that the candidate's professional competence has developed and improved. The collection of essays would need to be presented in the best possible format, with attention paid to spelling, grammar and layout, as communication skills and data handling are important elements of the Professional Key Skills module.

Other forms of assessment could include formative assessment through a portfolio work-based learning approach, in conjunction with other modules.

ASSESSMENT OF THE B MODULES

Candidates working on B modules in isolation, (i.e. not through a portfolio work- based learning approach, in conjunction with other modules) will be required to present the following evidence for assessment:

- It is suggested that candidates complete up to 5 case studies of around 1,000 words each, and a 1,000 word essay justifying their choice of cases and reflecting upon their learning during the module. All cases are to have been managed by the candidate. The number of cases to be included in the case book may vary, depending on the extent to which the cases selected can be shown to cover all the main areas of the module. Cases selected should demonstrate that the candidate has dealt competently with a range of commonly presented conditions or situations from the area of practice in which they are working.

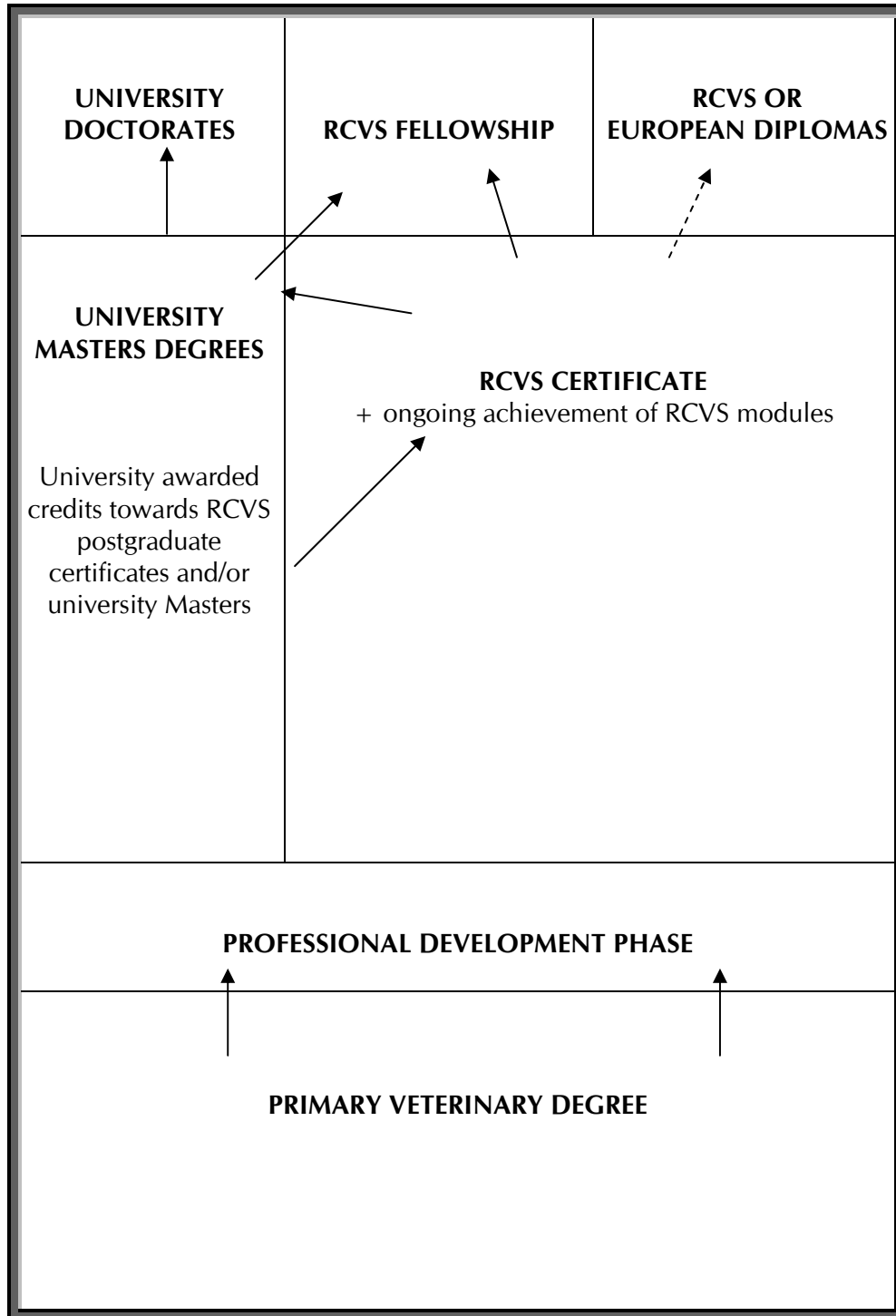
For most candidates, centres may find it appropriate to offer 'formative' assessment of case books for this module, particularly for those who are new to the process of case report writing. Rather than approaching the assessment of this B module as a rigid 'pass/fail' summative assessment, candidates will benefit from guidance from an assessor on the standard and presentation of their case book before they proceed to any of the C modules. Although the assessor will need to be satisfied as to the quality of the candidate's work before they sign them off as having completed this module, the candidate may be allowed to re-present their work following feedback until they are deemed to have met the appropriate benchmark.

ASSESSMENT OF THE C MODULES

Many C modules could be assessed by the following methods:

- A **learning diary** that documents the candidate's experiences over the period that the module is being completed, includes critical commentaries upon at least some of the learning resources used, and describes the application of the learning process to a wide range of cases encountered in practice.
- A **case book** of three cases, each of up to 1,500 words in length. These cases should be selected to demonstrate the candidate's ability to use the competences that have been acquired to cope with a challenging situation, rather than necessarily using classic "textbook cases" of particular conditions.
- A **reflective essay** of about 800 words, completed at the end of the module, reflecting upon how the course of study has resulted in a more competent practitioner. This may be incorporated into a final reflective essay to be produced before the full qualification is awarded.

VETERINARY POSTGRADUATE QUALIFICATIONS FRAMEWORK



RCVS 'Recognised Specialist' status is open to those who hold a Diploma or equivalent level qualification.