

ASSESSMENT OF RCVS A-PKS.1 MODULE

OPEN ESSAYS

One possible method of assessing the Professional Key Skills Module is through a series of open essays covering each of the main topics in the module. The following suggested questions have been prepared by RCVS and new essay topics will be published periodically. Candidates who have graduated relatively recently will need to spend time developing their knowledge and building up their experience as practising veterinary surgeons before being able to tackle them. However, more experienced members of the profession may be able to handle them based on their existing experience.

Universities are free to discuss alternative approaches to assessing this module, subject to accreditation by RCVS.

This series of 10 essay topics is the starting point for a reflective professional skills portfolio (total 10,000 words). Candidates should submit a essay in their species of choice on **each** question. Alternatively, candidates may select 9 essay topics from the 10 provided, but must then prepare a 10th essay, summarising their experience of learning across the whole module and providing evidence of how their approach to their own professional work may have changed and improved as a result of engaging in further development.

The total word count for the ten essays should be between 10,000 and 15,000, with each essay being in the region of 1,000 words. Essays must include reference to relevant theory and must also relate to the candidate's personal experience as a practising veterinary surgeon.

Those aiming for a single species Certificate should focus each essay on that species. Those aiming for a mixed practice certificate should aim to focus a minimum of two questions on each of farm animals, horses and small animals. Those working towards a Government Veterinary Service/State Veterinary Medicine certificate should aim to focus a minimum of two questions on each of cattle, sheep and pigs but may also include poultry and small animals if relevant.

List of Essay Topics

1. Using evidence from two cases, one in which your communication skills were exemplary and one in which you felt your communication skills were lacking, identify and discuss the key features which lead to a successfully managed customer.
2. Outline how you record case details in your workplace. Discuss how your system meets the various needs for recording in professional practice.
3. Increasingly veterinary services are delivered by a multidisciplinary team. Discuss, with personal examples, the managerial problems this can create, and how these should be overcome.
4. Either (a) discuss the tension between client emotion and economic reality in companion practice, and the veterinary surgeon's professional role in resolving such issues, or (b) discuss the practical effects of economic considerations in production animal practice.

5. Discuss your most puzzling case, and how such cases inform your diagnostic approach and your general approach to practice.
6. When you last undertook a risk analysis in your workplace, what new risks were identified? Discuss how these were overcome in the interests of both your staff and public safety.
7. Outline the important stages in the process of staff appraisal. Discuss an appraisal which you felt went less well than you would have liked, and how it could have been improved.
8. The veterinary profession is famous for its enterprising, tackle-all attitude to our work! Discuss where you draw the line in tackling novel and specialist cases or situations, giving examples of those in which you would proceed and those in which you would not.
9. Outline three circumstances from your professional practice in which you have encountered compromised animal welfare. Discuss your contribution to improving the situation for the animals involved.
10. Ethical concerns are a key feature of professional life. Outline one ethical dilemma relating to the business aspect of your work and one relating to your practice of veterinary science. How did you resolve each to your own satisfaction?