

THE ROYAL COLLEGE OF VETERINARY SURGEONS

ESSENTIAL COMPETENCES REQUIRED OF THE VETERINARY SURGEON

ESSENTIAL COMPETENCES REQUIRED OF THE NEW VETERINARY GRADUATE

“DAY ONE SKILLS”

A1 - GENERAL PROFESSIONAL SKILLS AND ATTRIBUTES

The new veterinary graduate should be able to:

- A1.1 Communicate effectively with clients, the lay public, professional colleagues and responsible authorities; listen effectively and respond sympathetically to clients and others, using language in a form appropriate to the audience and the context
- A1.2 Prepare clear case reports and maintain patient records in a form satisfactory to colleagues and understandable by the public
- A1.3 Work effectively as a member of a multi-disciplinary team in the delivery of services to clients
- A1.4 Be aware of the ethical responsibilities of the veterinary surgeon in relation to individual patient care and client relations, and also more generally in the community in relation to their possible impact on the environment and society as a whole
- A1.5 Be aware of the economic and emotional climate in which the veterinary surgeon operates, and respond appropriately to the influence of such pressures
- A1.6 Be willing to use one’s professional capabilities to contribute as far as possible to the advancement of veterinary knowledge in order to benefit veterinary practice and further improve the quality of animal care and public health
- A1.7 Have an elementary knowledge of the organisation and management of a veterinary practice, including:
 - awareness of own and employer’s responsibilities in relation to employment and health and safety legislation, and the position relating to lay staff and public liability
 - awareness of how fees are calculated and invoices drawn up, and the importance of following the practice’s systems for record keeping and book-keeping, including computer records and case reports
 - ability to use information technology effectively to communicate, share, collect, manipulate and analyse information
 - importance of complying with professional standards and policies of the practice
- A1.8 Understand the need and professional obligation for a commitment to continuing education and training, and professional development, throughout one’s professional life

A1.9 Conduct oneself in a professional manner with regard to the veterinary surgeon's professional and legal responsibilities and understand and apply the ethical codes as set out in the RCVS Guide to Professional Conduct

A1.10 Be able to cope with uncertainty and adapt to change

A1.11 Develop a capacity for self-audit and willingness to participate in the peer-review process

A1.12 Be aware of personal limitations, and demonstrate awareness of when and from where to seek professional advice, assistance and support.

(Commentary: This last item is considered to be one of the most important, and should guide all new veterinary graduates when undertaking their professional duties. Veterinary surgeons undertaking procedures on patients must at all stages in their careers be fully competent in their performance, or be under the close supervision of those so competent. When in doubt, the new veterinary graduate must seek professional support and in the interests of animal and human health, should not attempt to undertake complex procedures unsupervised.)

B1 - UNDERPINNING KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING

The new veterinary graduate will need to have acquired a thorough knowledge and understanding of the following:

B1.1 The sciences on which the activities of veterinary surgeons are based

B1.2 Research methods and the contribution of basic and applied research to all aspects of veterinary science

B1.3 How to evaluate evidence

B1.4 The structure and functions of healthy animals, and all aspects of their husbandry

B1.5 The aetiology, pathogenesis, clinical signs, diagnosis and treatment of the common diseases and disorders that occur in the common domestic species in the UK

B1.6 Legislation relating to the welfare (including transport) of animals and notifiable diseases

B1.7 Medicines legislation and guidelines on responsible use of medicines

B1.8 The principles of disease prevention and the promotion of health and welfare

B1.9 Veterinary public health issues including zoonoses.

C1 - PRACTICAL COMPETENCES

The new veterinary graduate should be able to undertake the following:

- C1.1 Obtain an accurate and relevant history of the individual animal or animal group, and its/their environment
- C1.2 Handle and restrain an animal safely and humanely, and instruct others in performing these techniques
- C1.3 Perform a complete clinical examination
- C1.4 Attend all species in an emergency and perform basic first aid

(Commentary: problems to be handled for any species include first aid management of haemorrhage, wounds, breathing difficulties, eye & ear injuries, unconsciousness, clinical deterioration, burns, tissue damage, internal organ damage and cardiac arrest. First aid to be applied includes bandaging, cleaning, immobilising limbs, resuscitation procedures, haemorrhage control.)

- C1.5 Assess correctly the nutritional status of an animal and be able to advise the client on principles of husbandry and feeding

(Commentary: this applies to commonly presented cases and would not, for example, be expected to include advanced nutritional advice for complex cases, eg. high performance horses, high yielding dairy cows, certain exotic or zoological species.)

- C1.6 Collect, preserve and transport samples, perform standard laboratory tests, and interpret the results of those generated in-house, as well as those generated by other laboratories

(Commentary: new graduates are expected to have a working knowledge of tests to be undertaken include conditions relating to infectious & contagious diseases; alimentary system; respiratory system; circulatory system; urinary system; nervous system; endocrine system; mucocutaneous system; musculoskeletal system; trauma; poisoning; obstetrics; paediatrics; parturition; reproduction)

- C1.7 Use radiographic, ultrasonic, and other technical equipment which can be used as a diagnostic aid, safely and in accordance with current regulations

- C1.8 Follow correct procedures after diagnosing notifiable, reportable and zoonotic diseases

- C1.9 Know and apply the RCVS twelve Principles of Certification correctly

- C1.10 Access the appropriate sources of data on licensed medicines; prescribe and dispense medicines correctly and responsibly in accordance with relevant legislation and ensure that medicines and waste are safely stored and/or disposed of

- C1.11 Correctly apply principles of sterilisation of surgical equipment

- C1.12 Correctly apply principles of aseptic surgery

- C1.13 Safely perform sedation, general and regional anaesthesia, implement chemical methods of restraint, and assess and control pain

C1.14 Advise on, and administer appropriate treatment

(Commentary: the new veterinary surgeon must always seek professional advice and support if presented with a case beyond his or her immediate capability – see item A.12)

C1.15 Recognise when euthanasia is necessary and perform it humanely, using an appropriate method, whilst showing sensitivity to the feelings of owners and others, and with due regard to the safety of those present; advise on disposal of the carcase

C1.16 Perform a basic gross post mortem examination, record details, sample tissues, store and transport them

C1.17 Perform ante mortem inspection of animals destined for the food chain and correctly identify conditions affecting the quality and safety of products of animal origin

C1.18 Assess and implement basic health and welfare records (and production records where appropriate)

C1.19 Advise on, and carry out preventive and prophylactic programmes appropriate to the species and commensurate with accepted animal health, welfare and public health standards, seeking advice and assistance where necessary from professional colleagues

C1.20 Minimise the risks of contamination, cross infection and accumulation of pathogens in the veterinary premises and in the field.

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