Harper Adams University Accreditation Visit

Certificate in Advanced Veterinary Nursing

2019

Report to the Veterinary Nurses Council of the Royal College of Veterinary Surgeons (RCVS)

Contents

List of Visitors

Shirley Gibbins RVN

VN Qualifications Manager

Denise Chambers RVN

Quality Assurance Officer

Lily Lipman RVN

Practice Standards Senior Manager

Harper Adams University Panel Members

Mr Steve Barnett (Chair)

Head of Educational Development and Quality Enhancement, Chair of the Quality and Standards Committee and Member of the Learning, Teaching and Student Experience Committee

Mrs Lisa Barnett (Secretary)

Assistant Registrar (Validations and Accreditations) and Secretary to the Quality and Standards Committee and Programme Approvals Committee

Dr John Donaldson

Principal Lecturer, Associate Head of the Animal Production, Welfare and Veterinary Sciences Department (Animal Systems Section) and Partnership Co-ordinator

Ms Inge Breathnach RVN

Senior Nurse Clinician, Fitzpatrick Referrals, Student Representative

Miss Bethan Pinney RVN

Course Tutor, 1st Year, Veterinary Nursing Programmes

Mr Matthew Rendle RVN

Head Veterinary Nurse and Exotic Referrals, Holly House Veterinary Clinic

Miss Mandy Tamba RVN

Lecturer – School of Animal, Rural and Environmental Sciences, Nottingham Trent University

Key Staff met

Mrs Susan Howarth RVN

Programme Manager – Veterinary Nursing, Animal Production, Welfare and Veterinary Sciences Department

Mrs Jane Thomas

Senior Lecturer and Associate Head of the Animal Production, Welfare and Veterinary Sciences Department

Mrs Linzi Nuttall

Lecturer – Animal Production, Welfare and Veterinary Sciences Department

Ms Katherine Hart

Teaching Assistant – Veterinary Nursing, Animal Production, Welfare and Veterinary Sciences Department

Ms Nina Tudor

Technician – Veterinary Nursing, Animal Production, Welfare and Veterinary Sciences Department

Mr Carwyn Ellis

Head of the Animal Production, Welfare and Veterinary Services Department

Mrs Rebecca Hayhurst

Student Services Manager

Ms Laura Pilsel

Head of Library Services

Summary of the Visitors' findings

- Harper Adams University was visited on Wednesday 26th June 2019. The following programmes were under accreditation review:

  Graduate Certificate in Advanced Veterinary Nursing (Anaesthesia)
  Graduate Certificate in Advanced Veterinary Nursing (Analgesia and Pain Management)
  Graduate Certificate in Advanced Veterinary Nursing (Surgical)
  Graduate Certificate in Advanced Veterinary Nursing (Oncology)

  Postgraduate Certificate in Advanced Veterinary Nursing (Anaesthesia)
  Postgraduate Certificate in Advanced Veterinary Nursing (Analgesia and Pain Management)
  Postgraduate Certificate in Advanced Veterinary Nursing (Surgical)
  Postgraduate Certificate in Advanced Veterinary Nursing (Oncology)

- Harper Adams University Panel concluded that all of the named programmes would be recommended for approval subject to conditions. This included successfully receiving accreditation from the RCVS.

- The visitors received a warm welcome from the staff and are grateful to all those who were responsible for preparing the visit, arranging the schedule and providing supplementary information when requested. The enthusiasm, commitment and pride of staff in what they do made it an interesting and enjoyable visit.

The visiting panel found the following:

- Harper Adams University is to be **commended** for the development of novel assessment techniques
- Harper Adams University is to be **commended** for the development of niche CPD opportunities for Veterinary Nurses within the new RCVS Certificate of Advanced Veterinary Nursing Standards and framework
- Harper Adams University is to be **commended** for their commitment in the development of these new programmes and the standard achieved within the timescales

Standard 2 – Sustainability

Suggestions

    a. Develop a progression diagram or flowchart to identify starting points and student progression opportunities.

    b. Develop and implement and programme specific feedback form.

Actions

None

Standard 3 – Curricula and Assessment

Suggestions

    a. Update HAU 'Assessment Regulations' to incorporate reference to the Level 6 Graduate Certificate.

Actions

    a. The University must standardise the rationale and context section within all module descriptors.

    b. Review all student facing documentation to correct typographical errors and ensure there is clear reference to the support students can access, as well as guidance on secondment or placement requirements, delivery of sessions and co-teaching, re-assessment opportunities and relevant links to the RCVS website.

    c. Provide updated module descriptors with reviewed learning outcomes.

    d. Provide assessments, assignments, example answers and marking schemes for initial programmes to be delivered.

    e. Develop and provide specific assessment rubrics.

    f. Add Graduate Certificate/Postgraduate Certificate Integrated Pain Management assessments to the assessment schedule.

    g. Plan and provide schemes of work for initial programmes to be delivered, with detailed planning for the compulsory introductory session.

    h. Update APL document to reflect RCVS CertAVN APL conditions.

    i. Update student documentation with guidance on how to apply to the RCVS for the CertAVN upon successful completion of the programmes, once the information has been published by the RCVS.

Standard 4 – Educators and Assessors

Suggestions

None

Actions

    a. Provide Induction plan for students, incorporating introduction to student support network.

Standard 1 – Course Provider

> **Details of the location at which qualification delivery is to take place must be provided.**
>
> **The course must be accredited by a UK university or awarding organisation.**
>
> **The application must be made by the principal or chief executive of the college.**

1.1 The qualifications will be delivered at the below address, although the vast majority of the programmes will be delivered via the Virtual Learning Environment (VLE).

Harper Adams University

Edgemond
Newport
Shropshire
TF10 8NB

1.2 The completed application has been submitted by Dr David Llewellyn – Vice Chancellor, Harper Adams University.

1.3 The proposed qualification titles, as detailed in the application, are as follows:

Graduate Certificate in Advanced Veterinary Nursing (Anaesthesia)
Graduate Certificate in Advanced Veterinary Nursing (Analgesia and Pain Management)
Graduate Certificate in Advanced Veterinary Nursing (Surgical)
Graduate Certificate in Advanced Veterinary Nursing (Oncology)

Postgraduate Certificate in Advanced Veterinary Nursing (Anaesthesia)
Postgraduate Certificate in Advanced Veterinary Nursing (Analgesia and Pain Management)
Postgraduate Certificate in Advanced Veterinary Nursing (Surgical)
Postgraduate Certificate in Advanced Veterinary Nursing (Oncology)

Suggestions

None

Actions

None

Standard 2 – Sustainability

> **Provide strong evidence of an adequate and sustainable market for the proposed qualification backed up by sound research based evidence.**

2.1 The financial analysis for the proposed programmes was provided during the accreditation event. Programme costings were based on a proposal of 30 students for the combined suite of Graduate Certificates and 30 students for the combined suite of Postgraduate Certificates. Based on the figures provided, the programmes will be financially viable from year one.

2.2 The financial analysis also included staffing requirements, which HAU recognises will increase as the programmes become established, and costing for an additional member of teaching staff has already been budgeted for.

2.3 HAU confirmed that they are confident they will have sufficient student enrolments to make the running of the programmes viable, based on enquiries from approximately 100 students to date. HAU also indicated that their lowest viable threshold is further reduced due to the online and blended delivery, and thus have no concerns that any of the programmes will not be feasible for delivery.

2.4 The programme survey provided for the application raised concerns that the suitability of one feedback form for both attended and distance programmes was not fit for purpose, so HAU Validation Panel have added the recommendation that a new, course specific form is designed and implemented. However, it was made clear that feedback is always provided to teaching staff and improvements made as necessary.

2.5 The market research for these programmes has been mostly based on RCVS and VN Futures surveys, however, the delivery team also took into account the popular modules and CPD sessions which have been delivered in the past. This, alongside the expertise of staff members already engaged with advanced nursing programmes, has led to the development of the four proposed subject areas.

2.6 The panel agreed that is was not immediately clear what the progression through the various programmes might be for a student, nor the starting point for RVNs of various qualification routes. The delivery team clarified that they did not anticipate that once a student has completed the Graduate Certificate at Level 6 they would move onto the Postgraduate Certificate at Level 7, as there are other advanced programmes offered at the university that provide suitable progression. It was agreed by the panel that in order for students to be fully informed, this needed to be clearer, so a recommendation was made that a progression flowchart was developed to identify a clear starting point for new students and a pathway for current students.

a. Develop a progression diagram or flowchart to identify starting points and student progression opportunities.
b. Develop and implement and programme specific feedback form.

Actions

None

Standard 3 – Curricula and Assessment

> **Curricula and assessments are designed, developed, delivered and evaluated to ensure candidates achieve the RCVS Certificate in Advanced Veterinary Nursing**

3.1 All panel members felt that the proposed subject areas were relevant to Veterinary Nursing and will allow RVNs to achieve the RCVS Certificate in Advanced Veterinary Nursing. It was agreed that the level of detail in the context and rationale for the modules was very variable, and therefore there needed to be a more standardised approach so that students have access to similar depth of information when considering their course options.

3.2 There was a recommendation within the student handbook that students may wish to second to a placement in order to gain sufficient experience in the area of study. The panel suggested that this recommendation be bolstered with further explanation in the documentation. Further information relating to application to the RCVS for the Certificate in Advanced Veterinary Nursing upon successful completion of the programmes is also required, however, at the time of writing the report the mechanism was not yet published, so once this information is available this must also be included in the student handbook. Similarly, there was no information related to the delivery of sessions on campus, specifically in relation to the co-teaching of sessions, which needs clarifying to avoid confusion on behalf of the students attending.

3.3 There was some concern from the panel that the academic levels were not reflected within the learning outcomes for the respective modules. This was discussed at length and the programme team were made aware that they must review all learning outcomes to ensure that the language used accurately reflects the academic level required. In addition, it was noted that some learning outcomes were written more as a testable assessment as opposed to a learning outcome, e.g: '*Conduct a literature review using a variety of sources to produce a research-based report that demonstrates accepted conventions of academic writing'* (Evidence Based Nursing), and '*Plan and deliver effective peri-operative, intraoperative and post-operative care for animals undergoing surgeries associated with the cutaneous structure and special senses, based on critical assessment of nursing needs'* (Graduate Cutaneous System and Special Senses Surgery and Nursing Support). The team were therefore advised to review the wording of each learning outcome to ensure they are fit for purpose.

3.4 The assessments were unavailable prior to the accreditation event, and examples of questions, scenarios and model answers were made available at the visit. The example assessments made available were fit for purpose, as well as encouraging a higher level of practical competence above that required for registration as a veterinary nurse. Of particular note was the incorporation of the triple-jump assessment, where students are provided with information or a scenario, given time to ascertain further pertinent information and develop an outcome that satisfactorily achieves the assessment criteria. This method encourages students to extend their understanding, as well as their reasoning, for a particular clinical course of action. However, the planned assessments and any assignment briefs for the first programmes to be delivered must be made available for review.

3.5 The assessment rubric provided appeared to only be in reference to assignments, however, it was explained by the University that this rubric is used as a basis for all assessments at HAU and a variety of examples are available for students to review on the VLE. Nevertheless, in order for students to have clear understanding of their assessment criteria, particularly where the assessment may be unfamiliar to them, such as video logs, HAU is required to adapt the root document and provide specific rubrics for students' reference.

3.6 The assessment schedule was missing reference to the Graduate Certificate/Postgraduate Certificate Integrated Pain Management assessments, although these were documented within the module descriptors.

3.7 The assessment schedule allows for two submission dates, one of which must be agreed between the student and the course leader towards the start of the module. HAU currently employ this strategy on other postgraduate qualifications and reported that students prefer this approach as it allows for more flexibility around workload. The delivery team also felt that it aids with easing workload pressure with reference to marking. There was concern raised by the panel that this may affect the standardisation of moderation, although this has never been raised by the External Examiner and both the delivery team and HAU panel felt it was appropriate.

3.8 There are sufficient re-assessment opportunities within the assessment schedules, although this was not detailed within any student facing documentation, and must be incorporated for clarity and fair access to assessment.

3.9 The HAU moderation policy was documented within the Academic Quality Assurance Manual provided with the application. However, there were a number of relevant appendices missing, which were shared and reviewed subsequent to the event. It was clear that the relevant policies and annexes were very thorough and would allow any staff member to clearly understand the requirements, with the exception of the provision of how the deadlines for submission of mitigating circumstances are shared with students. It was also noted that as the Graduate Certificate is a new 60 credit provision at Level 6, the HAU 'Assessment Regulations' do not currently reference to the programme, and this should be updated for accuracy and thoroughness, as well as clarity to be provided on how and when dates and deadlines for mitigating circumstances submission are provided to students.

3.10 There was no reference to RPL, APL or APEL for these programmes, but it was stated that the HAU policy would be followed. The HAU policy has now been shared and reviewed, and it is clear that no more than 30 credits can be used towards these 60 credit modules. The RCVS CertAVN

APL policy, as detailed in the Certificate Handbook, must also be followed, in that any APL must be directly and substantially matched against the outcomes of the accredited certificate. This is not explicit within the current documentation and must therefore be updated accordingly.

3.11 The schemes of work were not available for review. The delivery team commented that once the programmes had been validated, the course tutors could make a decision on what would be of most value to the students on their 'in days' and consider the availability of industry experts for guest lectures. Upon successful validation and accreditation of the programmes, the University will review the market demand and deliver the two programmes which have demonstrated the potential for the highest initial uptake. All programmes will consist of a compulsory introductory session at the beginning of the academic year, followed by optional study weekends based on whether the student feels they will be of sufficient value to them. Students who choose not to attend will have access to all of the required learning materials via the VLE and will have the opportunity to discuss this in the course feedback form.

Suggestions

    a. Update HAU 'Assessment Regulations' to incorporate reference to the Level 6 Graduate Certificate.

Actions

    a. The University must standardise the rationale and context section within all module descriptors.

    b. Review all student facing documentation to correct typographical errors and ensure there is clear reference to the support students can access, as well as guidance on secondment or placement requirements, delivery of sessions and co-teaching, re-assessment opportunities and relevant links to the RCVS website.

    c. Provide updated module descriptors with reviewed learning outcomes.

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Standard 4 – Educators and Assessors

Theory and practice learning and assessment are facilitated effectively and objectively by appropriately qualified and experienced professionals with necessary expertise for their educational and assessor roles.

4.1 The CVs and CPD records for all staff involved with the delivery of the proposed programmes were provided for review as part of the application for accreditation. It was evident that all staff were suitably qualified and experienced, and maintain their RCVS CPD requirements as well as educational and institutional specific updates and further training.

4.2 The staffing resource for the proposed programmes has been reviewed and is sufficient, with allocation within the budget for another member of staff to join the team. The co-teaching of the Graduate Certificate and Postgraduate Certificate, within the subject specific areas, as well as the online component of programme delivery, will also assist with limiting the impact on staffing.

4.3 The co-teaching aspect of the proposed programmes did raise concerns from the panel in relation to differentiation, but the delivery team were confident that with the assistance of additional materials within the VLE online areas, as well as the variance between the learning outcomes, assignment briefs and grading criteria, students would be able to comprehend the differences between the two programme levels. The delivery team also reiterated that the Postgraduate Certificate Level 7 programme would demand a higher academic skill in comparison to the Graduate Certificate Level 6 programme, which is denoted by the differentiation in the learning outcomes.

4.4 The requirement for course tutors to contact enrolled students was not indicated within the application, although the current process was explained during the accreditation event. Course tutors will remind enrolled students of upcoming assessment deadlines, but stated that as the students will be adult learners, the onus of contacting HAU for further support will be on the student, not the course tutor. The delivery team were very clear that they currently signpost students to student support services as necessary, and will continue to do so in future.

4.5 The HAU panel did not feel that the current provision for student support was well illustrated within the current paperwork, so have requested that this is incorporated into the induction plan for these programmes and provided for review as a condition of programme approval.

4.6 The library and electronic resources were reviewed during the accreditation event and the panel felt that there are sufficient resources available to support students with these higher level programmes. The Head of Library Services confirmed that students could also request access to alternative print books, e-books and journals, the use and requests for which are then reviewed on a regular basis. As these programmes are blended learning programmes, it was also confirmed that books can be posted to students if they are unable to attend the library facilities in person.

4.7 The VLE example shown to the panel included a 'landing' section at the top of the page that included details of the module. Subsequent sections were split into the teaching weeks. Each week section had a mixture of media, including power point slides and articles. There was

evidence of links to online formative tests provided by external suppliers to check learning, and there were areas for the students to access links to the recommended reading. The link to a peer reviewed journal engine could be accessed via the library page. An academic writing guide is provided to the students, and the University provides a facility for tutors to review drafts of assignments to check level and style, prior to submission.

Suggestions

None

Actions

a. Provide induction plan for students, incorporating introduction to student support network.

University response

Action Plan Response from XXXX, Updated (date)

Standard 2 - Sustainability					
Category	Number	Action/Suggestion	Response and evidence	Action by whom	Date for resolution	RCVS response
Suggestion	a.					
Action	a.					

Standard 3 – Curricula and Assessment					
Category	Number	Action/Suggestion	Response and evidence	Action by whom	Date for resolution	RCVS response
Suggestion	a.					
Action	a.					

Standard 4 – Educators and Assessors					
Category	Number	Action/Suggestion	Response and evidence	Action by whom	Date for resolution	RCVS response
Suggestion	a.					
Action	a.					