

Hartpury University  
Certificate in Advanced Veterinary Nursing  
Accreditation Visit

March 2022

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

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## List of Panel Members

Samantha Double RVN – Educator Representative

Shirley Gibbins RVN – RCVS Qualifications Manager (Chair)

Andrea Jeffery RVN – Employer Representative

Jodi Thompson-Hughes RVN – Student Representative

Kirsty Williams – RCVS Education Quality Improvement Manager (Observer)

## Key Staff met

Lucy Dumbell – Academic Registrar, Hartpury University

Lynn Forrester -Walker – Chief Operating Officer, Hartpury University

Carol Gray MRCVS – Principal Lecturer Veterinary Nursing and Programme Manager, CertAVN programmes, Hartpury University

Catherine Phillips RVN/REVN – Head of Department Veterinary Nursing, Hartpury University

Rosie Scott-Ward – Pro Vice-Chancellor, Hartpury University

Carly Thornton RVN – Associate Head of Department Veterinary Nursing, Hartpury University

## Summary of the Visitors' findings

- Hartpury University (HU) was visited on 30 March 2022. The following programmes were under accreditation review:

### **Graduate Certificate in Advanced Veterinary Nursing:**

- **Equine Critical Care**
- **Equine Diagnostic Imaging and Rehabilitation**
- **Perioperative Nursing and Patient Safety**
- **Clinical Nursing and Client Support**

### **Postgraduate Certificate in Advanced Veterinary Nursing:**

- **Equine Critical Care**
- **Equine Diagnostic Imaging and Rehabilitation**
- **Perioperative Nursing and Patient Safety**
- **Clinical Nursing and Client Support**

- The RCVS Panel 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, particularly with regard to facilitating the remote attendance of a Panel member at short notice.
- It is accepted that, as the above detailed programme proposals are for new provision, there are elements of the Standards which will have not been met and are not expected to have been met prior to the Accreditation Event. Where this is the case, this is detailed within the report.

The team found the following:

- HU is to be **commended** for unique programme proposals, with a clear understanding of industry requirements.
- HU is to be **commended** for the excellent standard to which assessment moderation and the associated assessment verification is conducted.
- HU is to be **commended** for its clear and robust approach to reasonable adjustments, inclusivity and accessibility.
- HU is to be **commended** for the overall standard of evidence provided for review prior to the accreditation event.
- Areas for further review included consideration of the structure and similarity of the programmes, with a decision to be made on the graduate outcomes of the different pathways, and a requirement to evidence the currency and specificity of CPD for module leads.

The findings in this report are based on the RCVS Panel's review. The panel are not the decision makers, and their commendations, suggestions and actions may be subject to amendment during the committee process.

**Awarding University or Organisation and details of the proposed qualification.**

Requirements	Details
<b>Name of organisation awarding the Certificate</b>	Hartpury University
<b>Main address and contact details for the above organisation</b>	Hartpury University and Hartpury College Hartpury House Gloucester GL19 3BE
<b>Name of Principal or Chief Executive Officer</b>	Russell Marchant
<b>Name of Programme Lead</b>	Carol Gray
<b>Proposed programme(s) title:</b>	<p><b>Graduate Certificate in Advanced Veterinary Nursing:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Equine Critical Care</li> <li>•Equine Diagnostic Imaging and Rehabilitation</li> <li>•Perioperative Nursing and Patient Safety</li> <li>•Clinical Nursing and Client Support</li> </ul> <p><b>Postgraduate Certificate in Advanced Veterinary Nursing:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Equine Critical Care</li> <li>•Equine Diagnostic Imaging and Rehabilitation</li> <li>•Perioperative Nursing and Patient Safety</li> <li>•Clinical Nursing and Client Support</li> </ul>
<b>Address and contact details of proposed site/s for delivery of Certificate</b>	Hartpury University and Hartpury College Hartpury House Gloucester GL19 3BE
<b>Pattern of delivery</b>	One year programme, delivered online.
<b>Intakes and student numbers</b>	One intake per year, with a minimum of six students per cohort.

## Standard 2 – Sustainability

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

Standard met		
Accredited Education Institutions must:		
Requirements	Met	Not Met
<p>Provide evidence that there is adequate market demand for the proposed qualification(s). <i>Evidence reviewed:</i> <i>Employer survey December 2021 results and current student focus group</i> <i>December 2021 transcript</i></p> <p>The market research and financial information provided indicated that the proposed programmes would be viable from a student number and business perspective.</p> <p>The RCVS Panel questioned the proposed student numbers per pathway and the institution confirmed that any under-recruitment would be accepted by HU until the popularity and identity of the course grew and developed. The proposed delivery timetable for the programmes was also discussed, which the programme team will keep under review.</p>	✓	
<p>Clearly report finances and budget specific to the qualification leading to award of the RCVS Certificate in Advanced Veterinary Nursing. <i>Evidence reviewed:</i> <i>Hartpury Annual Report and Financial Statement</i> <i>Group Management Accounts</i></p> <p>The business case for the programmes was not provided in the evidence submitted prior to the accreditation event. The institutional finances indicated that there was capacity for such a programme to be supported, however, this requirement necessitates the review of the specific business case for the proposed programmes.</p>		✓
<p>Proactively identify and act on areas for improvement, regularly measuring programme performance and outcomes. <i>Evidence reviewed:</i> <i>Programme Committee Action notes</i> <i>Programme Enhancement report</i></p> <p>The documentation provided clearly demonstrates a transparent and robust process to identify, and act upon, areas for improvement, and that the institutional process will be applied to the programmes submitted for accreditation. The evidence provided indicated that there are programme level committees and other processes</p>	✓	

<p>which ensure a cycle of quality review and improvement. This process will ensure that particular aspects, such as the proposed evening delivery sessions, will be considered once delivery has commenced.</p>		
<p><b>Conclusion:</b></p> <p>Hartpury University was able to well evidence the market demand and support for the proposed programmes, with appropriate funding available from the institution.</p> <p>The experience of the programme team promoted confidence in the feasibility of existing feedback procedures to be mapped across to the new provision, which HU was assured would provide valuable feedback which can be swiftly implemented.</p> <p>The critical mass number requirement for each pathway was discussed, however, it is noted that this may increase should HU decide to amend the approach to the programme outcomes. This, in turn, may further improve the viability of the provision.</p>		
<p><b>Suggestions:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Consider a flexible approach to the evening delivery of the programme, to accommodate possible new ways of working within clinical practice following the pandemic.</li> </ul> <p><b>Actions:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Provide the business case for the proposed programmes.</li> </ul>		

## 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.**

Standard not met		
Accredited Education Institutions must ensure:		
Requirements	Met	Not Met
<p>Curricula to remain relevant in respect of contemporary veterinary nursing.</p> <p><i>Evidence reviewed:</i>  <i>Programme outline</i>  <i>Module specifications.</i>  <i>Application form</i></p> <p>The proposed programmes demonstrate a clear consideration of contemporary veterinary nursing. Modules within the pathways represent current practice and HU is recruiting expert guest speakers.</p> <p>Consideration will be needed regarding any proposed changes to the Advanced Nurse Practitioner module; if this is increased in level, as discussed during the event, to ensure the module remains relevant to contemporary veterinary nursing.</p>	✓	
<p>Curricula and assessment weigh theory and practice learning appropriately to the programme.</p> <p><i>Evidence reviewed:</i>  <i>Assessment weighting in programme specifications</i>  <i>Module specifications</i></p> <p>The HU proposal for the pathways includes two level 6 modules and two level 7 modules for the Graduate Certificates and one level 6 module with three level 7 modules for the Postgraduate Certificates.</p> <p>The RCVS Panel identified that the two pathways were almost identical, with limited differentiation between the Graduate Certificate and Postgraduate Certificate outcomes. This raised concern that students would complete almost the same assessments but would have different levels of award conferred. The only distinction sits with academic writing and research modules: <i>Investigative Skills for the Successful Undergraduate</i> at level 6, and <i>The Research Process</i> at Level 7.</p> <p>Additionally, it was identified that some of the QAA level descriptors, which must be incorporated into the CertAVN qualifications, did not appear to be addressed.</p>		✓



<p>After lengthy discussion, the RCVS and HU Panels agreed that an exclusive Postgraduate Certificate outcome may be the preferred option, ensuring fair recognition of the commitment and successful achievement by students. In order to accomplish this, HU will need to increase the levelling of the Advanced Nurse Practitioner module to level 7, to comply with HU Academic Regulations for level 7 programmes and the required credit values. This, in turn, raised concern that students entering onto the programme from the Level 3 Diploma pathway may not be academically confident enough to achieve the assessment outcomes, particularly with regard to academic writing. HU indicated that an 'either/or' approach could be utilised for the academic writing and research modules: students applying for the programme who have not already achieved a level 6 qualification could enrol onto the level 6 module, whereas those who have already achieved at level 6 could enrol onto the level 7 module. The Academic Registrar confirmed that this approach was feasible and manageable.</p> <p>This change would meet this Requirement; however, it is for HU to determine how best to proceed with the pathways and HU is required to confirm within the action plan what the approach will be.</p>		
<p>A range of appropriate assessments are delivered, ensuring the intended learning outcomes are fully and suitably assessed.</p> <p><i>Evidence reviewed:</i>  <i>Programme semesterisation and assessment map</i>  <i>Module specifications</i>  <i>Programme outline</i></p> <p>Two assessment examples were reviewed by the RCVS Panel, however, module changes had been made during the university validation process meaning that these assessment examples were not fully relevant to the module specification learning outcomes. Current and effective assessment examples must be provided, relating to the modules for planned delivery from September 2022.</p> <p>It is accepted that further changes are often likely to be required following accreditation events for new provision.</p>		✓
<p>Curricula are developed and evaluated by suitably experienced and qualified educators and/or practitioners who are accountable for ensuring the curriculum incorporates relevant programme outcomes.</p> <p><i>Evidence reviewed:</i>  CVs</p> <p>The programme has been developed by experienced and qualified educators and reviewed by an external expert.</p>	✓	

<p>Curricula are structured and sequenced to enable students to manage their theory and practice learning experience effectively.</p> <p><i>Evidence reviewed:</i> <i>Module specifications</i></p> <p>Sequencing of the curriculum was discussed in detail with the programme team. Assessments are appropriately sequenced to ensure workload is manageable for both students and staff.</p> <p>It was discussed that the team-based learning approach would only be effective with enough students available and online at the same time. This is a scheduled delivery session, and forms a clear part of the proposed marketing, but the programme team will need to keep this approach under review.</p> <p>The use of team-based learning and patchwork text approaches is commendable and demonstrates the work and thought that has gone into clear evidence-based learning and assessment by the programme team.</p>	✓	
<p>Moderation processes are in place.</p> <p><i>Evidence reviewed:</i> <i>IV 1 form</i> <i>IV 2 form</i> <i>Academic regulations</i></p> <p>There are clear processes and procedures in place, which comply with the HU Academic Regulations.</p>	✓	
<p>Assessment and moderation is fair, reliable and valid.</p> <p><i>Evidence reviewed:</i> <i>IV 1 form</i> <i>IV 2 form</i> <i>Academic regulations</i></p> <p>The evidence provided clearly indicated that the HU approach to assessment complies with this requirement. However, the reliability of assessment methodology will need to be reviewed in line with any module changes incorporated following the review of the QAA Benchmarks.</p>	✓	
<p>Adjustments are provided in accordance with relevant equalities and human rights legislation for all assessments.</p> <p><i>Evidence reviewed:</i> <i>Inclusive teaching and learning guide</i> <i>Academic regulations – extenuating circumstances and reasonable adjustments</i></p>	✓	

<p>There are clear processes in place and there is obvious VLE signposting for both students and staff.</p>		
<p>The required facilities and resources are in place for the delivery and assessment of the curricula. <i>Evidence reviewed:</i> <i>VLE – Moodle pages</i></p> <p>The VLE is well structured and fit for purpose; an extensive online library gives the students access to proposed textbooks and journal articles. The programme team have secured the funding for all proposed journals and texts for the programme.</p> <p>This programme will be delivered exclusively online, with two optional onsite events for students.</p>	✓	
<p>Curricula and assessments are reviewed by an External Examiner who has sufficient standing, credibility and a breadth of experience within the discipline. <i>Evidence reviewed:</i> <i>Proposal for signal tier examination board</i> <i>CV for external examiner</i></p> <p>The curricula and assessment examples have been reviewed by an external expert, however, HU is yet to recruit an External Examiner for the programme.</p> <p>It is accepted that HU has not yet had the opportunity to effectively recruit for this role, as the Validation and Accreditation outcomes would need confirming before recruitment commences. However, based on the pathway changes which may be implemented, it is recommended that this is a priority for HU.</p>		✓
<p><b>Conclusion:</b></p> <p>Some requirements have been thoroughly met for this Standard, however, as detailed above, the RCVS Panel identified concerns regarding the current proposed level of the two pathways. This was fully discussed with the programme team in terms of the minimal difference between programmes and the potential disadvantage to learners on the Graduate Certificate.</p> <p>This concern, alongside the required mapping requirements which may influence further changes, has resulted in this Standard not being met. However, the RCVS Panel was reassured by the pragmatic approach demonstrated by the HU Panel and the discussion provided confidence that the required changes could be made. These changes would demonstrate compliance with this Standard overall. There are other actions to address, but primarily these are focused around aspects of a new programme that could not be fully achieved prior to the accreditation event.</p>		

**Suggestions:**

- a. Review the pathways and programme outcomes, with consideration of an exclusive Postgraduate Certificate offering.
- b. To monitor the timing of team-based learning and other 'live' sessions to ensure learners are able to access these and monitor student compliance with the attendance of these sessions.
- c. Prioritise the recruitment of an External Examiner for effective review of programme changes prior to submission to RCVS.

**Actions:**

- a. Fully review the level of each programme and determine the planned approach for the Graduate Certificate and Postgraduate Certificate outcomes.
- b. Demonstrate compliance with QAA level 7 descriptors.
- c. Provide updated versions of assessment examples, with feedback incorporated, evidencing the internal IQA process of the assessments and the review conducted by an external expert/external examiner.
- d. Recruit an External Examiner who is suitably qualified and experienced.

## 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.

Standard met		
Accredited Education Institutions must ensure educators and assessors:		
Requirements	Met	Not Met
<p>Are appropriately qualified and experienced and always act as professional role models.</p> <p><i>Evidence reviewed:</i>  <i>CV and CPD records,</i>  <i>Annual appraisal,</i>  <i>Lesson observations,</i>  <i>Staff Codes of Conduct,</i>  <i>Recruitment and selection policy</i></p> <p>The range of evidence provided, for the most part, clearly demonstrated that the educators and assessors had been selected appropriately to deliver programmes and that there is an ongoing review process for continual evaluation and development of the team. However, some of the CV records required updating or had not been submitted for the initial evidence review.</p> <p>The CPD records showed that there were some team members delivering on the programme who had not undertaken subject specific CPD and, therefore, there is a requirement for a CPD and occupational upskilling plan to be provided. The programme team is also expected to demonstrate reflection on CPD undertaken, in order to comply with RCVS registration requirements. It is accepted that reflection on CPD is a new requirement for RCVS Registered professionals, and the delivery team have sufficient time to reflect on CPD already conducted prior to completing their declaration for this year. The delivery team are, therefore, compliant with CPD requirements at present, but reflection must be completed in order to demonstrate ongoing compliance.</p> <p>The programme has had a financial commitment from the institution of £30,000 to support with identifying and appointing external speakers to supplement the programme. Upon successful accreditation of the proposed programmes, the agreed list of speakers will be required to demonstrate their currency and suitability. It is accepted that HU was unable to provide this evidence prior to successful accreditation of the proposed programmes.</p>		✓

<p>Receive relevant induction, ongoing support, education and training.</p> <p><i>Evidence reviewed:</i>  <i>CVs and CPD records</i>  <i>Induction and probation policies.</i>  <i>Staff development policy</i></p> <p>HU has a robust process for induction and ongoing support of its staff, which is clearly evidenced within the policies and CPD records provided for the accreditation event. This will be further supported by the submission of the required CPD plans for the module leads.</p>	✓	
<p>Have supported time and resources to enable them to fulfil their roles in addition to other professional responsibilities.</p> <p><i>Evidence reviewed:</i>  <i>Example workload calculator</i></p> <p>The evidence reviewed, as well as the discussions had with the delivery personnel during the accreditation event, reassured the RCVS Panel that this requirement is met.</p>	✓	
<p>Receive and act upon constructive feedback from students and the people they engage with to enhance the effectiveness of their teaching, supervision and assessment.</p> <p><i>Evidence reviewed:</i>  <i>Example student feedback,</i>  <i>Committee meeting minutes</i>  <i>Module reports</i></p> <p>The documentation provided evidence of a feedback loop, in terms of the student voice and programme level response to this feedback. HU has experience of delivering blended learning programmes; the majority of the programme delivery will be virtual and will use the mechanisms already in place at HU.</p>	✓	
<p>Appropriately share and use evidence to make decisions on student assessment and progression.</p> <p><i>Evidence reviewed:</i>  <i>Academic Regulations appendix.</i>  <i>Assessment Cycle (p38-44), Part C, Conduct of assessment and Part D,</i>  <i>Assessment decisions</i></p> <p>There is a variety of robust documentation in place to demonstrate that evidence is shared and used appropriately, to make relevant decisions on student assessment and progression.</p>	✓	

**Conclusion:**

The CPD recorded for the module leads did not clearly evidence up to date development within the areas in which they are going to lead. However, this should be addressed via the action requested and it was clear that staff are supported in their development, with various team members currently completing additional qualifications

**Suggestions:**

None.

**Actions:**

- a. Provide updated CV records for all delivery personnel.
- b. Develop CPD and development/occupational upskilling plans for the module leads, which must include a timeline for achievement.
- c. Demonstrate reflection on CPD undertaken.
- d. Provide the guest lecturer allocation, upon successful accreditation of the programmes.