PSP Handbook

Guidance for veterinary nurses undertaking a Period of Supervised Practice
PSP Handbook

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Returning to the Register of Veterinary Nurses: A quick guide

Introduction
1. In 2007 the Royal College of Veterinary Surgeons opened a new register for veterinary nurses. The Register marked a significant step forward in the regulation of VNs. It was the first step towards statutory regulation for veterinary nurses. All VNs that joined the RCVS since 1 January 2003 either transferred automatically from the List to the Register in 2007, transferred voluntarily or were automatically transferred on the 17 February 2015 when the new Royal Charter came into effect, and the unregulated List of veterinary nurses was officially closed.

2. As a registered veterinary nurse (RVN) you are obliged to adhere to a code of professional conduct (the Code of Professional Conduct for Veterinary Nurses) and this, in turn, requires you to maintain your competence through appropriate continuing professional development (CPD).

3. The RCVS recognises that veterinary nurses returning to the Register after a significant career break may not have been in a position to maintain their knowledge and skills. Whilst you may be a very experienced nurse, returning to a busy clinical environment after a break can be daunting.

4. We are also aware that some students, on completion of their qualification, for various reasons, do not apply to enter the Register for many years.

5. It is for these reasons that we introduced the Period of Supervised Practice (PSP) for nurses who have not been in active practice for five years or more.

6. This handbook will guide you through the process of updating your skills so that, by the time you have completed your PSP, you should be confident and up-to-date in your core veterinary nursing knowledge and skills. Please read it carefully and ensure that your PSP mentor has a copy.

7. We take this opportunity to welcome you back to clinical practice and to the Register of Veterinary Nurses in due course.

What is the Period of Supervised Practice (PSP)?
8. The PSP is time spent by a nurse in clinical veterinary practice in order to refresh his/her skills before rejoining the Register. During the PSP you will work with a named mentor (an experienced RVN or vet) in order to update your knowledge and skills and re-gain your confidence to work as a fully registered VN. Your PSP must take place over a minimum of 17 full-time weeks or the part-time equivalent i.e. at least 595 hours.

9. A PSP should normally take place within an RCVS-approved training practice (TP) or a practice approved at general practice or hospital standard under the RCVS Practice Standards Scheme. If your practice does not have TP or PSS approval this does not necessarily preclude you from undertaking your PSP but you should contact the RCVS for advice.
10. Once you have registered for your PSP, you must normally complete this within one year.

What is the PSP for?

11. Perhaps it is important to first say what the PSP is not! It isn’t re-training; you are already a qualified and experienced veterinary nurse. You therefore are not undertaking a pre-registration qualification and you are not expected to be formally re-assessed.

12. The PSP is in place to ensure you have the opportunity to update your knowledge and skills under the mentorship and supervision of other registered practitioners (veterinary or veterinary nursing) before you re-join or in the case of those not previously registered, join the Register and become a fully accountable professional.

13. You may think it strange that we do not require you to be formally assessed or re-examined. This is because you will be bound by the Code of Professional Conduct for Veterinary Nurses as soon as you join or re-join the Register. It is therefore up to you to ensure that you have the requisite and up-to-date knowledge and skills for the areas of work you will be undertaking as a Registered Veterinary Nurse. In other words you are trusted, as a professional practitioner, to ensure you are competent.

Registering for the PSP

14. In order to commence your PSP you must register in the PSP section of the RCVS database. This is important for two reasons; first your registration will entitle you to undertake the full range of veterinary work regulated by the Veterinary Surgeons Act (Schedule 3). This means that you will be able to undertake a full range of nursing work, including the administration of medical treatments and performance of minor surgical procedures. Second, the RCVS must be notified of your PSP in order for it to “count”. Unless your PSP has been registered you will not be able to re-join the Register of Veterinary Nurses in due course.

15. You need not be in paid employment to complete your PSP, although it is more likely that you will be. Your practice principal must confirm his/her support for your PSP and either he/she, or another named (experienced) vet or RVN will act as your mentor throughout. Your PSP mentor will work with you to plan your learning and organise suitable experience and updating. At the end of your PSP your mentor will confirm completion to the RCVS and provide a professional reference so that you may join the Register.

Can I undertake Schedule 3 work during the PSP?

16. Yes, the whole point of the PSP is to ensure that you can regain confidence and skills across a range of veterinary nursing work, including procedures regulated under the Veterinary Surgeons Act. During your PSP you will work under the regulations that are in place for student veterinary nurses i.e. you will be working under the supervision of your employing veterinary surgeon.
rather than under his/her direction. This is not because the RCVS regards you as a student VN! It is simply a convenient way of permitting you to work as a veterinary nurse for a limited period of time without the responsibilities and obligations of being fully registered.

17. You and your employer should familiarise yourselves with the section of Schedule 3 that deals with student veterinary nurses so that you both understand how you may work. This is especially important if you are working in a practice which is not a VN training practice (TP) and may not be familiar with this part of the Veterinary Surgeons Act. The RCVS guidance on Schedule 3 is appended to this handbook.

Your PSP mentor

18. While undertaking the PSP you must work under the supervision of a named veterinary surgeon (MRCVS) on the home practising part of the Register or a Registered Veterinary Nurse. This person will take overall responsibility for your PSP and will sign a Declaration of Completion to enable you to join the Register.

19. Your PSP mentor will help you evaluate your strengths and weaknesses in clinical practice and to identify a suitable action plan to update and develop you. He/she will ensure that you have adequate teaching and supervision.

20. PSP mentors must be:
   - Registered (home practising) veterinary surgeons (MRCVS)
   - Registered veterinary nurses (RVN)
   - Experienced practitioners, normally with at least two years of post-qualification experience.

Will my PSP be assessed?

21. Yes, but not in the formal way that student veterinary nurses are assessed. The PSP provides opportunity for refreshment and development but is not re-training. You will, with the help of your employer and colleagues, be expected to identify your own learning needs and create a learning and development plan taking into account the type of work you will undertake once on the Register.

22. This handbook contains a clinical skills self evaluation tool as an aid to identifying gaps in your nursing knowledge and practical skills. You will need to keep a record of your PSP development plan and of the activities undertaken to achieve it. You and your mentor will need to review and evaluate your progress with the PSP plan regularly. Once the PSP has been completed and you feel ready (competent and confident) to Register, both you and your PSP mentor sign a declaration to that effect.

Are there any courses I can do to help with the PSP?

23. Yes, there is a range of CPD courses on offer. However undertaking courses is not mandatory and you should reflect on your particular learning needs (taking into account the type of work you will be undertaking) before deciding whether to invest in an external course.
Commencing a PSP

Who needs to undertake a PSP?
24. Any veterinary nurse who has previously been included in the RCVS Register of Veterinary Nurses (or formerly, the List of Veterinary Nurses) and who has been de-registered for a period of five years or more must undertake a period of supervised practice. Any person who has achieved a UK veterinary nurse qualification but has not applied to register within five years of achieving their qualification must also undertake a period of supervised practice before they can apply to register.

25. Nurses who have had a shorter break in registration are not required to undertake a PSP before renewing their registration, however they should ensure that their skills are up-to-date. If you are in this situation you will find it helpful to work through the Clinical Skills Self Evaluation Tool (page19) voluntarily, even though you don’t have to register for a PSP.

Where a PSP can be undertaken
26. While undertaking the PSP you will need access to a caseload and resources that will enable you to update your core clinical knowledge and skills. For this reason the RCVS stipulates that the PSP must normally take place within a Training Practice (TP) or a Practice Standards Scheme (PSS) general practice or hospital standard accredited practice.

27. Non-accredited practices may be able to support you provided that they can offer the requisite levels of experience and support, either wholly at the practice or via a combination of employment in the practice concerned and some visits/placements to other practices. If you are working in a practice that is not either a TP or a PSS-accredited practice, please contact the RCVS for advice.

Registering for a PSP
28. Once you have returned to work in a veterinary practice you should contact the RCVS in order to register for the PSP. You will be asked to complete a registration form and pay a fee (the current PSP registration fee can be found at www.rcvs.org.uk). Your PSP mentor and Practice Principal will need to give their agreement to support you and sign your registration form. The PSP registration form is included within this handbook.

29. When you have registered for the PSP you will need to consider which areas of your knowledge and skill need to be refreshed in order for you to be able to practise safely and effectively. The next section explains how to do this.
Planning your PSP

Getting started
30. When you return to clinical veterinary nursing you will almost certainly encounter changes in the way that veterinary care is delivered. You may also find that practice organisation and/or administration has changed and that RCVS professional regulation and guidance has moved on. In order to function effectively as a registered VN you need to become familiar and confident in all these areas of your practice once again. However, not everything will have changed; there will be some areas of practice with which you still feel familiar and comfortable and you will be able to use these as a point from which to develop.

The standard to reach
31. All veterinary nurses must be competent in a range of clinical and related skills at the point of joining the Register. The Day One Skills list is a regulatory benchmark of essential clinical skills, developed and reviewed by the RCVS, based on the RCVS Day One Competences for Veterinary Nurses. The Day One Skills and Day One Competences can be accessed on the RCVS website:
http://www.rcvs.org.uk/document-library/rcvs-day-one-skills-for-veterinary-nurses/
http://www.rcvs.org.uk/document-library/day-one-competences-for-veterinary-nurses/

32. In addition to “day one” skills, you may also be undertaking other areas of work by virtue of your VN registration. This could be clinical practice such as nutrition or behaviour counselling or other work such as teaching. As a registered veterinary nurse you will need to ensure that you are competent to practise in any work that you undertake.

33. Three key steps will assist you in planning how to use your period of supervised practice effectively:

   **Step 1:**  Evaluating your skills
   **Step 2:**  Making decisions about refreshment and learning
   **Step 3:**  Planning the detail

Step 1 – Evaluating your skills
34. On page 25 you will find a self-evaluation tool that will help you to identify areas where you are already skilled and those where you need some refreshment and/or development. The tool sets out the core clinical skills that are deemed essential “day one” competences for any registered veterinary nurse.

35. The self-evaluation tool is simple to complete, however to get the best value from it you will need to work in practice for a week or so before you complete it. You, and your PSP mentor,
will then have a good idea how confident you feel in the various areas of your work.

Exercise 1.

First make a list of the work you currently undertake in your practice on a daily basis – work logically from the start of your shift to the finish to ensure you include everything. If there are areas of work you undertake regularly but less frequently (for example taking X-rays) add these to your list.

Now, either on your own or with your PSP mentor, use the self-evaluation grid to go through your list and look at where your regular work activities feature within the core veterinary nursing skills listed.

Under the questions ‘How often do you do this activity?’ and ‘How strong are your skills in this activity?’ tick the statement which most applies to you.

36. The self-evaluation tool also has space for you to add areas of work that you will be expected to undertake regularly, but which are not listed as a core competence. You can add these to your self-evaluation and rate them in the same way as core competences.

Step 2 – Making decisions about refreshment and learning

37. Once you have completed the self evaluation grid you will be able to see which areas of your knowledge and skills need the most attention and begin to plan for your PSP. You will need to ask yourself:
   ○ Which are the core VN competences that need attention?
   ○ Are there any other skills I need to learn/update?

38. Concentrate on the skills you use often or fairly regularly and in which you have identified fair or weak skills. If you identify areas that are weak but you very rarely or never undertake these in your current job (for example you are not required to perform laboratory tests) you might decide to give these a lower priority for the time being. However you must ensure you update yourself and regain your competence before you undertake any of these areas of work in the future.

39. In relation to each of the areas you have identified you will need to consider:
   ○ What sort of guidance and/or experience would be helpful?
   ○ When and where will I be able to gain this?
   ○ How will I update my knowledge?
   ○ When shall I review my progress?
   ○ How will I know when I am competent?
40. If you set these questions out in a grid you will very quickly be able to identify the ways in which you can make progress. Try this for one of your weak areas:

**Exercise 2**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question:</th>
<th>Sample answer:</th>
<th>Your answer:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Which skill needs attention?</td>
<td>I am not confident with current anaesthesia practice and haven’t monitored anaesthetics for six years</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What sort of guidance and/or experience would be helpful?</td>
<td>I need to shadow an experienced vet for at least one major anaesthetic and then monitor several different types of case under supervision</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>When and where will I be able to gain this?</td>
<td>Over the next month in my practice</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How will I update my knowledge?</td>
<td>I will read this up and would like to visit Herriot and Partners Veterinary Hospital to observe best practice</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>When shall I review my progress?</td>
<td>In four weeks time</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How will I know when I am competent?</td>
<td>When my PSP mentor and I feel confident with my performance</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

41. Use this checklist for all of your “fair” or “weak” skills and record your responses. You can use the action planning form on page 29.
Step 3 – Planning the detail

42. You and your PSP mentor should now have a list of the knowledge and skills you need to update. All that remains is to plan out how you will achieve this and how long it will realistically take. To help you stay on track you will need to draft an action plan, setting out your goals and how/when you expect to achieve them. This need not be a lengthy or very detailed document but it should:
   - State clearly what you expect to achieve (what you want to be able to do and to what standard)
   - Identify how you will achieve each goal and who you need to help you
   - Identify any external help you may need (such as a visit or placement to another practice or course attendance)
   - Set a date for achievement of each goal
   - Set dates for you and your PSP to review your progress

43. If your practice is a TP or PSS General Practice or Hospital status you should be able to address most of your PSP goals in-house. However there may be areas of practice that are infrequently carried out where you are employed and in which it may be difficult for you to update yourself. In such instances you may need to negotiate a visit or short placement to another practice in order to gain the necessary experience or observe best practice. Negotiating such experience with your employer and your proposed host practice should be done early in your PSP and should be built into your action plan.
Completing the PSP

**Keeping your PSP record**

44. Once you and your mentor have agreed a suitable action plan for your PSP, you will need to work through this and ensure that you review it regularly, taking care to record a note of each review. These notes need not (and should not) be lengthy but should record the meetings you have with your mentor and the main issues you discussed, along with any changes to your action plan, for example if timescales have been expanded or items added.

45. You can record your PSP progress in the way that best suits you. Whilst you must use the RCVS Clinical Skills Self-evaluation tool, you can use whatever recording system suits you to document your action plan and progress. You can use the RCVS form (page 29) if you wish but may equally well use a notebook kept for the purpose. Whatever system you use, you must be prepared to show it to your Mentor and practice Principal and you will be asked to submit this to the RCVS at the completion of your PSP, along with the declaration of completion form.

**Monitoring your progress**

46. It is important to appreciate that you are responsible for gauging your progress during the PSP. This is a reflective process and will entail some critical self-evaluation on your part. Your mentor is there to support you and offer appropriate advice and guidance when needed. Meetings with your mentor are important and should be planned so that they take place regularly. At the beginning of your PSP you should aim to meet at least once per week; once you are established and making progress these meetings could be less frequent, but still need to be planned and adhered to.

47. Meetings with your mentor do not have to be lengthy but should be properly scheduled so that both you and he/she can focus on your PSP progress without undue distractions. You will be focusing on your action plan, reflecting on achievements and identifying any changes that might be needed to your plan. For example, you may feel that you need more guidance with anaesthetic monitoring than you originally anticipated and that your associated goal is consequently going to take slightly longer to achieve.

48. In addition to meetings with your mentor, you should reflect regularly on your progress yourself. Sometimes things will go well and on other occasions you will have set-backs. If you have a set-back, try to work out what went wrong and what you might do to improve your skills or performance in the future. Similarly, when something goes particularly well, take time to think about why this was and whether this success can be repeated, or the principles transferred to other areas of your practice. This will help you to use the time spent with your mentor to the best advantage and will get you into the habit of self-appraisal and reflective practice.

**Professional accountability**

49. During your PSP you are not a fully registered veterinary nurse and will be working under the legal (Schedule 3) provisions in place for student veterinary nurses. This means that your supervising veterinary surgeons and registered veterinary nurses assume professional accountability for the work delegated by them to you. However, you must adhere to the Code of
*Professional Conduct for Veterinary Nurses* throughout your PSP. The Code can be accessed on the RCVS website [http://www.rcvs.org.uk/advice-and-guidance/code-of-professional-conduct-for-veterinary-nurses/](http://www.rcvs.org.uk/advice-and-guidance/code-of-professional-conduct-for-veterinary-nurses/) and is also available as an app. You should make sure you are familiar with its provisions. You should not be described as a registered veterinary nurse or veterinary nurse by the practice during your PSP, as these titles are only for those who are fully registered. The title “Veterinary Nursing Assistant” or “Veterinary Care Assistant” could be used.

50. If you are asked to undertake work that you do not yet feel confident to carry out, you must tell the vet or veterinary nurse who is delegating the task(s) to you. You must only work within your personal competence, and within the law, as set out in the *Code of Professional Conduct for Veterinary Nurses*. You should ask for supervision if you don’t feel ready to undertake an area of work independently.

**Courses**

51. You do not have to undertake a formal course or qualification in order to complete your PSP; this can be done entirely in clinical veterinary practice. However various CPD courses and qualifications are available that may help you to update your knowledge and get the best out of your PSP.

**Applying to join the Register**

52. When you have completed your PSP action plan and you and your PSP mentor are satisfied that you are ready to join the Register, you and your mentor should complete the Declaration of Completion on page 23 and send this, with your action plan, to the RCVS. You may also submit the application for restoration to the register at this stage. We will confirm when your PSP has been signed off and will pass the details to the registration department for processing. Your restoration to the Register will normally be processed within three working weeks.

53. Remember that the PSP is flexible; whilst you must undertake at least 17 weeks (595 hours), if you do not feel ready to assume the full responsibilities of a RVN at this point you can, in consultation with your employer, opt to extend your PSP until you have fully addressed your action plan.

54. If you are working part-time, you may find it helpful to keep a spreadsheet of your hours worked.

55. Your PSP should normally last no longer than one year; the RCVS will not normally renew this type of registration.
Information for employing practices

Use of title “veterinary nurse”
56. Following the introduction of the new Royal Charter in 2015, the Codes of Professional Conduct for veterinary surgeons and veterinary nurses were updated to strengthen guidance on the use of the title “veterinary nurse”: Para 3.5 of the veterinary surgeons’ code of conduct includes the guidance: “Veterinary surgeons must not hold out themselves or others as specialists or advanced practitioners unless appropriately listed with the RCVS, or as veterinary nurses unless appropriately registered with the RCVS”.

57. This means that only Registered Veterinary Nurses should be described as veterinary nurses and only they should use the post-nominal letters VN or RVN.

58. In this document, “PSP nurse” has been used to describe those undertaking the PSP. However, in the practice and on the practice website titles which could be used are “Veterinary Nursing Assistant” or “Veterinary Care Assistant”.

Which nurses need to undertake a PSP?
59. The Period of Supervised Practice is mandatory for those veterinary nurses returning to, or in the case of those not previously registered, joining the Register. It provides the opportunity to update their professional knowledge and skills as set out in the introductory chapter of this handbook.

Status and supervision of PSP nurses
60. The PSP takes place over a minimum of full-time 17 weeks (595 hours) or the equivalent part-time employment. During this time the returning nurse will register with the RCVS as a “PSP nurse”. This means that he/she will be regarded, for legal purposes, as a student and will not assume the full professional obligations of a registered veterinary nurse. The reason for this limited registration is to permit the nurse to undertake a full range of veterinary nursing work, including “Schedule 3” procedures under veterinary supervision rather than direction.

61. The definition of “supervision” and how this applies to PSP nurses can be found in the Code of Professional Conduct Guidance Note 18, [http://www.rcvs.org.uk/advice-and-guidance/code-of-professional-conduct-for-veterinary-surgeons/supporting-guidance/delegation-to-veterinary-nurses/](http://www.rcvs.org.uk/advice-and-guidance/code-of-professional-conduct-for-veterinary-surgeons/supporting-guidance/delegation-to-veterinary-nurses/) and paragraph 7 of Schedule 3 of the Veterinary Surgeons Act that applies to the work of student veterinary nurses. In essence this means that PSP nurses must have ready access to a veterinary surgeon who is present on the premises and able to respond to a request for assistance if needed. If a PSP nurse undertakes a minor surgical procedure the level of supervision must be ‘direct and continuous supervision’, which means that the veterinary surgeon is present and giving the nurse his/her undivided personal attention.

Facilities and resources
62. Whilst PSP nurses are not student veterinary nurses and do not need pre-qualification practical assessment, they do need access to a caseload and resources that will enable them to update their core knowledge and skills. For this reason we stipulate that the PSP must normally take
place within a Training Practice (TP) or a Practice Standards Scheme (PSS) general practice or hospital standard accredited practice. However this does not preclude other practices from supporting a PSP nurse provided that they can offer the requisite levels of experience and support, either wholly at the practice or via a combination of employment with you and some visits/placements to other practices. If you are considering the employment (paid or otherwise) of a PSP nurse and your practice is not a TP or PSS-accredited at the required level, please contact the RCVS for advice.

63. You should consider the potential impact of supporting a PSP nurse. He/she will not need the same levels of support and assessment as a student VN but nonetheless will need mentorship and supervision during the PSP. You will need to be sure that your practice team can support this, and take into consideration any other people, such as student veterinary nurses, EMS students or new veterinary graduates, that may also need support.

Providing a PSP mentor

64. All PSP nurses must have access to a mentor who is a registered veterinary nurse or a registered (home practising) veterinary surgeon. The PSP mentor will work with the PSP nurse to identify the skills and knowledge that need updating and the ways in which this can be achieved. He/she will monitor the PSP action plan regularly and, once the nurse is ready to join the Register, will sign a declaration of PSP completion.

65. PSP nurses do not require formal assessment and the PSP mentor does not need to be a qualified assessor. Ultimately PSP nurses self-certify that they are in a position to resume the responsibilities and obligations of a registered practitioner. The role of the PSP mentor is to guide and support them to reach this position.

66. Mentors should be able to help the nurse to identify weaknesses or gaps in their skills and suggest and support ways in which these may be addressed. It will therefore be very helpful for a PSP mentor to be familiar with the “day one” standards of knowledge and skill expected of a registered VN. These are set out in RCVS Day One Competences for Veterinary Nurses and RCVS Day One Skills for Veterinary Nurses. The Day One Skills and Day One Competences can be accessed on the RCVS website: http://www.rcvs.org.uk/document-library/rcvs-day-one-skills-for-veterinary-nurses/ http://www.rcvs.org.uk/document-library/day-one-competences-for-veterinary-nurses/

67. The self-evaluation tool that PSP nurses work to is based on the Day One Skills for Veterinary Nurses.

68. Mentors should be willing, and have the time, to monitor a nurse’s progress and offer ongoing support. Given the level of responsibility required, a PSP mentor should be an experienced practitioner and in a position to command the confidence of the PSP nurse.
Completing the PSP

69. A Period of Supervised Practice must take a minimum of 17 full-time weeks (or the part-time equivalent). However in some cases it may take longer for a nurse to feel confident to join the Register. The PSP mentor and the returning nurse should undertake regular and scheduled reviews of progress and document these. If it appears that a nurse may need a longer period of supervision this, and the reasons for it, should be readily apparent to the employing practice (and to the RCVS) from these progress records.

70. The PSP mentor and nurse will be required to sign a declaration of completion, and to submit the final self evaluation document and the completed action plan, when the period of supervised practice has been completed and the nurse is ready to join the Register.
Appendix

PSP forms:

- PSP application form
- Self-evaluation tool
- Action plan
- Completion declaration
Application to register for a Period of Supervised Practice (PSP)

Please write in block capitals using black ink

Section 1

i. Personal details

Surname: .............................................................................................................

Title: (Mr, Miss, Mrs, Ms) .............................................................................

All forenames: ..............................................................................................

Date of birth: .................................................................................................

Address for contact purposes: .........................................................................
.......................................................................................................................
.......................................................................................................................
                                 Post code:.......................................................

Daytime contact telephone number: Home/Work (please delete):......................

Email address: ..............................................................................................

ii. Registration status

Are you:

A. A qualified veterinary nurse previously on the Register or List of Veterinary Nurses

B. A qualified veterinary nurse holding an acceptable UK qualification seeking to register with the RCVS

If you were previously registered as a qualified veterinary nurse with the RCVS:

C. Please give your registration number*: ........................................................

D. When were you last registered (year)? ...........................................................

iii. Security

To verify your identity please provide a photocopy of the identifying page of your valid passport or a photocopy of your valid EU identity card.

I have enclosed a valid copy of my passport or ID card ☐

*please contact the veterinary nursing department on 0207 202 0788 if you need assistance
iv. Employment

Name of veterinary practice at which you are currently employed/working in a voluntary capacity:

........................................................................................................................................................................

Date of commencement at practice:  

\[ \begin{array}{ccc} 
\text{dd} & \text{mm} & \text{yy} \\
\end{array} \]

Training practice (TP) number: (if applicable) 8__ __ __ __ __ __

Section 2
Application to register for a Period of Supervised Practice

1. I hereby apply to be registered for a Period of Supervised Practice.

2. I understand that, during the Period of Supervised Practice, I must work under the supervision of a registered veterinary surgeon or a registered veterinary nurse in accordance with the provisions for student veterinary nurses under Schedule 3 of the Veterinary Surgeons Act 1966.

3. I understand that registration for the PSP does not entitle me to use the title “Veterinary Nurse” or “Registered Veterinary Nurse” or the post-nominal letters “VN” or “RVN”. I will use the title Veterinary Nursing Assistant/Veterinary Nursing Auxiliary or other similar titles.

4. I agree to abide by the Code of Professional Conduct for Veterinary Nurses (including updates) published by the RCVS from time to time.

Signed: ........................................................................................................................................ Date: ........................................................................

Section 3
Payment – the PSP registration fee for 2019 is £86.00

i. By cheque
Please enclose cheque(s) or postal order(s) made payable to The Royal College of Veterinary Surgeons

Please write your RCVS reference number on the back, and the letters “PSP”

OR

ii. By bank transfer
Bank name: Lloyds Plc
Bank account name: Royal College of Veterinary Surgeons-Fees a/c
Bank account no: 01066656
Bank sort code: 309897

Please use your RCVS reference number and the letters “PSP” as the reference
Section 4

Declaration of Practice Principal

I hereby support this application for a Period of Supervised Practice and agree to provide supervision and mentorship for the applicant nurse

Name of Applicant: ..................................................................................................................

I confirm that he/she is employed/working in a voluntary capacity at the practice indicated in section 1 iv of this application.

I agree to ensure the applicant will:

i. Spend the greater part of his/her time on varied veterinary nursing work directly relevant to his/her registration as a veterinary nurse.

ii. Be given at least one hour of planned tuition and mentorship by a registered veterinary surgeon (MRCVS) or a registered veterinary nurse (RVN) in clinical practice per week.

iii. Be provided with day to day supervision of his/her work as a returning nurse both in relation to refreshing his/her competence in relation to the RCVS Day One Skills and Day One Competences for Veterinary Nurses, and in accordance with the requirements of Schedule 3 of the Veterinary Surgeons Act.

iv. I understand that the applicant must not use the title “Veterinary Nurse” or “Registered Veterinary Nurse” or the post-nominal letters “VN” or “RVN”. He/she will use the title Veterinary Nursing Assistant/Veterinary Nursing Auxiliary or other similar titles.

Signature: ................................................................. Date: .............................................

Name (print) ................................................................. Principal

Name of Practice: ................................................................. TP Number: 8 __ __ __ __ __ __

Address of practice:

..................................................................................................
..................................................................................................
..................................................................................................

Section 5
Mentor

Name (print) ................................................................. Date: .............................................

RCVS Reference No ................................................................. Signature: .................................................................
Please note that PSP registrations can take between 2 and 4 weeks to process once received by the RCVS. If you have any difficulties in completing the application form please contact the RCVS VN Department on 0207 202 0788 or email: vetnursing@rcvs.org.uk
## Period of Supervised Practice: Clinical Skills Self Evaluation Tool

**Areas of Core Veterinary Nursing Competency**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Competency</th>
<th>How often do I do this activity?</th>
<th>How strong are my skills in this activity?</th>
<th>Competent?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Evaluate and develop your personal performance and effectively maintain your professional knowledge and skills</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Work effectively with others within the veterinary team</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Communicate effectively and confidently with colleagues and veterinary clients</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Monitor and maintain health, safety and security in the veterinary environment taking in to account yourself and others</td>
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<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Support clients effectively at all stages of their contact with the veterinary team</td>
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<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Advise on and demonstrate appropriate and effective care for healthy or sick animals</td>
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<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Assess the nursing requirements of animals and plan, deliver and evaluate effective in-patient nursing care</td>
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<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Maintain accurate and effective clinical records</td>
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<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Provide effective first aid and assist with first line emergency treatment</td>
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<tr>
<td>Areas of Core Veterinary Nursing Competency</td>
<td>How often do I do this activity?</td>
<td>How strong are my skills in this activity?</td>
<td>Competent?</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Often</td>
<td>Sometimes</td>
<td>Never</td>
<td>Strong</td>
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<tr>
<td>10 Maintain an effective clinical environment, taking into account accommodation, equipment and materials</td>
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<tr>
<td>11 Admit and discharge animals; handle and control animals minimising risks to the animal, yourself and others</td>
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<tr>
<td>12 Prepare for and provide appropriate and effective assistance with medical investigations</td>
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<tr>
<td>13 Implement effective measures to control the spread of infection</td>
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<tr>
<td>14 Support diagnostic procedures:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Prepare equipment and materials</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>• Prepare, restrain and position animals</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Provide effective aftercare and monitoring</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Collect, preserve, store and label samples for analysis</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Carry out diagnostic testing safely and effectively</td>
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<tr>
<td>15 Prepare and maintain the operating theatre, applying infection control and safety procedures in relation to equipment, accommodation, patients and personnel</td>
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<tr>
<td>Areas of Core Veterinary Nursing Competency</td>
<td>How often do I do this activity?</td>
<td>How strong are my skills in this activity?</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Often</td>
<td>Sometimes</td>
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<td>Strong</td>
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<tr>
<td>Work effectively and safely in support of surgical procedures:</td>
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<tr>
<td>16</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Prepare and supply surgical equipment and materials</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>• Prepare, restrain and position patients</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Assist with a range of procedures (“scrubbed” and “unscrubbed”)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Support and monitor anaesthesia:</td>
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<tr>
<td>17</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>• Prepare and supply anaesthetic equipment and materials</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>• Conduct pre-anaesthetic checks and procedures</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Effectively monitor anaesthetised animals</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Assist the veterinary surgeon to maintain anaesthesia</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Effectively monitor and assist in the recovery of patients after surgical procedures</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Areas of Core Veterinary Nursing Competency</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Often</td>
<td>Sometimes</td>
<td>Never</td>
<td>Strong</td>
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<tr>
<td>18 Administration and dispensing of veterinary medicines:</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>• Administer veterinary medicines</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Effectively manage the veterinary dispensary</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Know the law relating to veterinary medicines</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Further competencies required by your current employment:

| Nature of skill/competence: |        |           |       |        |      |      |          |
|                            |        |           |       |        |      |      |          |
|                            |        |           |       |        |      |      |          |
|                            |        |           |       |        |      |      |          |

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Initial evaluation</th>
<th>Mentor signature:</th>
<th>Date:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Veterinary Nurse signature:</td>
<td>Date:</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Final evaluation</th>
<th>Mentor signature:</th>
<th>Date:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Veterinary Nurse signature:</td>
<td>Date:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Period of Supervised Practice (PSP): Action Plan

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name:</th>
<th>RCVS PIN: 6</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Date PSP commenced:</td>
<td>Name of supervisor:</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Goal</th>
<th>Plan to achieve</th>
<th>Review and reflection</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Goal</td>
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</table>

Signature:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Signature of Supervisor:</th>
<th>Date:</th>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date:</th>
<th>Date:</th>
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</table>
### Period of Supervised Practice: Declaration of Completion

**Personal details of nurse:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name:</th>
<th>Registration No:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name and address of PSP practice:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date PSP commenced:</th>
<th>Date PSP completed:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Annual leave (days)</th>
<th>Sickness (Days)</th>
<th>Contracted hours / week*</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name and qualifications of mentor:</th>
<th>Registration No</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

*excluding overtime or on-call payments

**Veterinary Nurse’s Declaration:**

I declare that I have completed a Period of Supervised Practice as stipulated in the *Royal College of Veterinary Surgeons Veterinary Nurse Registration Rules* and, to the best of my knowledge and belief, am competent in the veterinary nursing competences set out in the *RCVS Day One Competences for Veterinary Nurses*.

I understand that, as a Registered Veterinary Nurse, I must maintain my competency to practise through appropriate continuing professional development and that I must ensure I receive adequate training to undertake work additional to the core veterinary nursing competences contained in the *RCVS Day One Competences for Veterinary Nurses*.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Signature:</th>
<th>Date:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

**Mentor’s Declaration:**

I declare that the above named veterinary nurse has completed a Period of Supervised Practice between the dates recorded above and as stipulated in the *Royal College of Veterinary Surgeons Veterinary Nurse Registration Rules* under my supervision and, to the best of my knowledge and belief, is competent in the veterinary nursing competences set out in the *RCVS Day One Competences for Veterinary Nurses*.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Signature:</th>
<th>Date:</th>
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</table>
Veterinary nurses and the Veterinary Surgeons Act 1966

Introduction

1. Under the Veterinary Surgeons Act 1966 the general rule is that only a veterinary surgeon may practise veterinary surgery. There are, however, a number of exceptions to this rule, and two of them concern veterinary nurses. This note explains the law as it applies to them.

Definition of veterinary surgery

2. Veterinary surgery as defined in the Act "means the art and science of veterinary surgery and medicine and, without prejudice to the generality of the foregoing, shall be taken to include-

   (a) the diagnosis of diseases in, and injuries to, animals including tests performed on animals for diagnostic purposes;

   (b) the giving of advice based upon such diagnosis;

   (c) the medical or surgical treatment of animals; and

   (d) the performance of surgical operations on animals."

What can be done by people other than veterinary surgeons

3. Schedule 3 to the Act allows anyone to give first aid in an emergency for the purpose of saving life and relieving suffering. The owner of an animal, or a member of the owner's household or employee of the owner, may also give it minor medical treatment. There are a number of other exceptions to the general rule, mainly relating to farm animals, in addition to the exceptions which apply to veterinary nurses. These are explained below.

What can be done by veterinary nurses

4. Veterinary nurses, like anyone else, may give first aid and look after animals in ways which do not involve acts of veterinary surgery. In addition, veterinary nurses may do the things specified in paragraphs 6 and 7 of Schedule 3 to the Veterinary Surgeons Act 1966 as amended by the Veterinary Surgeons Act 1966 (Schedule 3 Amendment) Order 2002. The text of these paragraphs is set out in the annex below.

Registered veterinary nurses

5. Paragraph 6 applies to veterinary nurses whose names are entered on the register maintained by RCVS. They may administer "any medical treatment or any minor surgery (not involving entry into a body cavity)" under veterinary direction.

6. The animal must be under the care of a veterinary surgeon and the treatment must be carried out at his or her direction. The veterinary surgeon must be the employer of the veterinary nurse or be acting on behalf of the nurse's employer.
7. The directing veterinary surgeon must be satisfied that the veterinary nurse is qualified to carry out the treatment or surgery. RCVS will advise from time to time on veterinary nursing qualifications which veterinary surgeons should recognise.

8. All registered veterinary nurses (VNs) are qualified to administer medical treatment or minor surgery (not involving entry into a body cavity), under veterinary direction, to all the species which are commonly kept as companion animals, including exotic species so kept. Unless they hold further qualifications they are not qualified to treat the equine species, wild animals or farm animals. Registered veterinary nurses who hold the RCVS Certificate in Equine Veterinary Nursing (EVNs) are qualified to administer medical treatment or minor surgery (not involving entry into a body cavity), under veterinary direction, to any of the equine species - horses, asses and zebras.

9. A veterinary nurse should only carry out a particular act of veterinary surgery if she or he is competent to do so and has the necessary experience to deal with any problems which may arise. Where appropriate, a veterinary surgeon should be available to respond to a request for help. A veterinary nurse may only carry out acts of veterinary surgery under the direction of a veterinary surgeon.

Student veterinary nurses

10. Paragraph 7 of the Schedule applies to student veterinary nurses. A student veterinary nurse is someone enrolled for the purpose of training as a veterinary nurse at an approved training and assessment centre (VNAC) or a veterinary practice approved by such a centre (TP). This does not include those who are undertaking a Pre-Veterinary Nursing Access course.

11. A student veterinary nurse may administer “any medical treatment or any minor surgery (not involving entry into a body cavity)” under veterinary direction.

12. The animal must be under the care of a veterinary surgeon and the treatment must be carried out at his or her direction. The veterinary surgeon must be the employer of the veterinary nurse or be acting on behalf of the nurse's employer.

13. The treatment or minor surgery must be carried out in the course of the student veterinary nurse's training. In the view of the RCVS, such work should be undertaken only for the purpose of learning and consolidating new skills.

14. The treatment or surgery must be supervised by a veterinary surgeon or a registered veterinary nurse. In the case of surgery the supervision must be direct, continuous and personal.

15. In the view of RCVS, a veterinary surgeon or registered veterinary nurse can only be said to be supervising if they are present on the premises and able to respond to a request for assistance if needed. “Direct, continuous and personal” supervision requires the supervisor to be present and giving the student nurse his or her undivided personal attention.
Medical treatment and minor surgery

16. The Act does not define "any medical treatment or any minor surgery (not involving entry into a body cavity)". Ultimately it would be for the courts to decide what these words mean.

17. The procedures which veterinary nurses are specifically trained to carry out include the following:

- administer medication by mouth, topically, by the rectum, by inhalation or by subcutaneous, intramuscular or intravenous injection;

- administer other treatments, including oral, intravenous and subcutaneous rehydration, other fluid therapy, catheterisation, cleaning and dressing of surgical wounds, treatment of abscesses and ulcers, application of external casts, holding and handling of viscera when assisting in operations and cutaneous suturing;

- prepare animals for anaesthesia and assist in the administration and termination of anaesthesia, including premedication, analgesia and intubation;

- collect samples of blood, urine, faeces, skin and hair; and

- take X-rays.

Guidance on anaesthesia

18. Particular care is needed over the administration of anaesthesia. A veterinary surgeon alone should:-

- assess the fitness of the animal to undergo anaesthesia;

- select and plan a suitable anaesthetic regime;

- select any premedication; and

- administer anaesthetic if the induction dose is either incremental or to effect.

19. Provided the veterinary surgeon is physically present and immediately available for consultation, a registered veterinary nurse may:-

- administer selected sedative, analgesic or other agents before and after the operation;

- administer non-incremental anaesthetic agents on the instruction of the directing veterinary surgeon;

- monitor clinical signs and maintain an anaesthetic record; and

- maintain anaesthesia by administering supplementary incremental doses of intravenous anaesthetic agents or adjusting the delivered concentration of anaesthetic agents, under the direct instruction of the supervising veterinary surgeon
Annex

Paragraphs 6 and 7 of Schedule 3 to the Veterinary Surgeons Act 1966, as amended by the Veterinary Surgeons Act 1966 (Schedule 3 Amendment) Order 2002, SI 2002/1479, with effect from 10 June 2002

6. Any medical treatment or any minor surgery (not involving entry into a body cavity) to any animal by a veterinary nurse if the following conditions are complied with, that is to say –

   (a) the animal is, for the time being, under the care of a registered veterinary surgeon or veterinary practitioner and the medical treatment or minor surgery is carried out by the veterinary nurse at his direction;

   (b) the registered veterinary surgeon or veterinary practitioner is the employer or is acting on behalf of the employer of the veterinary nurse; and

   (c) the registered veterinary surgeon or veterinary practitioner directing the medical treatment or minor surgery is satisfied that the veterinary nurse is qualified to carry out the treatment or surgery.

In this paragraph and in paragraph 7 below –

"veterinary nurse" means a nurse whose name is entered in the list of veterinary nurses maintained by the College.

7. Any medical treatment or any minor surgery (not involving entry into a body cavity) to any animal by a student veterinary nurse if the following conditions are complied with, that is to say –

   (a) the animal is, for the time being, under the care of a registered veterinary surgeon or veterinary practitioner and the medical treatment or minor surgery is carried out by the student veterinary nurse at his direction and in the course of the student veterinary nurse's training;

   (b) the treatment or surgery is supervised by a registered veterinary surgeon, veterinary practitioner or veterinary nurse and, in the case of surgery, the supervision is direct, continuous and personal; and

   (c) the registered veterinary surgeon or veterinary practitioner directing the medical treatment or minor surgery is satisfied that the student veterinary nurse is qualified to carry out the treatment or surgery.

In this paragraph –

"student veterinary nurse" means a person enrolled under bye-laws made by the Council for the purpose of undergoing training as a veterinary nurse at an approved training and assessment centre or a veterinary practice approved by such a centre;
"approved training and assessment centre" means a centre approved by the Council for the purpose of training and assessing student veterinary nurses.

1 The list refers to the Register of Veterinary Nurses
2 The bye-laws have now been replaced with the Veterinary Nurse Registration Rules