

University of London

Royal Veterinary College (RVC)

31 July 2019

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

Contents

List of Visitors	3
List of Reviewers	3
Key Staff met.....	3
Summary of the Visitors' findings.....	5
Standard 1 – Organisation	9
Standard 2 – Sustainability	12
Standard 3 – Qualification design and delivery.....	13
Standard 4 – Qualification quality management	16
Standard 5 – Assessment	18
Standard 6 – Centre approval and quality assurance.....	22
Standard 7 – Self evaluation and reporting.....	25
Awarding Organisation response	266

List of Visitors

Sally Bowden RVN (Chair of RCVS Panel)

Industry Representative

Ashleigh Burkitt

Student Representative

Denise Chambers RVN

RCVS Quality Assurance Officer

Jane Furness RVN

Industry Representative

Victoria Hedges RVN

RCVS Examinations Manager

University of London / RVC Panel Members

Stephen Fean MRCVS (Chair of RVC Panel)

RVC Senior Lecturer, BVetMed Deputy Course Director

Claire Vinten MRCVS

RVC Lecturer in Veterinary Education

Susan Howarth RVN

External panel member – Harper Adams University

Liz Cox RVN

External panel member – Independent Vet Care (IVC)

Jessica Kim Seagreen RVN

Student panel member

Key Staff met

Rachel Lumbis RVN

Course Director (maternity leave)

Hilary Orpet RVN

Acting Course Director

Sue Gregory MRCVS

Acting Deputy Course Director

Marie Jones RVN

Senior VN Tutor

Natalie Hubble

RVC Placements Support Manager

Adrian Boswood MRCVS

Vice-Principal Learning, Teaching and Assessment

Imelda McGonnell

Vice-Principal Students

Julie Waterfield

RVC Director of Finance

John Sanger

Head of Examinations

Victoria Page RVN

CAW and RVC Link Tutor

Karen Brightman

CAW Organiser of placements for RVC VN students

Leslie Heaton-Smith

Marketing and Development Director (CAW)

Frank Taylor RVN

Vice-Principal Veterinary Studies (CAW)

Summary of the Visitors' findings

- The Royal Veterinary College (RVC), Hawkshead Campus, was visited on the 31st July 2019. The following programme was under accreditation review:

FdSc Veterinary Nursing

- The RVC is a College of the University of London (UoL), although there was no representation from UoL during the event. UoL must therefore confirm the validation decision and the mechanism in place for this.

The team found the following:

- The RVC veterinary nursing team is comprised of strongly proactive, experienced and confident staff members. UoL/RVC are to be **commended** for their active consideration of the design of the programme, in order to effect change that will address recent critical reviews and statistics as well as seeking to produce veterinary nurses who will be ready to meet the future requirements and challenges of the profession.
- The design of the programme is essentially still in draft form and requires much consideration of the detail, but the principles of the new programme are imaginative and forward-thinking, for which UoL/RVC are to be **commended**.
- The application submission was provided well in advance of the event, although the panel found that much of the paperwork referenced the existing programme, and it was therefore noted that the RVC will be required to submit updated documentation for further review.
- The RVC is to be **commended** for continuing to engage with student feedback and responding to those issues raised that can reasonably be dealt with.

Standard 1 – Organisation

Suggestions

None

Actions

- a. The University of London must provide the RCVS with written confirmation that it supports the accreditation application for the award of FdSc in Veterinary Nursing.
- b. The University of London must provide the RCVS with the nominated contact for the University of London.
- c. All students must be registered on/studying the accredited qualification (FdSc in Veterinary Nursing). Should the university wish to recruit onto a BSc in Veterinary Nursing as a stand-alone programme, this must be accredited by the RCVS in order for students enrolled on this programme to register with the RCVS on completion.

Standard 2 – Sustainability

Suggestions

None

Actions

- a. Complete a training practice evaluation with a view to understanding the sustainability of current training practices and awareness of where further training practices may be required.

Standard 3 – Qualification design and delivery

Suggestions

- a. Review assessment weightings and determine whether the proposals are appropriate.
- b. Increase the amount and type of inter-professional education, particularly early in the programme.

Actions

- a. Ensure all RCVS Day One Competences are mapped to the modules.
- b. Review the proposed modules, including all of the learning outcomes, to ensure that the FHEQ level is appropriate, the learning outcomes and DOS are mapped to the assessments and all assessments including DOS have an unseen component.
- c. Review module outlines, programme specification and the planned assessments to ensure parity.
- d. Review the range of assessment methods to ensure there is a wide variety and that the assessment type matches the outcome, i.e. an observed assessment for a practical skill.
- e. Provide a completed copy of the VN Course Handbook.
- f. Amend summative assessments to ensure that they differ from the formative assessments.

Standard 4 – Qualification quality management

Suggestions

- a. Include session on introduction to placement in student facing documentation.
- b. Monitor student progression data to observe correlation between this and the increased entry requirement in the proposed programme.
- c. Communication between departments to allow veterinary nursing students access to live animal handling experience where possible.

Actions

- a. Standardise course documentation to include the same job titles consistently in all documentation.
- b. Provide an updated chart or list of currently employed CAW staff, with qualifications, who undertake practice placement visits and Nursing Progress Log (NPL) quality assurance for RVC students.

Standard 5 – Assessment

Suggestions

- a. Consider reviewing APL policy and whether two thirds of the programme is an appropriate amount.
- b. Consider scheduling formal mock examinations for the benefit of students.

Actions

- a. All documentation in relation to the examinations must be checked to ensure that areas raised in this section of the report are amended.
- b. Amend the OSCE documentation to include a section on the post examination quality assurance.
- c. Confirm the number of OSCE stations being used and the mechanism in place to determine the number of stations which need to be achieved to pass the module.
- d. Forward CV and last three years' CPD records for Victoria Bowes, RVC External Examiner.
- e. Clinical coach training and standardisation materials to be updated, to include reference to RVC Learn.
- f. All CAW placement documentation to be reviewed and updated, specifically including, but not limited to:
 - i. Confirm method for supporting slow progressing students.
 - ii. Update guidance on how NPL skills are sampled and units signed off.
 - iii. Remove references to OSPVEs.
 - iv. Clinical coach training and standardisation materials to be updated, to include reference to RVC Learn.

Standard 6 – Centre approval and quality assurance

Suggestions

None

Actions

- a. Detail a contingency plan for placement support if a new agreement is not made between RVC and CAW in 2021.
- b. Provide an updated list of training practices accessible to RVC students.
- c. Develop a real time mechanism for RVC staff to accurately track student placement locations.
- d. Clarify the timeline and process for provision of training practice paperwork to affiliated and non-affiliated practices.
- e. Clarify the process to follow up training practice actions and the sanctions for training practices not meeting their actions.
- f. Provide an up to date placement visit tracker.
- g. Update placement letters sent to training practices and students.

Standard 7 – Self-evaluation and reporting

Suggestions

None

Actions

- a. Submit annual self-evaluation report in line with RCVS requirements, once provided by RCVS.

Standard 1 – Organisation

A senior member of AO or HEI staff (the official correspondent) responsible for the overall delivery of RCVS-approved licence to practise qualifications, in veterinary nursing, must be designated.

Details of the location(s) at which the qualification is to be administered must be provided.

Licence to practise qualifications must be accredited by a UK University/HEI or by an AO recognised by the UK national regulatory authorities.

Applications must be made by the principal or chief executive of the AO or HEI.

1.1 The University of London/Royal Veterinary College (UoL/RVC) currently hold Full Accreditation to award the FdSc in Veterinary Nursing. This means that students completing the accredited qualifications are able to enter the register without further assessment from the RCVS.

1.2 The licence to practise qualification is administered from:

University of London

Senate House
Malet Street
London
WC1E 7HU
020 7862 8000

The Royal Veterinary College

Hawkshead Lane
North Mymms
Hatfield
Hertfordshire
AL9 7TA
01707 666333

1.3 The qualification is delivered in collaboration with:

The College of Animal Welfare

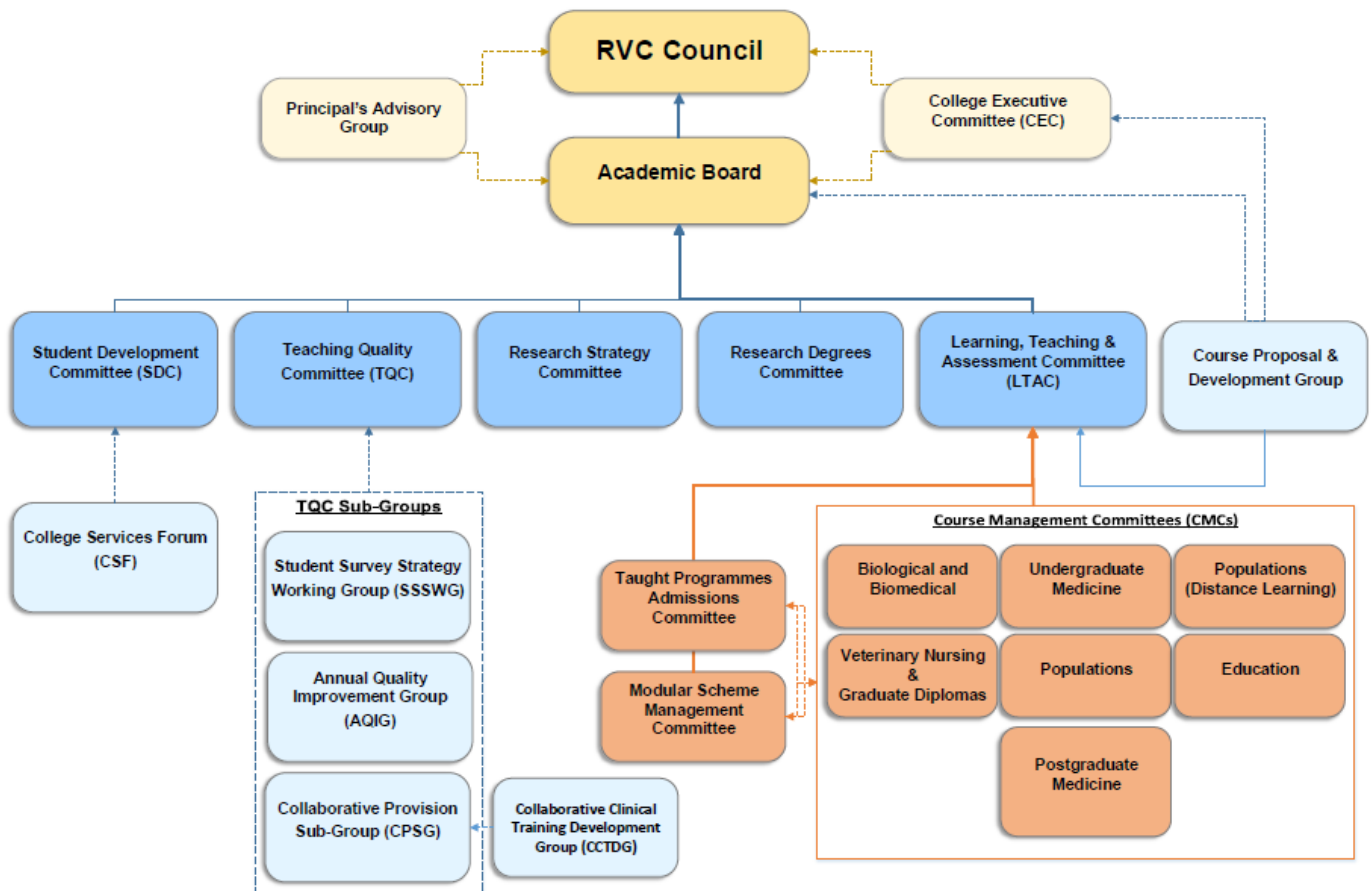
Headland House
Chord Business Park
London Road
Godmanchester
Huntingdon
Cambridgeshire
PE29 2BQ
01480 422060

1.4 The RVC has another campus (Camden), where occasional lectures and educational activities may take place. The students are also placed at a range of Training Practices (TPs), most of which are affiliated to The College of Animal Welfare (CAW), although some are affiliated to other

providers. CAW works in collaboration with the RVC to manage the placement system. A new contract was presented during the visit, securing the agreement until 2021.

- 1.5 The application for accreditation was made by Professor Stuart Reid, Principal, CEO and Chief Accountable Officer of the RVC. The Lead correspondent in relation to the licence to practise qualification is Professor David Church, Deputy Principal and Acting Vice Principal (Clinical Affairs) of the RVC.
- 1.6 The RVC was granted awarding powers for both taught and research degrees in 2009. These powers are not currently being exercised. The RVC continues to confer University of London awards. The RVC was informed by the RCVS panel that should it choose to award the qualification in the future the RCVS accreditation will need to be formally transferred and therefore RCVS must be informed of any likely changes at the earliest opportunity.
- 1.7 The University of London does not appear to have been involved in the application for RCVS accreditation and was not represented at the accreditation event. An official correspondent at the University of London must be appointed and the contact details forwarded to the RCVS. The RCVS will continue to copy the RVC official correspondent into communication, however, there may be occasions where meetings are held specifically with the University of London. Where this is the case UoL may choose to invite the RVC official correspondent to join the meeting.
- 1.8 The University of London/RVC proposed the delivery of the following qualification:
 - Foundation Degree in Veterinary Nursing (FdScVN)
- 1.9 The FdSc is delivered over three years.
- 1.10 It is intended that the proposed qualification will be delivered (subject to RCVS accreditation) from September 2020.
- 1.11 The University is also delivering a BSc (Hons) in Veterinary Nursing. This qualification was not put forward for accreditation. The Senior Course management team explained that students are recruited onto either the FdSc or the BSc, but all students graduate with an FdSc on completion of the level 4 and 5 modules and register with the RCVS. Students enrolled on the BSc then continue onto the level 6 modules.
- 1.12 The modules of both courses are similar but those completing the BSc have additional content and assessments to prepare them for the level 6 modules. Students enrolled on the FdSc may apply to enter a top-up year (fourth year of the BSc) but must complete additional assessments. Some students opt to undertake these additional assessments during their FdSc years.
- 1.13 It was understood from previous accreditation reports dated 2008 and 2013 that some students would be recruited onto the programme with the intention that they would complete the BSc after completion of the FdSc. The RCVS was unaware that the university is enrolling students onto the BSc as a stand-alone programme. Furthermore when students are enrolled with the RCVS, the University representative is declaring that the student is enrolled on the FdSc and it is therefore concluded that students are following the accredited FdSc modules and not the BSc modules.

1.14 The organisation chart articulating the structure of the RVC and the course management committees is detailed below.



Suggestions

None

Actions

- d. The University of London must provide the RCVS with written confirmation that it supports the accreditation application for the award of FdSc in Veterinary Nursing.
- e. The University of London must provide the RCVS with the nominated contact for the University of London.
- f. All students must be registered on/studying the accredited qualification (FdSc in Veterinary Nursing). Should the university wish to recruit onto a BSc in Veterinary Nursing as a stand-alone programme, this must be accredited by the RCVS in order for students enrolled on this programme to register with the RCVS on completion.

Standard 2 – Sustainability

Finances must be demonstrably adequate to sustain the educational programmes.

AOs and HEIs must be able to demonstrate that the delivery of the proposed qualification is cost effective.

AOs and HEIs must demonstrate that there is a sufficient need for all new qualification(s).

2.1 Course-specific financial documentation was provided within the application, although the panel felt that it lacked detail and it was therefore not possible to see how the figures presented had been arrived at. However, the cross-college RVC Annual Report and Financial Statements 2017-2018 had been made available and showed careful planning to cope with an anticipated significant reduction in surplus.

2.2 The veterinary nursing programme delivered at the RVC continues to be in high demand, with a ratio of 9 applicants for each place. The RVC is confident that this will remain the case for the foreseeable future. The student demand for the programme, the post-graduate employment rate and the general shortage of veterinary nurses nationwide were cited as evidence of the demand. However, it was apparent in the application that the data relating to applications and student interest related to the FdSc and the BSc collectively, whilst the FdSc enrolment has decreased over the past academic year. As the FdSc is the only RCVS accredited programme, consideration must be given as to why this may be the case.

2.3 The panel felt that it was unclear whether current TPs intend to continue taking RVC students and/or whether there are any potential new or replacement TPs to use, as there has been no market research in this area. Three practices identified for a visit prior to the accreditation event were unable to accommodate a visit due to either lack of staffing or no longer taking RVC placement students. It was therefore noted that the TP list provided by CAW needs updating in order for the RVC to have full clarity of where their students have access to placements. The RVC can then access the up to date list for their own market research and employer feedback.

Suggestions

None

Actions

- b. Complete a training practice evaluation with a view to understanding the sustainability of current training practices and awareness of where further training practices may be required.

Standard 3 – Qualification design and delivery

Licence to practise qualifications must address the RCVS Day One Competences for Veterinary Nurses and RCVS Day One Skills for Veterinary Nurses and, in the case of HE programmes, relevant benchmark statements.

Licence to practise qualifications must contain the minimum Guided Learning Hours (GLH) as defined by the body entrusted for setting GLH for your sector. Prior to registration students must complete 2,990 hours in duration, actively engaged in training (GLH and clinical placement), excluding annual leave and absence.

Programmes of study delivered by Centres must incorporate a minimum of 1,800 hours of clinical work experience, to be gained in a veterinary practice registered with the RCVS as a Training Practice (TP) or an Auxiliary Training Practice (aTP). This must be in addition to the GLH as set by the relevant bodies. It is the AO/HEIs responsibility to ensure these requirements are being met.

Work-based learning requirements must articulate with the RCVS Day One Skills for Veterinary Nurses and be recorded and assessed in a format that is readily auditable and accessible to students, clinical supervisors and quality assurance personnel.

Methods of summative assessment must be detailed within the modules. Assessments need to be valid and reliable and comprise a variety of approaches. Direct assessment of RCVS Day One Skills for Veterinary Nurses must form a significant component of the overall process of assessment.

- 3.1 All QAA benchmarks are mapped to the proposed modules. It was noted by the panel that the RCVS Day One Skills (DOS) for Veterinary Nurses were fully mapped, but the following RCVS Day One Competences (DOC) for Veterinary Nurses were missing: 1, 2, 12 and 13.
- 3.2 The panel discussed that the module learning outcomes for the proposed programme were not wholly measurable – they were highly prescriptive and some of the learning outcomes were not included within the proposed assessment strategy. The learning outcome progression also did not follow a linear advancement, with examples of level 5 modules utilising phrases such as ‘describe’, ‘outline’ and ‘list’. Some of the learning outcomes appeared to be assessed via observational means, but there were no practical summative assessments indicated.
- 3.3 The RCVS DOS were not mapped to the learning outcomes and it was therefore unclear whether there was any unseen component included for the assessment of the DOS. The RVC must review the modules, including all of the learning outcomes, to ensure that the FHEQ level is appropriate, the learning outcomes and DOS are mapped to the assessments and all assessments including DOS have an unseen component.

3.4 The panel commented that there was a lack of parity between module outlines, the specification document and the planned assessments. For example:

- There was no reference to the assessment weighting in the module outlines
- There was no reference to the relevant DOC and DOS in the module outlines
- No key texts were included in the module outlines

It is imperative that the information available to students references the same information.

3.5 The module weighting was not felt to be appropriate to the required knowledge and understanding, or competency demanded. For example, the weighting of the OSCE assessment was stated as 30%. It is therefore suggested that the assessment weightings are reviewed to ensure the RVC is confident that the assessment strategy and requirements are appropriately weighted.

3.6 The VN Course Handbook provided was incomplete. This document must be completed and provided for review prior to students being enrolled onto this programme, and it was suggested that it should include reference to resilience and well-being.

3.7 The panel was in agreement that the use of formative assessments throughout the programme would provide students with sufficient feedback opportunities. However, there was concern raised that some of the summative assessments were too similar to the formative for the same module, and there was a risk that the same piece of work could be submitted. The assessment content in general was felt to be limited, with multiple care plan or report style assessments utilised. A wider variety of assessments could be developed to suit various learning styles and assessment outcomes.

3.8 The current placement arrangement was discussed with both current and previous students, and they were in agreement that the current model suits their programme requirements, as well as meeting the RCVS standard. However, the panel found it difficult to evidence this area of the provision, with lack of detail on some documents and several being out of date. The application indicated that there are plans to change the placement system related to an attempt to ease the accommodation issue, rather than to remedy a problem with the placement system itself. Whilst reviewing the current model, the opportunity has also been taken to introduce a rotation for all students to experience one of the RVC's own hospitals as well as a plan to introduce blended learning into year 3, with students being out on placement four days out of five and interacting remotely with staff on the fifth day. This is a significant change and not without risk, however there were sound educational justifications presented for this i.e. that this format enabled a wider variety of placements to be accessed, encouraged students to study autonomously, and in-practice experiences may be contemporaneously evaluated.

3.9 Students present at the visitation were very satisfied with their experiences, in particular the support of the staff and quality of the teaching. There were some comments regarding the poor timing of some of the support sessions, which the RVC hopes to address within the proposed programme.

3.10 The panel was very encouraged to see significant efforts being made to offer interprofessional educational experiences between the veterinary nursing and veterinary science students. These

are currently limited to extracurricular activities and are entirely voluntary. The panel felt this to be a very encouraging and forward-thinking move and would be pleased to see the initiative move onto the timetable for carefully selected sessions.

Suggestions

- c. Review assessment weightings and determine whether the proposals are appropriate.
- d. Increase the amount and type of inter-professional education, particularly early in the programme.

Actions

- g. Ensure all RCVS Day One Competences are mapped to the modules.
- h. Review the proposed modules, including all of the learning outcomes, to ensure that the FHEQ level is appropriate, the learning outcomes and DOS are mapped to the assessments and all assessments including DOS have an unseen component.
- i. Review module outlines, programme specification and the planned assessments to ensure parity.
- j. Review the range of assessment methods to ensure there is a wide variety and that the assessment type matches the outcome, i.e. an observed assessment for a practical skill.
- k. Provide a completed copy of the VN Course Handbook.
- l. Amend summative assessments to ensure that they differ from the formative assessments.

Standard 4 – Qualification quality management

AOs and HEIs must be compliant with all criteria stipulated by their accrediting national regulatory authority.

Student selection criteria must be in place including the minimal acceptable qualifications to be achieved prior to commencing the qualification. The number of students registered for the qualification must be consistent with the resources available including the availability of sufficient Training Practices to enable the required clinical experience to be undertaken

AOs and HEIs must allow the RCVS access to people, premises and records relevant to the management and delivery of the accredited qualification, and must cooperate with RCVS quality assurance activities in relation to the delivery and assessment of such qualification(s).

AOs and HEIs must employ sufficient suitably qualified staff to administer and quality assure the qualification(s).

Quality assurance personnel must demonstrate, maintain and provide evidence to RCVS of relevant occupational and academic competence in relation to the evaluation of assessment materials and decisions.

- 4.1 The RVC offer of a place on the FdSc in Veterinary Nursing course is subject to occupational health clearance and the panel was informed that students receive welfare and resilience training in the introduction to placement sessions before they commence their first placement. These sessions include signposting to college support services and discussion of euthanasia and bereavement, as well as reinforcement of this information while in placement by the provision of information cards handed out by CAW practice visiting staff. In their third year, students are provided with career resilience sessions. The RVC is to be commended for its approach to student well-being. It is suggested that the provision of the 'introduction to placement' session before the first placement module is made explicit in the student facing documentation so students are aware of the support available to them.
- 4.2 Access to Continuing Professional Development (CPD) records was granted by members of the veterinary nursing course teaching team. The panel found the majority were well in excess of the required hours with a range of suitable CPD activities, relevant to their current roles.
- 4.3 The panel found that there were high student attrition rates when moving from the first to the second year, so the potential causes of this finding were queried with the delivery team. The RVC stated that there had been found to be no statistical difference between FdSc and BSc students passing the Applied Sciences modules in year one, but that further investigation had not been possible, as the course team had not been provided with access to figures which could inform this analysis. The RVC stated that new Office for Students requirements will allow course directors access to the data necessary to monitor this in future. The RVC has increased the entry

requirements for the proposed FdSc Veterinary Nursing programme in an attempt to reduce student attrition rates. It is recommended that the RVC utilises future student achievement data to monitor any association between the increased entry requirements and student progression.

4.4 The panel found that the use of stuffed toys as practice for handling real animals was insufficient and recommended that some real experience was obtained prior to the students' first placement. The proposed timetable for the new FdSc programme includes rotations at the Queen Mother Hospital for Animals and The Beaumont Sainsbury Animal Hospital before the first placement to allow the students to gain experience of practical animal handling. The panel also noted that animals are occasionally brought to the college for veterinary students' use, for example for the practice of ultrasound scanning. It is suggested that college departments coordinate resources to allow veterinary nursing students to take part when live animals are on site.

4.5 The panel found that there were a large number of job titles mentioned throughout both the RVC and CAW documentation. For example, placement officers, placement coordinators, personal tutors, visiting officers, practice support officers and link tutors. The panel could not find descriptions of these roles or the responsibilities associated with each title. There was concern that students, clinical coaches and practices would be unsure who to contact in the event of any support issues when on placement or at college. Students and clinical coaches are given a placement letter with contact details of their CAW contact when they commence placement. However, the panel found that even within CAW, the same job had two titles (the placement officer is also known as the visiting officer), so to clarify roles and responsibilities it is requested that all RVC and CAW documentation is rationalised so the same titles are used consistently.

Suggestions

- d. Include session on introduction to placement in student facing documentation.
- e. Monitor student progression data to observe correlation between this and the increased entry requirement in the proposed programme.
- f. Communication between departments to allow veterinary nursing students access to live animal handling experience where possible.

Actions

- c. Standardise course documentation to include the same job titles consistently in all documentation.
- d. Provide an updated chart or list of currently employed CAW staff, with qualifications, who undertake practice placement visits and Nursing Progress Log (NPL) quality assurance for RVC students.

Standard 5 – Assessment

Qualification assessment strategies must be appropriate, valid and fair. A pass must be achieved in each assessment assessing the RCVS Day One Competences for Veterinary Nurses and RCVS Day One Skills for Veterinary Nurses.

Reasonable adjustment, mitigating circumstances, fitness to practise policies and an appeals procedure must be in place, taking into account the licence to practise requirement for all students to achieve all competences contained in the RCVS Day One Competences for Veterinary Nurses and RCVS Day One Skills for Veterinary Nurses.

Mechanisms must be in place to allow Accreditation of Prior Learning (APL) to be taken into consideration.

Appropriate security arrangements must be in place to safeguard the integrity of assessment processes.

The design and quality assurance of assessments must be carried out by personnel who are specifically qualified to execute these functions.

There must be procedures in place to maximise the fairness, validity and reliability of assessment outcomes, including but not limited to academic peer review of assessment content, proofing of scripts, supervision and invigilation, maintenance of records and moderation processes.

There must be appropriate moderation processes in place to ensure parity within and between individual units of study, across the programme, with other institutions; and to ensure that each student is fairly treated.

All modules or units of a qualification that address the RCVS Day One Competences for Veterinary Nurses and RCVS Day One Skills for Veterinary Nurses must include unseen independent examination as an element of the assessment strategy.

Independently assessed Objective Structured Clinical Examination (OSCE), or a similarly robust, objective and evidence-based form of examination, must be employed to test the safe and effective acquisition of clinical skills.

Practical assessment must be carried out by individuals who are specifically qualified to evaluate practical skills and performance, and who have sufficient occupational experience and qualifications to support safe and effective judgements of clinical competence.

- 5.1. The course team recognised that there are low pass rates in some module assessments - the proposed programme aims to resolve this. For example, in the current programme 33% of students failed the short answer paper in the anatomy and physiology element of the applied science module. The design of the proposed FdSc requires the applied science module to be delivered with the clinical nursing practice module. It is hoped that this will resolve the issue by creating a more applied and meaningful learning experience.

- 5.2. Students had also raised issues with expected and actual levels of self-directed study, timetabling of assessments and juggling work/study. The university has taken action including the release of all assignment briefs at the start of year and access to assignment exemplars, revision questions and sample examination papers. According to the proposed timetable, formal mock examinations are not scheduled to take place, although student feedback suggests that they would find these beneficial. Graded mock examinations inform students of their level of attainment and may influence their performance to improve based on marker's feedback, which could also help to reduce the attrition rates.
- 5.3. Study skills sessions have been included in the proposed qualification.
- 5.4. The Guidance for Design of Assessments policy does not apply to Level 4 assessments; it was unclear what guidance was in place for the level 4 assessments.
- 5.5. The Assessment Rules contain guidance on weighting but the assessments detailed in the module descriptors do not appear to be weighted.
- 5.6. Students are required to achieve a mark of at least 40% in each assessment and an aggregated average of 50% across all assessments within a module. It is clear that compensation is not permitted within a module. It was confirmed that compensation is also not permitted between modules but this is not clear from the documentation provided.
- 5.7. The Ebel standard setting method is used to set the pass mark for the MCQ examinations. The final scores are normalised to ensure that only those who have at least minimal competence pass the examination.
- 5.8. Common grading schemes and a 10 point marking scheme were provided. These are used to grade short answer questions and assignments. These were clear and to the point.
- 5.9. Examples of assessment materials including marking schemes were provided to view at the event. The RVC marking and moderation process was provided. The sample size was clearly indicated in the document but it was unclear how the sample was selected. It was, however, evidenced from the sample of assessments provided that a selection of marked work from each of the grades awarded is sampled.
- 5.10. In the summative assessment and moderation policy submitted there is an indication that CAW will be marking and moderating exams and assignments. Other documents indicate that this activity will be carried out by the course team at the RVC. It was confirmed that CAW are not responsible for marking or moderating written assessments.
- 5.11. It is of concern that assessments were presented as either FdSc or BSc despite the RCVS being informed on the RCVS enrolment form that all students are enrolled on an FdSc. This means that any sampling undertaken by the RCVS would include only those undertaking the FdSc and not those undertaking the BSc.

- 5.12. Students use the Nursing Progress Log (NPL) to record their progress towards meeting the RCVS Day One Skills. CAW is responsible for ensuring appropriate and timely recording and verification of skills recorded in the student's NPL. This includes the training and standardisation of clinical coaches. However, the Clinical Coach Training PowerPoint contains NPL targets which do not appear to be relevant to RVC students. In addition, the online resource does not contain details of RVC Learn, the online VLE which contains information for Clinical Coaches. The information provided relating to the current IQA team is out of date.
- 5.13. There is a separate RVC resource guide for Clinical Coaches. It was unclear how and when this is provided to Clinical Coaches.
- 5.14. The sampling record includes a key which makes it easy to interpret. Some of the 'unsatisfactory skills' have not been reviewed for a number of months. The reason for this is unclear. A number of students are consistently rated amber or red in relation to their NPL progression; it is unclear what action is being taken to get these students back on track. Most of the actions seem to relate to the Clinical Coach's CPD record rather than addressing concerns in relation to student progression. The Quality Handbook indicates that each unit of the NPL will be signed off once the student has completed it, but for Cohort 13 it appears that the units are signed off towards the end of the placement.
- 5.15. The Veterinary Nursing Objective Structured Clinical Examination (OSCE) process and procedure document outlines the process for the development and delivery of the OSCE stations. There was little information about the quality assurance process after the examination, which must be included.
- 5.16. The university was not in a position to confirm the number of stations being used in the OSCE. This must be confirmed, along with details of the number of stations students are required to pass in order to pass the module.
- 5.17. Some documents produced by CAW contain incorrect information about the examinations. For instance, the NPL guidance contains the term OSPVE rather than OSCE.
- 5.18. A comprehensive appeals procedure was provided. It was confirmed that there are no set dates for the appeals panel to meet. Meetings are held regularly based on demand.
- 5.19. The APL policy was discussed with the course team. Currently there is an indication that a maximum of two thirds of a programme can be APL/APEL'd. This is at the discretion of the course director. The course director confirmed that APL has been applied to a small number of students. In all cases, this was where students were transferring from other RCVS accredited veterinary nursing courses. Whilst no one had applied to have two thirds of the course APL'd, in reality the only time this would be applicable is where someone had completed a large proportion of their Veterinary Nursing degree elsewhere.
- 5.20. Policies in relation to Academic Misconduct and Professional Requirements (also known as Fitness to Study and Practise) reasonable adjustments are clear.

- 5.21. Security of examination materials is described across a number of documents and was demonstrated during the event. This appears to comply with RCVS requirements.
- 5.22. Victoria Bowes and Paul Crawford are listed as the external examiners for the FdSc, although the RCVS do not appear have been provided with CV and CPD records for Victoria Bowes.

Suggestions

- c. Consider reviewing APL policy and whether two thirds of the programme is an appropriate amount.
- d. Consider scheduling formal mock examinations for the benefit of students.

Actions

- g. All documentation in relation to the examinations must be checked to ensure that areas raised in this section of the report are amended.
- h. Amend the OSCE documentation to include a section on the post examination quality assurance.
- i. Confirm the number of OSCE stations being used and the mechanism in place to determine the number of stations which need to be achieved to pass the module.
- j. Forward CV and last three years' CPD records for Victoria Bowes, RVC External Examiner.
- k. Clinical coach training and standardisation materials to be updated, to include reference to RVC Learn.
- l. All CAW placement documentation to be reviewed and updated, specifically including, but not limited to:
 - i. Confirm method for supporting slow progressing students.
 - ii. Update guidance on how NPL skills are sampled and units signed off.
 - iii. Remove references to OSPVEs.
 - iv. Clinical coach training and standardisation materials to be updated, to include reference to RVC Learn.

Standard 6 – Centre approval and quality assurance

Centres/delivery sites approved for the delivery of the accredited qualification must address the requirements for personnel, resources and facilities stipulated within the RCVS Standards and procedures for the approval and monitoring of Centres.

AOs and HEIs must conduct a site visit, including an audit of facilities and resources, before approving any Centre/delivery site to deliver a licence to practise qualification.

AOs and HEIs must conduct a minimum of one site visit to each approved Centre/delivery site and/or its affiliated Training Practices, annually, based on a documented risk assessment policy.

Centres delivering a licence to practise qualification must be notified to the RCVS.

AOs and HEIs must set in place binding agreements with Centres that articulate both their national and professional regulatory obligations.

- 6.1 There are excellent resources across the campus that are being well utilised by staff, such as well-equipped learning spaces, a large library with many relevant titles, access to e-books, subscriptions to a range of periodicals and inter-library loan facilities. There are also comfortable and attractive recreational areas, an excellent clinical skills centre and a large on-site referral hospital.
- 6.2 The visiting panel found that the number of Internal Quality Assurance (IQA) staff available at CAW to support the numbers of RVC students was not clear, as the personnel chart provided was out of date. The panel requested an up to date list of staff currently in employment at CAW who undertake practice placement visits and Nursing Progress Log (NPL) quality assurance for RVC students.
- 6.3 The visiting panel was provided with a document entitled 'Training Practices Used for RVC Veterinary Nursing Students Between 09/18 - 07/19'. This document contained approximately 190 practices, however the list contained practices that did not wish to accept further RVC placement students, as well as those which had staffing problems and so would be unsuitable for training students. The panel was concerned that the training practice numbers relied upon by the RVC for its placement students may not be sufficient if the current list is not regularly updated. The RVC suggested this list may not be up to date as it was submitted some time prior to the accreditation event. An up to date list is to be supplied so training practice numbers may be accurately assessed.
- 6.4 Further to the above query, the panel asked how the RVC tracks student placements in the event of any safeguarding issue. CAW currently holds this information but it was recommended that the RVC and CAW develop a 'live' system to allow either party to accurately and quickly locate students whilst on placement.

- 6.5 The panel found that there were delays in the paperwork provided to training practices, for example, a training practice certificate with a delay of three months between approval visit completion, signature by the Head of Centre and the certificate being sent to the practice. Similar delays were also noted in the Beaumont Sainsbury Animal Hospital Memorandum of Understanding. The head nurse at the practice visited as part of the accreditation process could not produce any paperwork relating to RVC or CAW, although it was suggested by the RVC that a MOU may have been provided electronically to the clinical coach. The RVC is invited to provide clarification on the process for provision of training practice paperwork.
- 6.6 The Support Assessment of Placement Practices was felt by the panel to be a useful and easy to follow document to risk assess each practice, however it was unclear what processes are in place to follow up on any training practice actions, or what consequences there may be if actions are not met. Clarification is required on these points.
- 6.7 The panel felt the placement visit tracker was a good method for tracking when students on placement had been visited, however the document supplied indicated some inconsistencies in the way it was applied and the rationale for visits was unclear. According to the tracker provided, some initial visits had not been carried out, some visits were not completed until after the placement had finished, and some students were not visited until March when the placement commenced in January. It was also noted that some students received telephone calls in lieu of a physical visit to the practice. The RVC response suggested the tracker submitted may not be up to date and that all visits had now been completed, and an explanation was given for the rationale of frequency and type of visit. The panel requested that the RCVS be provided with an up to date tracker.
- 6.8 The panel found that CAW/RVC practice and student placement letters required updating to include consistent language and remove references to documentation not used by RVC students.
- 6.9 An updated Memorandum of Understanding between RVC and CAW was provided to the visiting panel at the accreditation event, detailing the support that CAW will continue to provide to RVC students. This updated agreement is due to expire in 2021, which does not cover the entirety of one student's programme completion. This has identified a concern that students may not have access to ongoing support for the duration of their studies, specifically whilst on placement, so the RVC is invited to confirm what the process will be, should this agreement not be renewed in 2021.
- 6.10 The panel found that there were good processes in place between RVC and CAW for communicating, such as monthly meetings and monthly NPL progress charts provided to RVC tutors.
- 6.11 Accommodation availability has caused issues for students of the course previously but it is noted that changes are being implemented to address these. The programme team is to be commended for continuing to engage with student feedback and responding to those issues raised that can reasonably be dealt with.

Suggestions

None

Actions

- h. Detail a contingency plan for placement support if a new agreement is not made between RVC and CAW in 2021.
- i. Provide an updated list of training practices accessible to RVC students.
- j. Develop a real time mechanism for RVC staff to accurately track student placement locations.
- k. Clarify the timeline and process for provision of training practice paperwork to affiliated and non-affiliated practices.
- l. Clarify the process to follow up training practice actions and the sanctions for training practices not meeting their actions.
- m. Provide an up to date placement visit tracker.
- n. Update placement letters sent to training practices and students.

Standard 7 – Self evaluation and reporting

AOs and HEIs must evaluate the delivery of a licence to practise qualification across all approved Centres and provide a report to the RCVS annually or when otherwise required to do so.

7.1 The programme Periodic Self Review was submitted prior to the accreditation event and the panel felt that this provided a comprehensive overview, however, it was noted that the document contained no actions for improvements to the programme.

7.2 Actions and programme improvements were detailed within the Annual Quality Improvement Report (AQIR), and it was clear to see that feedback was acted upon where the situation was reasonable.

7.3 The RVC provides the RCVS with an annual self-assessment report in line with RCVS requirements.

Suggestions

None

Actions

- b. Submit annual self-evaluation report in line with RCVS requirements, once provided by RCVS.

Higher Education Institute Response

Action Plan Response from RVC, Updated (date)

STANDARD 2 - Sustainability						
Category	Number	Action/Suggestion	AO/HEI response and evidence	Action by whom	Date for resolution	RCVS response
Suggestion	a.					
Action	a.					

STANDARD 3 – Qualification design and delivery						
Category	Number	Action/Suggestion	AO/HEI response and evidence	Action by whom	Date for resolution	RCVS response
Suggestion	a.					
Action	a.					

STANDARD 4 – Qualification quality management						
Category	Number	Action/Suggestion	AO/HEI response and evidence	Action by whom	Date for resolution	RCVS response
Suggestion	a.					
Action	a.					

STANDARD 5 – Assessment						
Category	Number	Action/Suggestion	AO/HEI response and evidence	Action by whom	Date for resolution	RCVS response
Suggestion	a.					
Action	a.					

STANDARD 6 – Centre approval and quality assurance

Category	Number	Action/Suggestion	AO/HEI response and evidence	Action by whom	Date for resolution	RCVS response
Suggestion	a.					
Action	a.					

STANDARD 7 – Self-evaluation and reporting

Category	Number	Action/Suggestion	AO/HEI response and evidence	Action by whom	Date for resolution	RCVS response
Suggestion	a.					
Action	a.					