

University of Central Lancashire
Certificate in Advanced Veterinary Nursing
Accreditation Visit

Myerscough College

April 2022

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

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List of Panel Members

Gillian Coughlan – Educator Representative

Shirley Gibbins RVN – RCVS Qualifications Manager (Chair)

Carol Hicks RVN – Employer Representative

Carla Husband RVN – Student Representative

Key Staff met

Claire Bloor RVN – Head of Area for Veterinary Nursing and Farriery

Helen Clarke MRCVS – Senior Lecturer in Veterinary Nursing

Zulakha Desai – Assistant Principal of Higher Education

Kirsty Edgley RVN – FE Assistant Head of Veterinary Nursing

Bryan Jones – UCLAN representative & Head of School for the School of Sport and Health Sciences

Rachael Shepherd RVN – HE Assistant Head of Veterinary Nursing

Summary of the Panel's findings

- University of Central Lancashire (UCLan) was visited on 28 April 2022 at the Myerscough College campus. The following programmes were under accreditation review:

Cert AVN (Surgical Nursing Care)
Cert AVN (Anaesthesia & Analgesia)

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

The team found the following:

- UCLan/Myerscough is to be **commended** for the excellent facilities and resources available to students, with a clear ongoing commitment for development of advanced veterinary nursing provision.
- The Myerscough delivery and leadership teams are to be commended for their collaborative and supportive approach to delivery, with an evident team ethos and a definite desire for ongoing professional development.
- UCLan/Myerscough is to be commended for its inclusive approach to advanced veterinary nursing provision, whilst also promoting unique developmental areas for Registered Veterinary Nurses.
- UCLan/Myerscough is to be commended for a thorough and well evidenced application and supporting evidence in preparation for the accreditation.
- Areas for further review included consideration of appropriate assessment methodologies and evaluation of the planned assessment scheduling.

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

Awarding University or Organisation and details of the proposed qualification.

Requirements	Details
Name of organisation awarding the Certificate	University of Central Lancashire
Main address and contact details for the above organisation	Preston PR1 2HE
Name of Principal or Chief Executive Officer	UCLan: Bryan Jones University Centre Myerscough: Alison Robinson
Name of Programme Lead	Claire Bloor RVN
Proposed programme(s) title:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cert AVN (Surgical Nursing Care) • Cert AVN (Anaesthesia & Analgesia)
Address and contact details of proposed site/s for delivery of Certificate	Myerscough College St Michael's Road Preston PR3 0RY
Pattern of delivery	Part-time blended learning over one academic year
Intakes and student numbers	One intake per year, with approximately 8 students per designation initially

Standard 2 – Sustainability

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

Standard met		
Accredited Education Institutions must:		
Requirements	Met	Not Met
<p>Provide evidence that there is adequate market demand for the proposed qualification(s).</p> <p><i>Evidence reviewed:</i> <i>UCLan Myerscough Cert AVN Market Research Updated Jan 2021</i></p> <p>Ongoing market research has been carried out. Market research for the previous two certificates proved accurate with predicted and final cohort numbers in sync, thus the programme team are confident in the approach and its ability to recruit.</p>	✓	
<p>Clearly report finances and budget specific to the qualification leading to award of the RCVS Certificate in Advanced Veterinary Nursing.</p> <p><i>Evidence reviewed:</i> <i>HE Course Costing – Cert AVN Update MARCH 2022</i> <i>Myerscough College Financial Statements July 2020</i> <i>UCLan Financial Statements July 2021</i></p> <p>Facilities are excellent and there is a clear commitment to finance and resources for the ongoing support of the proposed programmes.</p>	✓	
<p>Proactively identify and act on areas for improvement, regularly measuring programme performance and outcomes.</p> <p><i>Evidence reviewed:</i> <i>2020-21 HE Course Report - Veterinary Nursing</i> <i>EE Report VN 2020 2021</i> <i>VN2034 Module Review 2020 2021</i> <i>VN2035 Module Review 2020 2021</i> <i>VN3007 Module Review 2020 2021</i> <i>VN3010 Module Review 2020</i> <i>Dip HE CVN 2019 Intake SSLM Semester 1 Year 2 2020-21</i> <i>Dip HE CVN 2019 Intake SSLM Semester 1 Year 2 2020</i> <i>Dip HE CVN 2019 Intake Year 2 CT November 2020 With Feedback</i> <i>Dip HE CVN 2019 Intake Year 2 CT January 2021 With Feedback</i></p> <p>There is without doubt regular detailed feedback sought. Plans are in place to act on the recently collated existing Certificate feedback comments.</p>	✓	

<p>It is suggested that a template be devised following review of the External Examiner (EE)/External Adviser (EA) reports for specificity. It is currently unclear which programme EE/EA comments refer to, which did cause some confusion. UCLan appreciated the feedback and will consider amendments to the reporting process.</p>		
<p>Conclusion: Market research has been carried out, with the team able to justify and rationalise its place in the current market. There is clear financial backing for both of the proposed Certificates, with sensible contingencies in place for expected initial lower numbers, but conversely to cope with larger numbers.</p>		
<p>Suggestions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Review EE/EA reports for specificity. <p>Actions: None</p>		

Standard 3 – Curricula and assessment

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

Standard met		
Accredited Education Institutions must ensure:		
Requirements	Met	Not Met
<p>Curricula to remain relevant in respect of contemporary veterinary nursing.</p> <p><i>Evidence reviewed:</i> <i>Module descriptors & SOW for VN3022, VN3021, VN3025, VN3026</i></p> <p>All module descriptors are of an expected level for Cert AVN qualifications with appropriate learning outcomes (LOs). However, the schemes of work (SOW) evidenced for this standard appeared to indicate a more basic level of knowledge and understanding for students to achieve. The panel suggested a substantial portion of the suggested SOW can be given as pre-reading to ensure all enrolled students, regardless of entry qualification, be of an equal baseline assumed knowledge. The pre-reading will afford lecturers and students more time to focus on the advanced elements of the modules, which the panel felt to be a more appropriate approach for this advanced level of qualification. UCLan is to be commended on the inclusion of Schedule 3 tasks in the surgical nursing pathway, which will be a unique selling point (USP) of the programme. UCLan and the delivery team are to be commended on the use of guest lecturers and the dedication to enhancement of the curricula.</p> <p>The college requires the practice to provide a letter of supporting confirming that students will have access to the types of cases required for the respective pathways. If the student is struggling, there is an opportunity for secondment. This, in turn, will ensure that the advanced nature of the programmes can be evaluated in a practical setting.</p>	✓	
<p>Curricula and assessment weigh theory and practice learning appropriately to the programme.</p> <p><i>Evidence reviewed:</i> <i>Module descriptors, Assessment schedules & SOW for VN3022, VN3021, VN3025, VN3026</i> <i>Campus facilities tour & staff presentation</i></p> <p>Students can access in person study days throughout the course. During these days, there is an opportunity for students to learn practical skills and embed their knowledge.</p>	✓	

<p>Students will receive a “practical tool kit” for home-use to practise Schedule 3 surgical tasks while undertaking the surgical programme. A considerable amount of capital and staff foresight has been invested to allow students every opportunity to advance their skills while on this programme.</p>		
<p>A range of appropriate assessments are delivered, ensuring the intended learning outcomes are fully and suitably assessed.</p> <p><i>Evidence reviewed:</i> <i>Module descriptors & example assessment briefs for VN3022, VN3021, VN3025, VN3026</i> <i>Campus tour of lab facilities</i></p> <p>The suggested assessment methodologies include some coursework which is standard across most degree programmes, such as assignments and written exams. The panel were in agreement that short answer question exam papers will not assess the LOs as they are written currently, thus it was suggested that the team consider options to best assess “debate”/”discuss” type LOs, e.g. peer reviewed journal articles provided prior to the exam.</p> <p>The learners will potentially be full-time employees, many of whom may also have a caring obligation. The assessments, as they are currently designed, are workload heavy with no benefit other than course fulfilment. There is a professional expectation of an RVN with a CertAVN to advance themselves and the profession. The use of innovative assignment briefs where the end product would be publishable or be able to be presented at a conference in the form of a PowerPoint or poster with little to no extra effort would inspire and encourage the students and graduates to contribute to, and lead the way in, the veterinary nursing profession through evidence-based research. Encompassing this sort of assessment methodology would be another USP for this course. However, the practical element is currently eligible for compensation, which raises concern regarding a student’s successful achievement of a Schedule 3 based programme, with the potential of not having achieved the practical requirement. The panel unanimously agreed that this should be a non-compensatable assessment, which the University was in agreement with.</p> <p>Currently only the surgical pathway has a practical element to the assessment methodologies. The delivery personnel confirmed that they felt a similar approach was not appropriate for the anaesthesia pathway. The panel suggested a presentation element or poster element to the case report, as this also allows the students an opportunity for presenting at a conference and adding to the evidence base.</p>		✓
<p>Curricula are developed and evaluated by suitably experienced and qualified educators and/or practitioners who are accountable for ensuring the curriculum incorporates relevant programme outcomes.</p>	✓	

<p><i>Evidence reviewed:</i> <i>CPD records</i></p> <p>Staff are to be commended on the ongoing effort and passion they have demonstrated in the development of the programmes and their teaching. Evidence provided demonstrated improved CPD records from previous applications and opportunities given to advance their knowledge in their chosen fields. UCLan is to be commended on its dedication to staff development, which in turn allows for the development of the advanced curricula. The panel questioned the responsibility of anaesthesia pathway Module Leads, but it was explained that each individual oversees the two separate aspects, anaesthesia and analgesia. It was clear that the delivery team have a collegiate approach to teaching and assessment and provide any necessary assistance when required.</p>		
<p>Curricula are structured and sequenced to enable students to manage their theory and practice learning experience effectively.</p> <p><i>Evidence reviewed:</i> <i>Assessment schedules & SOW for VN3022, VN3021, VN3025, VN3026</i> <i>Student feedback</i></p> <p>Current student feedback indicated that students felt the assignments were too close together. This feedback is already being considered by the delivery team; an updated assessment timetable is required in order to demonstrate the planned approach to ease workload burden.</p>		✓
<p>Moderation processes are in place.</p> <p><i>Evidence reviewed:</i> <i>UCLan moderation policies & procedures</i></p> <p>The evidence provided clearly indicated that the moderation policies and procedures are fit for purpose and are implemented appropriately.</p>	✓	
<p>Assessment and moderation is fair, reliable and valid.</p> <p><i>Evidence reviewed:</i> <i>Example Assessment briefs for VN3022, VN3021, VN3025, VN3026</i> <i>CertAvn course feedback</i> <i>Tour of lab including a practical surgical exam set up</i> <i>UcLan Assessment Handbook & Marking Guidelines including specific disabilities</i></p> <p>Example assessments were looked at by the panel, and they showed an extensive amount of feedback provided by the programme team. It was suggested that this type of feedback is unsustainable for staff, particularly if the cohorts increase in size. Suggestions were made to consider the mechanisms of feedback, including verbal dictation, ensuring they are fair for all students but equally don't overburden the personnel marking the assignments. It was also discussed that there is a</p>	✓	

<p>different policy for providing feedback for students with specific learning needs. Staff explained that all students are still given the same opportunity to access in-person feedback if necessary.</p> <p>Whilst the practical element of the assessment for the surgical pathway is to be commended, the programme team had planned on running a variety of practical assessments within a cohort, i.e. different tasks for different students. The panel suggested that this may raise an appeal concern if the tasks are not of sufficient parity. The programme team may, therefore, wish to consider running the same practical assessment for all students within a cohort.</p>		
<p>Adjustments are provided in accordance with relevant equalities and human rights legislation for all assessments.</p> <p><i>Evidence reviewed:</i> <i>UCLan Assessment Handbook & Marking Guidelines including specific disabilities</i></p> <p>The evidence provided clearly indicated that this requirement is met.</p>	✓	
<p>The required facilities and resources are in place for the delivery and assessment of the curricula.</p> <p><i>Evidence reviewed:</i> <i>Facility video tour and equipment viewed during the tour on day of visitation</i></p> <p>The team are to be commended on the access students have to the resources and facilities on campus. The support from the college is evident with the investment into the Veterinary Nursing Centre and the models the students have access to. The team go out of their way to implement innovative teaching methodologies especially in relation to Schedule 3 tasks. The panel were impressed by the financial dedication that both UCLan and Myerscough have demonstrated to ensuring the running and training of nurses on these courses and all other nursing courses at Myerscough. Huge capital investment has been made into the library facilities, nursing technician role, interactive whiteboards and classroom interactive lesson recording to allow for blended learning across the campus.</p>	✓	
<p>Curricula and assessments are reviewed by an External Examiner who has sufficient standing, credibility and a breadth of experience within the discipline.</p> <p><i>Evidence reviewed:</i> <i>UCLan Role of the External Examiner</i></p> <p>The college are in the process of recruiting an EE, as their current EE is coming to the end of their term. Discussions with suitable replacements are ongoing with the suggestion of splitting the role. The panel agreed that this appeared to be a sensible approach, considering the number of courses accredited for delivery.</p>		✓

Conclusion:

The delivery team are to be commended on their continued effort for advancement of veterinary nurses and the profession. The financial dedication from the university and the college is evident and the students have access to incredible facilities on site, with investments made to the technology on offer for blended learning. The pathways on offer for the Cert AVN provision have the ability to be highly competitive in the marketplace, especially with the USP aspects.

Adjustments to the schemes of work, with the addition of pre-reading, will allow for the development of knowledge depth, with a focus on the more advanced nature of the provision. Review of the assessments is also needed, which in turn, could afford students the opportunity to publish their work at the end of the programme. These changes will ensure graduates of these programmes will be at the forefront of, and actively participating in, evidence-based advancement in the Veterinary Nursing profession.

Suggestions:

- a. Make a portion of each module pre-reading during enrolment to allow all students to get to an assumed baseline level of knowledge before the advanced nature of the modules begin.
- b. Review word count and assessment methodologies to consider making the assignments ready for publication. To add a presentation/poster element to the anaesthesia case report examination.
- c. Look at mechanisms of feedback to make the amount of feedback consistent and fair and prevent burnout for staff marking.
- d. Consider the parity of practical assessments and reliability of assessing different skills eg Schedule 3 surgical task.

Actions:

- a. Review assessment methodologies to ensure the LOs are fully and appropriately assessed.
- b. Compensation/cumulative grading to be removed in all modules, particularly those with practical elements.
- c. Look at assignment/examination timetable to stagger deadlines.
- d. Recruit an external examiner.

Standard 4 – Educators and assessors

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

Standard met		
Accredited Education Institutions must ensure educators and assessors:		
Requirements	Met	Not Met
<p>Are appropriately qualified and experienced and always act as professional role models.</p> <p><i>Evidence reviewed:</i> <i>CV and CPD records</i></p> <p>There is clear improvement to the submission and compliance of CPD records since previous applications. There has been significant financial and time investment to ensure alleviation of previous concerns.</p>	✓	
<p>Receive relevant induction, ongoing support, education and training.</p> <p><i>Evidence reviewed:</i> <i>Myerscough New Tutor Induction</i> <i>Myerscough CPD Policy and Procedure</i></p> <p>Whilst CPD improvements are evident, it is suggested that both certificates will require ongoing and accurate knowledge of practice facilities, resources and case load. Upskilling in a variety of practices as COVID restrictions permit would be advantageous.</p>	✓	
<p>Have supported time and resources to enable them to fulfil their roles in addition to other professional responsibilities.</p> <p><i>Evidence reviewed:</i> <i>VN Staff Availability and Teaching Hours</i></p> <p>Educators felt very well supported by their line manager and the senior leadership team. A close and supportive 'team ethos' was evident, but this did also indicate a heavy workload, in part due to the 'above and beyond' nature of several areas of student support. Suggestions made within Standard 3 would allow some time reprieve.</p> <p>The panel identified action points within departmental meetings relating to attainment of Advance HE Fellow status, which was proving challenging due to time commitments. This has already been recognised by the senior leadership team and</p>	✓	

<p>additional measures have been put into place to make achievement more accessible.</p>		
<p>Receive and act upon constructive feedback from students and the people they engage with to enhance the effectiveness of their teaching, supervision and assessment.</p> <p><i>Evidence reviewed:</i> <i>HE course report / SSLM minutes</i> <i>Module reviews</i> <i>Course tutorials</i></p> <p>Comprehensive questionnaires have been developed for the two already accredited Certificates. Clear plans are in place to act on feedback comments and suggestions and also to implement these across to the two new certificates.</p> <p>The Myerscough / UCLAN panel were very receptive to RCVS panel questions, which should be commended.</p>	✓	
<p>Appropriately share and use evidence to make decisions on student assessment and progression.</p> <p><i>Evidence reviewed:</i> <i>Briefing on the Operation of Module Assessment Boards</i> <i>Briefing on the Operation of Course Assessment Boards</i></p> <p>A variety of mechanisms are in place to demonstrate that evidence is shared and used appropriately.</p>	✓	
<p>Conclusion:</p> <p>The financial investment, as well as the enthusiasm and commitment from the delivery personnel, to support CPD and additional training should be commended.</p> <p>All Myerscough and UCLAN panel members were receptive to RCVS comments and questions, demonstrating a team of individuals with a common goal of wanting to create and achieve advanced veterinary nursing provision at the forefront of the industry.</p> <p>The management explanation of staff structure highlighted clear contingency plans, and this was echoed by positive and encouraging educator interviews.</p>		
<p>Suggestions:</p> <p>a. Consider CPD/upskilling in a variety of practices.</p>		

Actions:

None