

University of Glasgow
Certificate in Advanced Veterinary Nursing
Accreditation Visit

2 – 3 April 2025

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

Accreditation Outcome for University of Glasgow

University of Glasgow submitted an application for accreditation of the following programme.

Post Graduate Certificate Advanced Practice in Veterinary Nursing

Following the meeting of Veterinary Nurse Education Committee on 26 June 2025, University of Glasgow has been awarded full accreditation for five years status. This decision reflects the compliance of the programme against the RCVS Standards Framework for Veterinary Nurse Education and Training. University of Glasgow is next due for re-accreditation in academic year 2029/30, however, this may change subject to quality monitoring.

Classification of Accreditations

Provisional accreditation is granted for all AEIs with new qualifications that have made substantial progress towards meeting the accreditation standards. Once the first cohort of students completes the qualification, VNEC will be presented with all QM reports undertaken and consider the AEI for full accreditation. Students undertaking provisionally accredited qualifications may be required to pass the RCVS pre-registration examinations. Provisional accreditation will not normally be extended for more than two years, following the first cohort's completion. Provisionally accredited programmes are automatically deemed to be high-risk and will be audited accordingly.

Full accreditation for 5 years is given to qualifications that meet, or exceed, all the accreditation standards. Where a Provisionally Accredited programme has been awarded Full Accreditation, this will be for the remainder of the 5-year cycle. The RCVS will undertake a full programme review before the end of the agreed accreditation period.

Full accreditation for a shorter period is applied where deficiencies are identified in an existing programme; accreditation will be subject to the deficiencies being addressed within a set period. The RCVS will undertake a full programme review before the end of the agreed accreditation period.

Probationary accreditation is applied where a fully accredited programme is deficient in its resources or procedures and has failed to meet the RCVS Standards. Students may be required to pass the RCVS pre-registration examinations, as well as all qualification requirements, in order to be deemed competent in the RCVS Day One Competences and Skills. This will be at the discretion of VNEC and will be considered on a case-by-case basis.

Terminal accreditation is instigated where a programme is significantly non-compliant with the standards and has been unable to address the concerns within a timely manner. Students completing a programme which is assigned terminal accreditation may be required to pass the RCVS pre-registration examinations, as well as all qualification requirements. VNEC will communicate additional conditions to the AEI as required, depending on the rationale for the decision being taken. The programme will move into an exit strategy and specific details and evidence will be requested by the

Veterinary Nursing Department to maintain oversight whilst the final students complete the programme. The provision is quality monitored in accordance with a high-risk provider.

Voluntary Terminal Accreditation is applied where a programme has chosen to cease provision; students may be required to pass the RCVS pre-registration examinations dependent upon the rationale for the programme closure. Students are still required to complete all qualification requirements. The programme will move into an exit strategy and specific details and evidence will be requested by the Veterinary Nursing Department to maintain oversight whilst the final students complete the programme.

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List of Panel Members

Emma Anscombe-Skirrow RVN – Chair

Heather Blair RVN – Student Representative

Helen Farrant RVN – Employer Representative

Abigayle Gomez RVN – RCVS Senior Qualifications Officer

Hilary Orpet RVN – Educator Representative

RCVS Observers

Tori Thornton RVN – RCVS Qualifications Assessor

Key Staff met

Prof Christopher Loughrey FRCVS – Head of School (BOHVM*)

Prof Jennifer Hammond MRCVS – Deputy Head of School (BOHVM)

Laura Baggley –Postgraduate Taught Programme Manager (MVLS Graduate School*)

Jenna Wright – Postgraduate Taught Academic Governance Manager (MVLS Graduate School)

Samantha Fontaine RVN – APVN Programme Lead and Course Lead (VETMED5056)

Lissann Wolfe RVN – APVN Deputy Programme Lead

Dr Mary Fraser FRCVS – Course Lead (VETMED4023)

Pamela Mosedale FRCVS – Co- Course Lead (VETMED5055)

Helen Silver-MacMahon RVN – Co-Course Lead (VETMED5055)

Helen Cartlidge RVN – APVN Programme External Examiner

Angharad Davies – APVN Programme Administrator (MVLS Graduate School)

Jenny Crow – Digital Education Team Manager (MVLS Graduate School)

Wendy McAllan – Learning Technology Specialist (MVLS Graduate School)

Henry Watson – Senior Finance Analyst (College of MVLS Finance)

Maurice Reimann – Student Support Officer

Executive summary of the Panel's findings

- University of Glasgow was visited on 02 April 2025. The following programme was under accreditation review:

Post Graduate Certificate Advanced Practice in Veterinary Nursing

- 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 programme constitutes the first phase of the MSc pathway at the University.

The team found the following:

- University of Glasgow is to be **commended** for the development of a non-clinical post-registration qualification that enhances the veterinary nurse profession and has a range of both clinical and non-clinical applications relevant to a variety of practice-based roles.
- The support from the Programme Lead and the dedicated digital education team provides a positive learning experience to students and allows the flexible approach to study alongside full-time work commitments.
- The passion and dedication of the team in relation to the continuous improvement and progression of the veterinary nurse profession was evident throughout the event.

Areas for further review included:

- The need to update and standardise some documentation in line with university procedures.
- Consideration of how to consistently capture student feedback and promote graduate achievements in a more formal way to benefit future recruitment.

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 Glasgow
Main address and contact details for the above organisation	University Avenue Glasgow G12 8QQ
Name of Principal or Chief Executive Officer	Prof. Cheryl A. Woolhead Dean of Postgraduate Teaching College of Medical, Veterinary and Life Sciences University of Glasgow
Name of Programme Lead	Samantha Fontaine RVN
Proposed programme(s) title:	Postgraduate Certificate Advanced Practice in Veterinary Nursing
Address and contact details of proposed site/s for delivery of Certificate	Online distance learning
Pattern of delivery	Online distance learning
Intakes and student numbers	One intake per academic year in September. Average student number per year: 10

Standard 1 – 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	Part Met	Not Met
1.1	<p>Curricula to remain relevant in respect of contemporary veterinary nursing.</p> <p><i>Evidence reviewed:</i></p> <p><i>Curriculum Framework Mapping</i></p> <p><i>Schemes of Work and Assessment Plans</i></p> <p><i>Curriculum Documents</i></p> <p><i>Course Information Documents</i></p> <p><i>Programme Information Document</i></p> <p>The curricula for the Advanced Practice Veterinary Nursing (APVN) programme are reviewed annually and are relevant to the professional development of veterinary nurses.</p> <p>There were several inconsistencies in the student facing paperwork, such as the assessment briefs and the intended learning outcomes in the courses. Standardising the format will enhance consistency for students across all three courses.</p>	✓		
1.2	<p>Curricula and assessment weigh theory and practice learning appropriately to the programme.</p> <p><i>Evidence reviewed:</i></p> <p><i>Schemes of Work and Assessment Plans</i></p> <p><i>Course Information Documents</i></p> <p><i>Timetable</i></p> <p><i>Assessment Schedule</i></p> <p><i>Assessment Matrix</i></p> <p><i>Online Learning Platform</i></p> <p>The content and subsequent assessment of the modules prepare the students for developing a variety of professional skills that are applicable to a range of roles that veterinary nurses undertake. This was clearly evidenced by the students interviewed in that they have utilised their skills in a variety of ways in their practices.</p>	✓		

1.3	<p>A range of appropriate assessments are delivered, ensuring the intended learning outcomes are fully and suitably assessed.</p> <p><i>Evidence reviewed:</i></p> <p><i>Assessment Strategies and Rationale</i></p> <p><i>Example Assessments</i></p> <p><i>Programme Specification</i></p> <p><i>Course Specifications</i></p> <p><i>Course Information Documents</i></p> <p><i>Assessment Matrix</i></p> <p>Assessments within the course include a variety of methods, such as written assignments, discussion forums, group activities, and presentations. These assessment types have been carefully designed to align with the current intended learning outcomes, ensuring that students can effectively demonstrate their knowledge, skills, and competences. However, with the proposed amendments to the individual courses it will be necessary to review and confirm that the new intended learning outcomes are appropriately assessed. This process may involve evaluating whether the existing assessment methods remain suitable or if adjustments are needed to ensure a comprehensive and fair evaluation of student learning. The University of Glasgow will need to confirm whether changes need to be implemented, and if so, a further validation would be required.</p>		✓	
1.4	<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></p> <p><i>CV and CPD Records</i></p> <p><i>Programme Information Document</i></p> <p><i>Overview of Academic Quality Framework</i></p> <p><i>APVN Quality Assurance and Enhancement</i></p> <p><i>Marking Criteria and Rubrics</i></p> <p>The programme has appropriately qualified core staff who have designed and developed the course. Specific staff with subject matter expertise have been recruited on a contract basis to lead on the relevant courses. Continuing Professional Development (CPD) and Curriculum Vitae (CV) records were provided for the teaching team to evidence their subject matter expertise in specific areas.</p>	✓		
1.5	<p>Curricula are structured and sequenced to enable students to manage their theory and practice learning experience effectively.</p> <p><i>Evidence reviewed:</i></p> <p><i>Schemes of Work</i></p>	✓		

	<p><i>Online Learning Platform</i> <i>Course Information Documents</i> <i>Assessment Schedule</i> <i>Assessment Matrix</i></p> <p>The course content is released on a weekly basis, providing learners with the opportunity to engage with the material at the same time as their peers and progress consistently towards completion. This approach supports more synchronous discussions in the forums and helps students manage their time effectively. The students reported they were supported to be able to 'catch up' if they fell behind at any stage. They felt that perhaps if some pre-reading was provided for the following week that would be useful to help prepare if they had time.</p>			
1.6	<p>Moderation processes are in place.</p> <p><i>Evidence reviewed:</i> <i>Assessment Matrix</i> <i>Academic Regulations</i> <i>Programme Information Document</i> <i>Role of the External Examiner</i> <i>External Examiner Report</i> <i>Moderation Process Example</i></p> <p>Evidence of moderation was provided and the process of agreeing marks was explained. The team has been stable over the last few years and although first and second marking demonstrates close alignment, the recent weighting methods in marking have provided further standardisation of marking.</p>	✓		
1.7	<p>Assessment and moderation is fair, reliable and valid.</p> <p><i>Evidence reviewed:</i> <i>Academic Regulations</i> <i>Programme Information Document</i> <i>External Examiner Report</i> <i>Schemes of Work</i> <i>Course Information Documents</i> <i>Internal Examiner and Assessor Procedure</i> <i>Fitness to Study Procedure</i></p> <p>Evidence provided demonstrated that the assessment and moderation processes meet the requirements for this standard. Further discussion indicated that the University of Glasgow has established guidance on the use of Artificial Intelligence (AI) and was looking into methods of assessment that were not impacted by the use of AI. Currently the programme has assessments that include elements of personal</p>	✓		

	reflection, and also presentations, which are less likely to be affected by the use of AI. A new Academic Misconduct Committee has been created to review referred pieces of work.			
1.8	<p>Adjustments are provided in accordance with relevant equalities and human rights legislation for all assessments.</p> <p><i>Evidence reviewed:</i> <i>Equality and Diversity Policy</i> <i>Disability Policy</i> <i>Health and Wellbeing Policy</i> <i>Academic Appeals Procedure</i> <i>Fitness to Study Procedure</i> <i>Carers Policy</i></p> <p>There is clear support for the students on the course and this was reiterated by the students themselves. Some examples include flexibility in submission times provided to students with the introduction of an automatic extension of five days, as well as the 'Good Cause' process for extension where students were required to provide additional evidence. The students are able to interrupt their studies as required and the students reported this was invaluable to them, knowing they had support to return to studies at a later date. The team deserves recognition for their support of the students and their acknowledgment of the challenges of balancing full-time work with additional study.</p> <p>It was noted that the Equality and Diversity Policy, dated 2019, states a review cycle of every three years, while the Health and Wellbeing Policy is dated 2014. Given these dates, it is recommended that all policies be reviewed to ensure they remain current and aligned with institutional requirements and processes for reviewing.</p>		✓	
1.9	<p>The required facilities and resources are in place for the delivery and assessment of the curricula.</p> <p><i>Evidence reviewed:</i> <i>Computer Requirements for Studying Online</i> <i>Library Resources</i> <i>Online Learning Platform</i></p> <p>The learning materials are presented via a virtual learning environment and have been recently standardised in format across all courses. There is a dedicated digital learning team to support the teaching team in delivering the content. A weekly reading list is provided for students and updated regularly. Students are provided with access to the required software, such as Microsoft 365 and Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS).</p>	✓		

1.10	<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>External Examiner CV</i> <i>External Examiner CPD Record</i> <i>External Examiner Guidance</i> <i>External Examiner Reports</i></p> <p>The External Examiner covers all three years of the MSc programme which includes the APVN. This ensures they have an overall view but maintain effective oversight of the individual courses. CV and CPD records indicate they are a suitable candidate for this role.</p>	✓		
<p>Conclusion:</p> <p>This standard has been met.</p> <p>The curriculum and assessments for this programme are thoughtfully designed, developed, delivered, and evaluated to ensure candidates achieve the RCVS Certificate in Advanced Veterinary Nursing. Additionally, the programme provides a pathway for Registered Veterinary Nurses to advance to an MSc-level qualification.</p>				
<p>Commendations:</p> <p>Offering a post-registration qualification designed to enhance the professional skills of registered veterinary nurses, equipping them for diverse roles including quality improvement, leadership, and research within the profession. Students indicated they were able to utilise the skills attained in the programme to improve practice and progress to further study.</p> <p>The support for students and the flexible approach allows students from a variety of backgrounds and in full time work to commit to the course.</p> <p>The dedicated digital education support team facilitate the effective online learning delivery and support the course team well.</p> <p>Suggestions:</p> <p>1.1 – Ensure consistency in all student facing paperwork, such as course overviews and assignment briefs.</p> <p>Actions:</p> <p>1.3 – Provide confirmation of validation to evidence that the updated intended learning outcomes are fully and suitably assessed.</p>				

1.8 – Policies updated in line with university procedures should be provided in relation to equality and diversity.

Standard 2 – 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	Part Met	Not Met
<p>2.1 Are appropriately qualified and experienced and always act as professional role models.</p> <p><i>Evidence reviewed:</i> <i>Staff CVs</i> <i>Staff CPD Records</i></p> <p>The team are appropriately qualified and experienced in the areas that they are required to teach. The evidence demonstrates subject matter expertise, with extensive postgraduate qualifications and good standing within the industry. The passion and dedication of the team in the continuous improvement and progression of the veterinary nursing profession is evident throughout. Members of the permanent team hold teaching qualifications, and they offer support to contractual lecturers, alongside informal pedagogical training and courses offered by the University.</p>	✓		
<p>2.2 Receive relevant induction, ongoing support, education and training.</p> <p><i>Evidence reviewed:</i> <i>Mentor Programme</i></p> <p>The induction process is robust, and team members report that this is accessible and timely.</p> <p>The course delivery team are fully supported by the Programme Lead and benefit from the support consistently provided to them throughout each course delivery period. Training opportunities in their role are actively promoted and provided by the University, in relation to both education and research.</p>	✓		

2.3	<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>CPD Policy</i> <i>Staff CVs</i> <i>APVN Staff Time Allocation</i></p> <p>There is flexibility to reallocate workload across team members, with the option of utilising other staff in the university, for example tutors on the Bachelor of Veterinary Medicine and Surgery course and clinical nurses within the university hospital. Consideration is given to succession plans and recent examples were shared of dividing workloads where necessary.</p> <p>The APVN staff acknowledged peaks and troughs of workload across the academic year and feel that the allocation indicated adequate and realistic expectations for the work involved.</p>	✓		
2.4	<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>Overview of Academic Quality Framework</i> <i>Evaluation of Academic Practice</i> <i>Stakeholder Consultation</i> <i>External Examiner Report</i> <i>Course Evaluation</i></p> <p>The Programme Lead recognises that obtaining feedback from graduates is an area of weakness, especially with alumni, and is actively encouraging them to engage in formal feedback processes.</p> <p>There are several methods of feedback collection, including surveys, via student representatives and conversations with staff, so students have sufficient opportunity to feed back continuously throughout their study.</p> <p>The course team are committed to encouraging students to provide feedback and act on this information when it is available and feasible.</p> <p>The university has also liaised with employers and other stakeholders to elicit feedback, which has been positive and encouraging.</p> <p>Students would change little about the course and as a result actively recommend the programme to peers and colleagues. The relatively low student feedback rate could be attributed to the students' contentment with the way that the course is run and the content delivery.</p>	✓		
2.5	<p>Appropriately share and use evidence to make decisions on student assessment and progression.</p>	✓		

	<p><i>Evidence reviewed:</i> <i>Internal Verification Forms</i> <i>External Examiner Report</i> <i>Programme Rationale</i></p> <p>Progression boards sit twice per academic year to ratify grades and confirm progression. Assignments and coursework are double marked where appropriate, and a third marker is used where necessary.</p> <p>The External Examiner provides feedback on individual components of the programme, and this extends beyond the APVN component, with oversight of the full MSc, which affords continuity.</p>			
<p>Conclusion:</p> <p>This standard has been met.</p> <p>The theory delivery and assessments are facilitated effectively and appropriately by qualified and experienced professionals. Both the contractual and permanent members are extensively supported by the Programme Lead, and work/time allocation is recognised, ensuring that workload complements other individual external commitments.</p>				
<p>Commendations:</p> <p>An excellent support network for both staff and students, with a flexible approach to student learning and development of course leaders.</p> <p>The passion and dedication of the team in relation to the continuous improvement and progression of the veterinary nursing profession, with a strong and consistent work ethos and 'team' support established and apparent during individual panel meetings.</p> <p>Suggestions:</p> <p>2.4 - Consider how informal feedback from the students can be captured, recorded, and evidenced to assist with the course development, promotion, and longevity.</p> <p>Actions:</p> <p>None.</p>				

Standard 3 – 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	Part Met	Not Met
3.1	<p>Provide evidence that there is adequate market demand for the proposed qualification(s).</p> <p><i>Evidence reviewed:</i></p> <p><i>Admissions Data</i></p> <p><i>Marketing Strategy</i></p> <p>Applications for the programme were shown to be adequate and stable. It is apparent that it is challenging to fill postgraduate courses for veterinary nurses due to funding and/or awareness that these courses are available, thus, the university is collaborating with other higher education providers through the AVN Educator Network to continue discussions as to how educators can work to address this going forward. Clarity relating to the published entry criteria should be considered to fully reflect the role of the RCVS in this process, i.e. to clarify that it is possible to complete the qualification without being RCVS registered, but students must be registered with the RCVS, or on a comparable register in their home nation, to gain the Certificate in Advanced Veterinary Nursing award.</p> <p>Marketing strategies could be further developed to ensure these remain up to date and offer prospective students the current details of the programme. Positive engagement from social media and YouTube posts has been reported.</p>	✓		
3.2	<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></p> <p><i>Budget Plan</i></p> <p><i>School Financial Statement</i></p> <p><i>Initial Market Assessment</i></p> <p>The Finance Business Partner supports the academic team with financial planning and management. Discussions indicate that the cohort size consistently exceeds the minimum financially viable number by 50% or</p>	✓		

	<p>more. It is anticipated that the APVN will continue to be financially viable for the university over the next five years and beyond.</p> <p>Feedback from employers was positive when initial market assessment was carried out and this remains the case for the recent review undertaken.</p>			
3.3	<p>Proactively identify and act on areas for improvement, regularly measuring programme performance and outcomes.</p> <p><i>Evidence reviewed:</i></p> <p><i>External Academic Consultation</i></p> <p><i>Employer Consultation</i></p> <p><i>Review of Programme Performance</i></p> <p><i>Course Evaluation</i></p> <p><i>Admissions Data</i></p> <p><i>Graduate Testimonials</i></p> <p><i>Graduate Achievements</i></p> <p>The university has consulted and engaged with employers, the external examiner, and utilised feedback to drive improvement within the programme. The external examiner has made recommendations which have been acted on in a timely fashion.</p> <p>Admissions data provides evidence of consistent and adequate applications and conversions to support the continuation of delivery. Graduate development and application of learning are reported to have exceeded employer expectations, and the course is evidently highly relevant for nurses in practice.</p> <p>The team are committed to continual improvement both through informal discussions to review areas for progress, at the end of each cohort completion, and annually in the forward planning meetings. Actions and updates are disseminated throughout the course via a variety of methods. An excellent approach to student support promotes high completion rates and low attrition.</p>	✓		
<p>Conclusion:</p> <p>This standard has been met.</p> <p>Compelling evidence was presented from both employers and students as to the relevance of the course and the application of course materials to current clinical practice. The cohort numbers remain steady and whilst there is potential to grow cohort numbers, they are currently sustainable.</p>				

Commendations:

Consistent numbers of applications/cohorts show a promising demand which will ensure longevity of the programme.

Utilising feedback already provided and acting upon it promptly.

Suggestions:

3.1a – Consider broadening marketing strategies to encourage applications, such as promoting graduate achievements more widely, using more platforms and encouraging recognition.

3.1b – Provide clarity on published entry criteria to fully reflect the role of the RCVS in the enrolment process.

Actions:

None.