Veterinary Nurses Council

Agenda for meeting to be held on Tuesday 3 May 2016 at 11.00am

1. Apologies for absence

2. Declarations of interest

3. Minutes of meeting held on 2 February 2016
   Paper attached

4. Matters arising
   Oral report

5. Update on operational matters
   Oral report

Matters for decision by VN Council

6. VN Registration Rules
   Paper attached

7. VN Education Committee
   Minutes of meeting held on 21 March 2016
   Paper attached

8. English Language testing
   Paper attached

Matters of note

9. International Qualifications
   Report on overseas entrants
   Paper attached

10. Schedule 3 review
    Paper attached

11. CPD Audit
    Paper attached

12. Fitness to practise
    Oral report

13. Reports from Committees
    a. Practice Standards Group
       Oral report
b. Standards Committee

c. VN Preliminary Investigation Committee

d. VN Disciplinary Committee

14. **VN Futures**

15. **Communications report**

16. **VN Council membership and appointments**

a. VN Council election result

b. Lay membership

17. **Golden Jubilee Award 2016**

18. **Any other business**

19. **Date of next meeting**

   Tuesday 4 October 2016 at 10.30am

**Confidential and private items**

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Annette Amato  
Deputy Head of Veterinary Nursing  
April 2016  
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<tr>
<td><strong>Title</strong></td>
<td>Minutes of meeting of VN Council held on 5 October 2015</td>
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<td><strong>Author</strong></td>
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<td>Committee Secretary</td>
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Veterinary Nurses Council
Minutes of the meeting held on 2 February 2016

Members:

Mrs Elizabeth Cox - Chair
Mrs Victoria Aspinall
Mrs Lucy Bellwood
Miss Alison Carr
Dr Niall Connell - Vice-Chair
Mr Dominic Dyer
Mrs Elizabeth Figg
Mrs Andrea Jeffery
Mrs Katherine Kissick - Vice-Chair
Miss Hilary Orpet
Professor Susan Proctor
Miss Amber Richards
Mr Peter Robinson
Miss Marie Rippingale
Colonel Neil Smith

* Mrs Penelope Swindlehurst

*absent

In attendance:

Mrs Annette Amato - Committee Secretary
Mr Luke Bishop - Senior Communications Officer
Mrs Julie Dugmore - Head of Veterinary Nursing
Mrs Victoria Hedges - Examinations Manager
Ms Lizzie Lockett - Director of Strategic Communications
Mr Ben Myring - Senior Policy and Public Affairs Officer
Mr Nick Stace - Chief Executive

Welcome to new members

1. The Chair welcomed Marie Rippingale (elected veterinary nurse) to her first meeting as a member of Council.

Apologies for absence

2. Apologies for absence were received from Mrs Penelope Swindlehurst.

Declarations of interest
3. There were no new declarations of interest.

Minutes of the meeting held on 5 October 2015

4. The Minutes of the meeting held on 5 October 2015 were accepted as a correct record.

Matters arising

5. **Protection of the Veterinary Nurse title.** The Chair commented that the early Defra response to those who had signed the e-petition on the protection of the Veterinary Nurse title, indicating that the government did not intend to introduce new legislation to criminalise improper use of the title veterinary nurse, had been disappointing. However, the campaign had truly galvanised the profession and had received an astonishing level of support as well as good media publicity. It was also heartening that Defra had offered to carry out a review of Schedule 3. A full press release had been issued by the RCVS and was available on the RCVS website. The petition was set to run until 14 February, and had received more than 23 thousand signatures.

6. Council was in support of a suggestion that consideration might be given to reviewing the wording in the RCVS supporting guidance on the use of the term veterinary nurse. However, it is understood that this cannot be achieved without further legislation.

7. **Ethical Review Panel.** The Head of Veterinary Nursing reported that RCVS Council had approved in principle the establishment of an ethical review panel for a one-year trial period, and the members were now being recruited. Account had been taken of the comments made at the last Council meeting regarding the need to widen the scope to include veterinary nurses and to involve the BVNA. Mrs Kissick would sit on the panel as a representative of VN Council.

8. **Schedule 3.** The Chair reported that the review of Schedule 3 was now a work in progress and the College was working closely with Defra. It was likely that the revised Schedule would have a significant impact on the profession and the way it works.

9. **Associates.** It was reported that a meeting would be held at Defra on 22 February. Representatives of VN Council and BVNA would be attending.

10. **Fitness to Practise.** The VN Fitness to Practise working group had met in November, and had produced a draft guidance booklet based on that for veterinary surgeons. The draft had since been submitted to the Standards Committee, which had made very positive comments. It was also confirmed that the need to work to the Code of Conduct had been strengthened in the revised Day One Skills document.

Update on operational matters

11. **Vet Futures.** The Chief Executive reported that there had been continued good progress with the strategic plan, and the VN Council awayday event in January to take forward the VN
Futures project had been well attended and very productive. Other College committees had followed this example and had held their own “awayday” events. The intention was that by November 2016 there would be detailed plans for the next three years, and a road map for the next ten years.

12. The first meeting of the Vet Futures action group was due to take place in a week’s time, and the whole veterinary community was very engaged with the project. More than eighty applications to join the action group had been received following the launch of the project. The recommendations would be brought to the Vet Futures summit in June.

13. **Alternative Dispute Resolution.** A paper would be brought to RCVS Council in June following completion of the trial.

14. **Mind Matters Initiative.** More than two hundred people had attended the mind matters stream at the SPVS VPMA Congress the previous week, which covered many important issues affecting the professions.

15. **Practice Standards.** The revised practice standards scheme was launched at the London Vet Show in November and twenty practices were currently going through the trial.

16. **Fellowships.** The development of the new fellowship scheme was progressing well and the scheme would be formally launched later in the year.

17. **Associates.** It was intended to look at the criteria for Associates over the forthcoming year and to consider what other groups of paraprofessionals might be regulated by the RCVS.

18. **Governance.** The Defra consultation on Governance had received sixty responses, and there had been unanimous agreement that there should be veterinary nurse representation on RCVS Council, so the RCVS was now able to move forward with including this in the revised governance arrangements.

19. **Great Place to Work.** There continued to be a high level of staff engagement at the college, with an improvement on the high scores of the previous year in the “Great Place to Work” survey.

The Chief Executive left the meeting after this item.

**VN Education Committee**

20. **Minutes of meeting held on 16 November 2015.** The Chairman of the Committee, Andrea Jeffery, presented the report from the meeting of 16 November 2015 and drew Council’s attention to the following points:

21. The new improved enrolment process was working well and enrolments had been processed much more quickly for the September intake of students. The Head of Veterinary Nursing added that she hoped to hold a few regional meetings in the early summer with presentations
on the enrolment process for centre administrative staff, to try to further reduce delays by ensuring that the criteria and documentation required are properly understood.

22. The revised Day One Skills list, to be renamed the Practical and Clinical Skills list, had been approved by the Committee. Many of the low level skills in the current list which were not specific to veterinary nursing had been removed. The new list now comprises ten areas with a total of approximately 80 skills.

23. The number of training practices was increasing year on year, with 333 new TPs in the period October 2014 to September 2015, and 58 withdrawals in the same period.

24. The ACOVENE board had agreed that the appropriate audit procedure in future would be for ACOVENE to audit the RCVS as the regulator for UK qualifications, in addition to some individual AOs/HEIs, rather than the previous system where the audit visits were carried out directly to AOs/HEIs. The Head of Veterinary Nursing added that a visit to the RCVS was carried out in November by one of the ACOVENE board members. The report would be submitted to the Education Committee at its next meeting.

25. A new external examiner had now been appointed for the Diploma in Advanced Veterinary Nursing and will sit on the DipAVN working group.

26. It was noted that the Committee had considered representations putting the case for including additional guidance in VN training programmes to cover the behavioural and emotional needs of patients, and had agreed that guidance regarding animal behaviour, ethology and prophylaxis should be provided alongside the newly revised RCVS Day One Skills for veterinary nurses. The Head of Veterinary Nursing reported that this had been discussed by the Day One Skills working group, and had been addressed by strengthening the guidance on behaviour within the Day One Skills.

Golden Jubilee Award

27. The Chair reported that four nominations had been received for the Golden Jubilee award. These would be circulated to a selection panel and the award winner would be announced in May.

Reports from Committees

Practice Standards Group (PSG)

28. Miss Richards reported that the new Practice Standards Scheme has been launched at the London Vet Show in November. A new team of assessors was in place, working to the new guidance. As noted in the operational update, twenty practices are currently trialling the system, and the feedback on the assessors and the modules has been very positive.

29. It was confirmed that the suggestion made at the previous VN Council meeting that consideration might be given in the future to widening the criteria to allow veterinary nurses to
become assessors, had been discussed. It had been agreed that this would be considered at the five-yearly review.

Standards Committee

30. Mrs Bellwood reported on a number of items discussed at the recent Standards Committee meeting, including the following items of particular interest to VN Council.

31. **Nurse clinics.** There was a discussion about whether chapter 18 of the supporting guidance (delegation to veterinary nurses) should be expanded to include the topic of nurse clinics. On balance, however, it was felt that this was not advisable at the current time, principally because of the review of Schedule 3 which might necessitate a broader review of the guidance on delegation to veterinary nurses. The Committee did, however, agree that veterinary nurses can make observations and can recognise abnormalities. The Committee agreed that the veterinary nurse who recognises an abnormality is not making a diagnosis and their proper role is to bring that to the attention of a veterinary surgeon. They should be careful, however, about how far they go and in their communications with clients.

32. **Delegation to lay staff.** The Committee approved additional guidance to be added to chapter 19 of the supporting guidance (treatment of animals by unqualified persons) on the topic of delegation to practice lay staff. It was acknowledged that the guidance derives from VN Standard article, Legally Speaking, of August 2010. Effectively, the position has not changed – but the guidance has been formalised by being included in the Supporting Guidance.

33. **Fitness to Practise.** The guidance for veterinary nurse students had been well received by the Committee, and it was felt that it would be very helpful to employers and training providers. The guidance for veterinary students had already been used by several members involved in veterinary education with good effect. The Committee was very happy for the guidance to go forward to RCVS Council for approval.

34. **Feline renal transplants.** The Committee noted the report of the Science Advisory Panel (SAP): Feline Renal Transplantation – Scientific Support to Develop an Ethical Position (December 2015). The Committee recognised the value of the report and expressed their appreciation for the hard work undertaken by the SAP. The Committee did not feel able to make a recommendation at this time as to a direction of travel and could only recommend that the issue is referred to Council for further consideration and debate. The Committee debated the issue at length and a number of issues will be brought to Council’s attention.

35. **Microchipping.** The Committee noted that the Welsh Regulations are now published but we await sight of the Scottish Regulations. The Committee agreed that the guidance on compulsory microchipping at chapter 29 of the supporting guidance (microchips, microchipping and animals without microchips) should be updated to reflect the position in Wales. The Committee will await news in respect of Scotland.

36. **Reporting suspected illegal imports.** The Committee approved additional guidance to be
added to chapter 14 of the supporting guidance (client confidentiality) to cover the topic of reporting suspected illegal imports. The Standards and Advice Team receives frequent enquiries on this issue and the new guidance will echo the comments of the Registrar publicised in the Veterinary Record in February 2015.

37. **Updated veterinary care guidance**: Proposed amendments to chapter 2 of the supporting guidance (veterinary care) were approved, subject to some minor revisions.

**VN Preliminary Investigation Committee**

38. The Report from the Chairman of the RVN PI Committee on the activity of the Committee since the last VN Council meeting was noted.

**VN Disciplinary Committee**

39. Council noted the report of the disciplinary hearing held by VN DC in November 2015, which had been fully reported on the RCVS website. There were no hearings planned and no pending appeals.

**VN Register report**

40. Council noted a paper setting out the number of registered veterinary nurses as at 20 January 2016, the number of nurses removed in January 2016 for non-payment of the annual fee, and the number of new registrations and transfers to the register in 2015. It was commented that the number of removals was slightly higher than usual. The registration department had looked into the reasons but no one specific reason had been found. Nearly 200 of those removed in early January had been restored to the Register by the end of the month.

**Communications report**

41. The Director of Strategic Communications reported on a number of recent and forthcoming activities.

42. **BSAVA Congress.** A session would be held on Friday 9 April to cover the review of Schedule 3 and to ask nurses and their employers which areas they would like to see included in any revision.

43. **Regional Question Time.** Forthcoming RQT events would take place on 17 May (Nottingham) and 31 May (Cardiff – tying in with the RCVS Council meeting later that week). Both RQTs would have a specific VN stream, covering the VN Futures project.

44. **Protection of the Veterinary Nurse title.** The campaign had received good coverage in a variety of media and although the response from Defra had indicated that new legislation would not be introduced, the campaign had demonstrated to veterinary nurses the significant level of support from the College.
45. **Vet and VN Futures.** A veterinary nurse, Daniel Hogan, had been appointed to the Vet Futures Action Group and would be asked to input to the VN Futures Action Group. The VN Futures project would need to develop rapidly, in order to deliver an action plan in summer – essentially achieving in six months what VetFutures had achieved in 18 months.

46. **Mind Matters.** A series of four different types of training events had been trialled in December, the aim being to pick a suitable supplier. All the events had been positively received and it was therefore likely that a portfolio of training types would be used. A conference for researchers into veterinary mental health would be held in June.

47. The Chair wished to place on record the thanks of Council for the tremendous support provided by the Communications team for the protect the title campaign and in awareness raising.

**Awarding Body closure**

48. The Head of Veterinary Nursing reported that the RCVS Awarding Body had closed ahead of Schedule, in November 2015.

**Any other business**

49. There was none.

**Date of next meeting**

50. Tuesday 3 May 2016 at 11.00am.
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<td>Title</td>
<td>Amendment of the Veterinary Nursing Registration Rules 2014</td>
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<tr>
<td>Summary</td>
<td>The Veterinary Nursing Registration Rules 2014 set out the College’s regulatory rules for the award of a Veterinary Nursing Certificate under the Charter i.e. the “licence to practise” necessary in order to enter the Register. The proposed amendments clarify the College’s requirement in relation to the practical training time required by student veterinary nurses, and accordingly a Licence to Practise as a veterinary nurse.</td>
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<td>Decisions required</td>
<td>None. VN Council is invited to recommend the proposed amendments to Schedule 1 of the rules (as set out in Annexes A and B) to Council.</td>
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| Attachments  | Annex A: Registration Rules amendments showing tracked changes  
Annex B: Registration Rules amendment incorporating changes |
| Author       | Julie Dugmore  
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**Amendment of the Veterinary Nursing Registration Rules 2014**

**Introduction**

1. This paper proposes amendments to Schedule 1 of the Veterinary Nursing Registration Rules ('the rules') following the review of Day One Skills for Veterinary Nurses, and to comply with current HM Revenue and Customs ('HMRC') National Minimum Wage Regulations ('NMWR').

**Background**

2. Article 15 of the Supplemental Charter states:

   ‘15. The Veterinary Nurses' Council shall set requirements in relation to the registration of veterinary nurses. Persons who satisfy the standards set by the committee in relation to education and training shall be entitled to be entered in the register of veterinary nurses, subject to compliance with such other requirements as may be set in Bye-laws of the College including, but not limited to, the payment of a registration fee and a requirement that they be of good character.’

3. The standards in relation to education and training pursuant to the above article are set out in Schedule 1 to the rules. At present, these standards include practical training that is an approved programme of veterinary nurse education at an approved centre lasting at least 94 weeks (equivalent to 3,290 hours), excluding annual leave and absence. The programme must include a full-time period of practical training in an approved training practice of not less than 60 weeks, equivalent to 2,100 hours, or an equivalent part-time period, together with a theoretical programme of not less than 700 guided learning hours. The practical training, which need not be continuous, must be spent in gainful employment or educational practice placement for at least 15 hours a week.

4. In February 2015, VN Council was invited to consider how the NMWR affect the veterinary nurse practical training requirements. As a result of this, VN Council decided to remove the current 60 week practical training requirement. Reducing the required number practical placement hours was also considered at this stage, however it was decided the requirement to complete 2,100 hours should remain in force until the review of the Day One Skills for Veterinary Nurses had been completed.

5. This review is now complete and was agreed by the Veterinary Nurses Education Committee ('VNEC') at its meeting on 21 March 2016. The new skills list comprises of ten unit titles and seventy nine skills, focusing in particular on safe and effective clinical skills and Schedule 3. This has the effect of making the Day One Skills for Veterinary Nurses more holistic and therefore the time taken to assess them is reduced. As such, VNEC agreed that the practical placement hours could be reduced from 2,100 to 1,800. This is calculated as 35hrs/week over a 52 week period to comply with the current HMRC National Minimum Wage requirement.
Proposed changes

6. In light of the above, it is proposed that Schedule 1 to the rules is amended in two ways:

   a. ’60 weeks' should be removed; and
   b. “2,100 hours” should be replaced by ‘1,800 hours’.

7. A copy of Schedule 1 showing the proposed amendments can be found at Annex A (with tracked changes) and Annex B (without tracked changes). The Veterinary Nurses Education Committee (VNEC) considered these proposed amendments on 21 March 2016 and voted by a clear majority to recommend the amendments to VN Council.

Decision

The Veterinary Nurses' Council is invited to recommend the proposed amendments to Schedule 1 of the rules (as set out in Annexes A and B) to Council.
Schedule 1
Requirements as to education and training

1. In order to be entered in the register of veterinary nurses a person must –

   - hold an approved vocational qualification in veterinary nursing and have completed practical training as specified below; or

   - hold an approved degree in veterinary nursing or other higher qualification in veterinary nursing and have completed practical training as specified below; or

   - have passed the Part II veterinary nursing examination formerly administered by the College and have completed practical training as specified below; or

   - hold the RCVS Certificate in Veterinary Nursing; or

   - have undertaken training and obtained a qualification outside the United Kingdom and acquired skill and knowledge commensurate with the standards set by the Veterinary Nurses' Council under article 14 of the Supplemental Charter for the training and education of persons wishing to be entered in the register of veterinary nurses.

1. The practical training mentioned above is an approved programme of veterinary nurse education at an approved centre lasting at least 94 weeks (equivalent to 3,290 hours), excluding annual leave and absence. The programme must include a full-time period of practical training in an approved training practice of not less than 60 weeks, equivalent to 2,100 hours, or an equivalent part-time period, together with a theoretical programme of not less than 700 guided learning hours. The practical training, which need not be continuous, must be spent in gainful employment or educational practice placement for at least 15 hours a week.
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   - have undertaken training and obtained a qualification outside the United Kingdom and acquired skill and knowledge commensurate with the standards set by the Veterinary Nurses’ Council under article 14 of the Supplemental Charter for the training and education of persons wishing to be entered in the register of veterinary nurses.

2. The practical training mentioned above is an approved programme of veterinary nurse education at an approved centre lasting at least 94 weeks (equivalent to 3,290 hours), excluding annual leave and absence. The programme must include a full-time period of practical training in an approved training practice, equivalent to 1,800 hours, or an equivalent part-time period, together with a theoretical programme of not less than 700 guided learning hours. The practical training, which need not be continuous, must be spent in gainful employment or educational practice placement for at least 15 hours a week.
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<td>Summary</td>
<td>Minutes of the meeting of the VN Education Committee held on 21 March 2016</td>
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<tr>
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| Author       | Annette Amato  
Deputy Head of Veterinary Nursing  
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a.amato@rcvs.org.uk |
Veterinary Nurse Education Committee
Minutes of the meeting held on 21 March 2016

Members:  
Mrs Victoria Aspinall - VN Council veterinary surgeon  
Mrs Talitha Cartmell - Employer representative  
Mrs Elizabeth Figg - VN Council veterinary nurse  
Mrs Susan Howarth - HE programme provider  
* Mrs Andrea Jeffery - VN Council veterinary nurse (Chair)  
* Dr Elizabeth Mossop - Independent educationalist  
* Professor Susan Proctor - VN Council lay member  
Mr Peter Robinson - VN Council veterinary surgeon  
Mrs Penelope Swindlehurst - VN Council lay member  
* Dr Jenny Watkins - FE programme provider  

In attendance:  
Mrs Annette Amato - Committee Secretary  
Mr Luke Bishop - Communications Officer  
Mrs Elizabeth Cox - Chair, VN Council  
Mrs Julie Dugmore - Head of Veterinary Nursing  
Mrs Victoria Hedges - Examinations Manager  
Mrs Lily Lipman - Qualifications Manager  
Mrs Jenny Soreskog-Turp - CPD Officer  

*absent

Apologies for absence

1. Apologies for absence were received from Mrs Andrea Jeffery, Dr Elizabeth Mossop and Professor Susan Proctor. The meeting was chaired by Mrs Elizabeth Cox, as Chair of VN Council. Mrs Jeffery, Dr Mossop and Professor Proctor had provided comments on specific agenda items which were reported by the Chair for inclusion in the relevant discussions.

Operational update

2. VN department staffing. The Head of Veterinary Nursing reported on staffing changes in the VN department. Sophie Jamieson, the Registration Officer, had left the college in February and Chloe Baxter had moved from the role of Enrolments Officer into this post. The new Enrolments Officer is Nimrah Saleem.

3. Student enrolments. The majority of enrolments for students starting training in September 2015 had now been processed, with a total of 1540 enrolments having been carried out to date. The new system, with an additional member of staff to assist at the peak period, was working well although there was still room for improvement. 1087 enrolments were processed in the period from August to December 2015, compared with 963 for the same period in 2014.
Issues which were causing delay in some cases were poor quality identification photographs which were not suitable for scanning, and spreadsheets not being completed properly by the centres. A new scanning system was being considered in time for the next academic year. It was intended to invite the administrators from the colleges to meetings, tied in with the VN Futures events in various parts of the country, to provide information on the enrolments process and how to avoid delays. A suggestion was made that consideration might be given to the provision of identification photos electronically in the future.

4. **RCVS staffing.** The Registrar, Gordon Hockey, left the college at the end of February and Eleanor Ferguson, Head of Professional Conduct, is now the Acting Registrar.

5. **VN Futures.** The VN Futures project, a development from the VetFutures project, commenced last October at the BVNA Congress when a joint workshop was held with VN Council and BVNA Council. Since then several regional meetings and workshops have been arranged. The first was held in Bristol on 14 March and further meetings would be held in Leeds (18 April), Edinburgh (11 May) and attached to the RCVS regional meeting in Nottingham on 17 May and Wales on 30 May. The report and actions will be launched at the VetFutures event on 4 July.

6. **Schedule 3.** Defra have agreed that Schedule 3 can be reviewed. Views will be obtained from the profession as part of the VN Futures discussions, and there would be a session devoted to this at the BSAVA congress.

**Declarations of interest**

7. There were no new declarations of interest.

**Minutes of the meeting of the Education Committee held on 16 November 2015**

8. The minutes of the meeting held on 16 November 2015 were accepted as a correct record.

**Matters arising on the Minutes**

9. **ACOVENE.** The Head of Veterinary Nursing reported that there had been an audit visit of the RCVS by ACOVENE on 23 November 2015. The visit had been positive, but unfortunately the audit had covered a number of criteria which were more appropriate for a centre visit rather than an accrediting body, and some areas had not been included. This had been discussed at the meeting of the ACOVENE Board where the criteria for a visit to an accrediting body had been clarified. The ACOVENE auditor would go on a centre visit with the Qualifications Manager in due course.

10. **Treatment by unqualified persons.** It was reported that as agreed at the previous meeting, the professional conduct department had been asked to review the current published guidance on Schedule 3. The revised guidance had been considered by Standards Committee and is now available.
11. **BIS Future of Higher Education green paper.** Following the last meeting, the BIS green paper had been circulated to the Committee and the Head of Veterinary Nursing had collated the comments received. It had been agreed that this was not really relevant to the RCVS as a regulator, so a formal response would not be submitted to BIS, but the RCVS would hold a watching brief on developments. The Heads of Veterinary Nursing and Education keep in touch by attending Professional, Statutory and Regulatory body (PSRB) meetings.

**VN Licence to practise qualifications**

**New / provisionally accredited AOs / HEIs**

12. The Qualifications Manager presented an update report on new and provisionally accredited AOs and HEIs offering awards leading to a licence to practise qualification in veterinary nursing. The attention of the Committee was drawn to a number of specific items.

13. **Royal Agricultural University (RAU).** Several actions from the last monitoring visit in relation to ensuring and upholding Centre and TP standards remained open, and an update would be provided to the next meeting. A concern had also been raised, following a large number of students contacting local practices, regarding documentation which indicated that students would be responsible for finding their own placements. It was confirmed that the RCVS guidance is clear that universities must ensure that there are sufficient placements for all their students, and they must assist students in obtaining placements. The university had been asked to amend its documentation accordingly. It was also noted that the RAU situation is unusual in that it runs two similar degrees, the VN FdSc which leads to registration as a veterinary nurse, and a degree in Veterinary Health Studies (VHS) which does not, although VHS students who are able to find placements may transfer to the VN FdSc.

14. Attention had been drawn to the fact that the UCAS website shows a delivery site for the VN FdSc which has not been notified to the RCVS.

15. In general discussion regarding placements for full-time courses, it was noted that some colleges may fill all the places for which they are able to provide placements, but then offer to take on additional students who can find their own. The issue of placements was brought up again later in the meeting, when a suggestion was made that this might be included as an item for the next AO/HEI meeting at the RCVS, with those who manage to place and monitor their students effectively asked to share what they do.

16. **University of South Wales and University of Wales.** It was reported that the two universities planned to collaborate and share resources in the design, delivery and management of OSCEs, and the RCVS Examinations Manager was due to deliver a training session in May for the staff of both colleges.

17. **Vetskill.** It was reported that an application is being made in 2016 by a new awarding organisation, Vetskill, which uses some physical resources and personnel associated with the College of Animal Welfare Huntingdon. The application will be submitted in two parts. The organisational evidence has been submitted and partially reviewed, and Dr Mossop has agreed
to be involved with the review, as a member of Education Committee. There is no agreed date for the second submission, relating to the curriculum, although the understanding is that this will be provided when the details of the apprenticeship scheme have been clarified.

**AO / HEI monitoring reports**

18. **Routine monitoring reports.** The Qualifications Officer presented a summary of the auditing activity undertaken for established AOs and HEIs since the last meeting, together with a number of quality monitoring reports and risk assessments. The current plan for visit and audit regimes for the forthcoming year had been circulated to the Committee with the agenda. Some of the reports were noted, with no further discussion.

19. **Central Qualifications.** It was noted that overall, this AO was low risk and in general was compliant with most actions.

20. **City & Guilds.** It was reported that although there were a few historic actions still outstanding, the majority of non-compliance issues had now been addressed, with regular and frequent communication between the Head of Veterinary Nursing and City & Guilds, and the overseeing of quality monitoring was now being carried out by the Qualifications Manager.

21. In response to a query regarding failure to meet action deadlines, the Head of Veterinary Nursing confirmed that this information is contained in the AO and HEI Handbook, and that if necessary, sanctions could be applied. However, at this stage she was satisfied with the communication with City & Guilds as it is. It was also confirmed that staffing levels are kept under review and although the number of audit visits has been reduced to a five-yearly cycle, regular desk based reviews are also carried out, and if resources need to be reviewed in the interim, this can be done.

22. **Royal Veterinary College.** It was commented that it had been good to see, at the audit of the OSCE examinations carried out in January, that the RVC’s external examiners had been present to address any issues as an example of good practice.

23. **University of Bristol.** The Examinations Manager reminded the Committee of the criteria for practical examinations which had been developed in 2011 and agreed by VN Council in early 2012, as the definitive criteria for the type of examination required as the summative assessment for licence to practise examinations. These are set out in the RCVS AO and HEI handbook, and are met by most HEIs and AOs. Accreditation standard 5.i states that an independently assessed Objective Structured Clinical Examination (OSCE), or similarly robust, objective and evidence-based form of examination, must be employed to test safe and effective acquisition of clinical skills.

24. The University of Bristol (UoB) was last validated in 2008 and changes were made to the modules in 2010. The RCVS reaccreditation is due to take place in 2017 and the university revalidation of the programme is due in 2018. The OSCE was observed by the Examinations Manager in August 2015 and concern was expressed on a number of issues. The Committee agreed that there were many factors in the design, delivery and quality assurance of the
examination to demonstrate that RCVS Accreditation Standard 5.i has not been met. These had been raised with the University, and the Committee received and discussed the full audit report and the UoB response, together with a summary of other information provided during communications between the Examinations Manager and the UoB Head of Centre. Comments were also provided from Dr Mossop, having been requested in her capacity as the independent educationalist member of the Committee.

25. It was accepted that the University of Bristol’s programme, along with a few others, had been accredited or reaccredited before the RCVS guidelines had been published, but it was agreed that all should now be expected to comply with the criteria, and similar decisions had already been taken for other AOs and HEIs which had formerly been non-compliant.

26. In the case of UoB, this should be addressed as a two stage process, with the first stage being implemented for the 2017 examinations. This should include an increase in the number of practical tasks, with the provision of an evidence basis for the number of stations used, an increase in the number of examiners to a minimum of one per practical task, the use of a recognised method of setting the pass mark for each station and the whole examination including re-sit criteria. The university should be asked to provide written policies and procedures detailing the design, delivery and quality assurance of all the practical examinations, to include the evidence basis used for each aspect.

27. It was further agreed that the second stage, to be implemented at the next RCVS accreditation, should be for the university to undertake a full review of the qualification and the practical assessments to ensure that a valid, reliable and independently assessed OSCE or a similarly robust objective and evidence based form of examination is in place. Should the University wish to provide an alternative definition of ‘objective assessment’, this would need to be accompanied by the literature source(s) used.

28. Central Qualifications examination statistics. At its previous meeting, the Committee had agreed that a further detailed explanation and clarification of the examination system used by this AO, including statistical information, should be provided. The Examinations Manager had been provided with some information which she had discussed with an independent examinations expert. It was clear that further discussion and explanation was needed, and this would be taken up at the next visit.

Approval of AO / HEI external examiners

29. The Committee received the list of the current external examiners appointed by the AOs and HEIs, with details of their qualifications and experience. A comment was raised on behalf of the Chairman, who was unable to attend, that it was possible that one of the examiners listed may not meet the RCVS criteria, due to not being currently involved in teaching. It was noted that the examiner in question had been involved in teaching in recent years and would therefore meet the criteria of being professionally and academically competent. However, it was agreed that the guidance should be reviewed to include time limits. It was also agreed that in the future, external examiners should be put forward to the Committee for approval before they are appointed by the university, to ensure that the criteria are met.
Standards for training and education

Review of Day One Skills for veterinary nurses

30. At the last meeting, the Committee had approved the revised Day One Skills list, subject to the provision of guidance and an assessment tool. The Committee noted the detailed guidance developed by the Working Party, which has been referenced to the Code of Conduct and its supporting guidance, where applicable within the skills list.

31. The Head of Veterinary Nursing reported that the working party had discussed the suggestion made at the last meeting of the Committee that guidance regarding animal behaviour, ethology and prophylaxis should be provided alongside the newly revised RCVS Day One Skills for veterinary nurses. This had duly been incorporated within the guidance, but the working party had felt that it would not be appropriate for additional specific guidance and references for delivery of core behavioural knowledge, or other subjects, to be provided to colleges. A few additional suggestions were made in the meeting as to areas where the guidance might be amplified, and subject to these additions, the Committee approved the proposed detailed guidance.

32. The Committee also considered the proposed assessment framework which had been developed with the permission of Middlesex University. Comments and amendments had been made by Dr Mossop, and it was agreed that this should now be trialled as a paper exercise, perhaps by one of the larger FE colleges. The final intention was to incorporate this within the NPL. Depending on the outcome of the trial, another meeting of the working party may be needed.

33. The working party had also discussed the clinical placement hours requirements, and had agreed to recommend that these be reduced to 1800, calculated as 35 hours per week over a 52 week period, to comply with the current HMRC National Minimum Wage requirements. It was felt that the required skills could be acquired within this timeframe, and the Committee agreed to recommend that this revised requirement should be incorporated into the Registration Rules.

NPL review and development

34. The Head of Veterinary nursing presented a report on the work of the NPL working party. The working party has met twice since it was established in June 2015, and the review started with focus groups during the BVNA Congress in October. Although the focus groups were poorly attended there had since been nearly 1,500 responses to the survey, which had generally been very positive, particularly in respect of the visuals of the tool and the convenience of tracking progress. The working party had evaluated all the feedback received and had drafted a list of enhancements which had been sent to Skillwise for scoping and costing. The agreed list of enhancements would be presented at the next meeting of the committee.

Apprenticeships
35. The Head of Veterinary Nursing presented a report on the work of the veterinary nursing employer trailblazer group, which is developing the standards and assessment plan for a trailblazer in veterinary nursing, with the support of a Relationship Manager from BIS. In order to receive government funding, the full proposals must be in place by 2017. The proposals must be supported by the RCVS, as the regulator. The draft standard developed by the group includes the RCVS Day One Competences for Veterinary Nurses, as well as the RCVS Day one Skills for veterinary nurses, and was provided to the Committee for approval.

36. A concern was raised that the current proposals do not mention minimum entry requirements for the apprenticeships. It was pointed out that the entry criteria for vocational and HE qualifications are now set by the AOs and HEIs, not by the RCVS. However, the Head of Veterinary Nursing added that if there is concern, this could be raised with the BIS Relationship Manager with a view to including minimum entry criteria.

37. The Committee agreed the proposed standard for the veterinary nursing trailblazer, which would now be put forward for consultation.

Training practice and student numbers

38. The Committee noted a paper showing the current numbers of approved training practices offering clinical training and work experience to student veterinary nurses, including details of TP and student numbers by region. Information was also provided on the total number and primary species type of practices in each region, showing how many are TPs. It was agreed that figures should be provided for the next meeting on the number of Practice Standards Scheme general practice level practice, together with the number of TPs, as this may give a better indication of the number of potential practices not already involved in training.

Continuing Professional Development

39. The Committee noted the analysis of the 2015 audit of CPD records for veterinary nurses, which included a breakdown by age groups and showing the types of CPD carried out by each group, including those who were non-compliant. The paper would also be submitted to VN Council at its May 2016 meeting, for information. The Committee also agreed the proposals for the 2016 audit.

Post Registration Qualifications

New RCVS Diploma providers

40. The Qualifications Manager presented a report of the visit with Victoria Aspinall on behalf of the Education Committee, to the Royal Veterinary College. The RVC had applied for accreditation of its current graduate Diploma, which had been running for several years, for the RCVS DipAVN. The RVC response to the report was also provided.

41. The main findings of the report were that the Diploma as it stands does not comply with the
RCVS DipAVN criteria on a number of counts. The RVC had indicated at the visit that it would not be making changes to the programme in order to comply with RCVS requirements, but required presentation of the application to the Education Committee.

**DipAVN monitoring report**

42. It was reported that the newly appointed DipAVN External Quality Assurer had attended the examinations at Harper Adams University in February, and the QA Manager had attended the oral examinations at Myerscough. The reports would be provided for the next meeting of the Committee.

**DipAVN Working Party**

43. The QA Manager reported that the DipAVN Working Party had held its first meeting on 17 March and had made good progress in the discussions on the future of the Diploma. The working party would meet again in the summer to develop the proposals.

**Items for publication**

44. The next following items were identified for inclusion in the next edition of the VN Education newsletter, to be published in May:
   - Good practice in relation to external examiners
   - Training Practice numbers
   - Reminder of requirement for centres for full-time courses to find placements for students
   - Improved processing of student enrolments
   - Publication of fitness to practise guidance for VN students

**Any other business**

45. The Qualifications Manager raised a concern, from her audits of awarding bodies and delivery sites, at the great disparity in the delivery of licence to practise qualifications, especially in relation to the increased use of blended and e-learning to replace college hours. It was agreed that this should be investigated and discussed further at the next meeting.

**Date of future meetings**

46. The following dates were confirmed:
   Monday 27 June 2016, Monday 21 November 2016. Meetings to start at 11.00am
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Meeting</th>
<th>Veterinary Nurses Council</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Date</td>
<td>3 May 2016</td>
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<tr>
<td>Title</td>
<td>English language testing and the Mutual Recognition of Professional Qualifications Directive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Classification</td>
<td>Unclassified</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Summary</td>
<td>This paper reports on recent developments regarding the Mutual Recognition of Professional Qualifications (MRPQ) Directive and the ability of the RCVS to test the English language skills of registrants from the EU.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Decisions required</td>
<td>English language requirements for overseas-qualified veterinary nurse applicants.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Attachments</td>
<td>None</td>
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<tr>
<td>Author</td>
<td>Ben Myring</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Policy and Public Affairs Officer</td>
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<td></td>
<td><a href="mailto:b.myring@rcvs.org.uk">b.myring@rcvs.org.uk</a></td>
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Mutual Recognition of Professional Qualifications Directive

Background

1. The Mutual Recognition of Professional Qualifications (MRPQ) Directive is a key piece of European legislation which allows professionals to be formally recognised and allowed to practice across the European Union (EU). Because of the way that the Directive was originally implemented in the UK, the College previously had no power to test the English language competency of applicants from other EU member states.

2. As previously reported, on 17 January 2014, a revised Directive came into force and 2005/36/EC has been updated by 2013/55/EU. The new Directive makes a number of important changes to the mobility of professionals across Europe, including clarifying and reinforcing the role of competent authorities in order to apply language controls.

3. Competent authorities such as the RCVS will not be able to undertake blanket testing of all EU registrants, and will only able to test applicants if there are 'serious and concrete doubts about the sufficiency of their English language knowledge'.

4. In order to empower the Registrar to decline to register a veterinary surgeon where the College has such 'serious and concrete doubts' it was necessary to amend the Veterinary Surgeons Act (VSA) 1966. While this restriction did not apply to veterinary nurses, who are not considered a 'sectoral profession' under the Directive, it was agreed by RCVS Council that the introduction of any new rules should proceed simultaneously for both professions.

5. The College held discussions with the Department for Environment Food and Rural Affairs (Defra) and the Department for Business, Innovation and Skills (BIS) between 2013 and 2015 to agree on the necessary changes to VSA. Following a formal consultation in mid-2015, a Statutory Instrument was used to amend the VSA in December 2015, and this came into force on 18 January 2016.

Establishing 'serious and concrete doubts'

6. While discussions on the reform of the VSA were ongoing, the College also worked with Defra to establish appropriate procedures for establishing 'serious and concrete doubts' which comply with the Directive. It has been agreed that during the application process applicants will be asked a series of questions concerning their language qualifications, experience and general ability to use the English language; this would effectively be a process of self-certification. The questions would focus on whether applicants could show a copy of a qualification obtained in English, an appropriate qualification attesting their English skills or could demonstrate professional experience of working in the UK or an English-speaking environment. Most crucially, the applicant will be asked whether they believe their English-language competency is sufficient to practice in the UK. If an applicant answers yes to this final question they will fulfil the English language requirements. If they answer no, then the College will have grounds for ‘serious and concrete doubts’.
7. Where a candidate’s qualification makes them eligible for registration it will be formally recognised in the usual way, but they will not be allowed to register. Instead the applicant will be written to and asked demonstrate that their language ability is sufficient, either by passing IELTS Level 7 or by spending time in a role or roles with English as the main language. Thus, applicants may delay their application and improve their English language and reapply.

8. Should an applicant declare that their language competency is sufficient, but then require a translator and/or not be able to answer basic questions in English at their registration interview, then this may also raise ‘serious and concrete doubts’ about their English language ability. The registration interview will proceed as normal (so as not to burden front-line RCVS staff with a potentially uncomfortable situation), but the application would then be referred to the Registrar prior to the applicant’s name being entered onto the register and the applicant could then be written to and asked to demonstrate their English language ability as above.

9. The proposed questions and related application and registration procedures for veterinary surgeons have been agreed with Defra, and have been proactively submitted to the Commission to ensure that they comply with the Directive. While we await the Commission’s response the College can follow the proposed procedures on an ad hoc basis.

**Proposed procedures for Veterinary nurses**

8. Now that the new procedure for establishing ‘serious and concrete doubts’ has been agreed with Defra, the College is in a position to integrate that procedure into the regulations for overseas veterinary nurse applicants. The following proposed procedures have been adapted to suit the VN overseas application process, which is more complex than for veterinary surgeons due to VNs not being a ‘sectoral profession’ and so not having automatic recognition for EU-qualified applicants.

9. Should an applicant declare that they believe their English language ability to be insufficient then the College will have grounds for ‘serious and concrete doubts’ about their language ability. Where a candidate’s qualification makes them eligible for registration it will be formally recognised in the usual way, but they will not be allowed to register. Instead the applicant will be written to and asked to demonstrate that their language ability is sufficient, either by passing IELTS Level 7 or by spending time in a role or roles with English as the main language. Thus, applicants may delay their application and improve their English language and reapply.

10. If an applicant declares that their language skills are insufficient, and the candidate’s qualification does not entitle them to register without examination or a period of adaptation, then they will have several options open to them in line with existing procedures. They may choose a Period of Adaptation (while completing relevant elements of the Nursing Progress Log); this will also serve to demonstrate whether their English language skills are sufficient and the supervising vet will be asked to attest to those skills at the end of the Period of Adaptation. If a candidate chooses to take the Pre-registration examination (practical and theory) then they may still voluntarily undertake a Period of Adaptation for up to one year while they prepare for the examination; this will similarly serve as a way of demonstrating their English language ability. If a candidate declares that they have insufficient English language skills and chooses to undertake the Pre-registration
examination option without a voluntary Period of Adaptation then they will be asked to pass IELTS at Level 7 prior to registration, or spend time in a role or roles with English as the main language.

11. Similarly to the procedure established for veterinary surgeons, should an applicant declare that their language competency is sufficient, but then require a translator and/or not be able to answer basic questions in English at their examination or registration interview, then this may also raise ‘serious and concrete doubts’ about their English language ability. The examination or registration interview will proceed as normal, but the application would then be referred to the Registrar prior to the applicant’s name being entered onto the register, and the applicant could then be written to and asked to demonstrate their English language ability as above.

Decision

12. Veterinary Nurse Council has previously decided not to implement English language requirements for non-EU overseas applicants. Part of the rationale for this was that these applicants have to pass the Pre-Registration Examination, and they could not do so without sufficient English language skills. However, the new opportunity to impose language testing where we have ‘serious and concrete doubts’ about an EU-qualified candidate’s language ability also gives us the opportunity to create a standard procedure for all overseas-qualified veterinary nurse applicants regardless of their country of qualification.

13. VNC is now in a position to decide whether the new procedures to impose language testing where the College has ‘serious and concrete doubts’ about an applicant’s English language ability should apply to all overseas-qualified veterinary nurse applicants.
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<th>Meeting</th>
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<tr>
<td>Date</td>
<td>03 May 2016</td>
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<tr>
<td>Title</td>
<td>Report on overseas applications to register 2015/16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Classification</td>
<td>Unclassified</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Summary</td>
<td>This paper summarises the applications for registration from nurses trained outside the UK. It covers the period between 1 April 2015 and 31 March 2016.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Decisions required</td>
<td>By the Veterinary Nurses Council: None</td>
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<td>Attachments</td>
<td>None</td>
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<tr>
<td>Author</td>
<td>Victoria Hedges</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Examinations Manager</td>
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<td>0207 202 0782</td>
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Overseas applications to register 2015/16

Background

1. VN Council and VN Education Committee have both agreed on the criteria by which veterinary nurses who train outside the UK can apply to enter the RCVS Register of Veterinary Nurses. This is summarised below.

Registration of veterinary nurses trained within the EU/EEA

2. The EU directive 2013/55/EU sets out the general system for the recognition of evidence of training for the purpose of establishment in the host country. Qualifications must be recognised if the applicant’s level of professional qualification is at least equivalent to the level immediately below that required in the host country. Recognition must also be granted to migrants whose profession is not regulated in the country of origin but who have worked full-time in that profession for two years. Under certain restricted conditions, the host country may impose compensation measures, i.e. an adaptation period of up to three years or an aptitude test. If the host country requires applicants to comply with such compensation measures, it must take into account their professional experience, and the applicant may in principle choose between the adaptation period or the aptitude test.

3. The RCVS currently accept holders of ACOVENE (the European Accreditation Committee for Veterinary Nurse Educations) accredited qualifications and those on a professional register in their country of origin to apply to enter the register directly.

4. Where the holder of an EU veterinary nursing qualification did not train in a ACOVENE accredited institution their qualification is assessed for equivalence.

5. When receiving an application from an EU trained veterinary nurse we are obliged to work on the default assumption that their qualification will be recognised but where there are significant differences in the qualification we can request for them to take an aptitude test and/or complete a period of supervised adaptation.

6. All applications need to include attestations of competence of evidence of formal qualifications issued by a competent authority in a member state. The EU Directive is very clear that any requirement for tests/adaptations, or refusal to recognise the qualification, must be based on strong grounds which are both justifiable and proportionate. We document the decision and this information is provided to the applicant.

Registration of veterinary nurses trained outside of the EU/EEA

7. Currently where a qualification has been achieved outside the EU/EEA the application is sent to the equivalency officer for consideration. Where a large number of applications are received from one country/awarding organisation, VNC is asked to consider applying the same assessment to all applicants from that country/awarding organisation. This is the case for applications received from Australia, New Zealand, South Africa and the USA. Holders of
certain qualifications from these countries do not have their qualification assessed but are required to pass the RCVS Pre-registration examination (theory and practical).

8. All other applications from outside the EU/EEA are assessed on a case by case basis. Where the training is similar to that in the UK the applicant is permitted to enter the RCVS Pre-registration examination, regardless of where they trained. If their training time is significantly less than that required of UK nurses a period of adaptation must also be completed.

2015/16 Applications

9. The tables below show the details of applications received between 1 April 2015 and 31 March 2016. The figures for 2014/2015 are also shown in brackets for comparison.

10. For the period 2015/2016 the way applications are recorded has changed. Previously we recorded the complete and incomplete applications. We now only record applications when we have all of the forms and payment and it is ready to send to the assessor. We currently have around 20 incomplete applications. These are not recorded in this report. It is likely that this new method of recording has resulted in a decrease of 35%.

11. This new way of recording has resulted in no pending applications.

12. The number of applicants proceeding to registration has increased by 24%. Many of these applied in 2014/2015 and either achieved the Pre-registration examination or completed a Period of Supervised Adaptation during 2015/2016.

13. Approximately 2% (287) RVNs currently on the register were training outside the UK. This has increased from 1.8% (228) in 2015.

14. 7.4% of new registrants between 1 April 2014 and 31 March 2105 were trained outside the UK. This in an increase of 1.4%

15. All applicants are given the option to declare their first language and confirm any English qualifications they have. 62% (33) applicants trained in the EU declared English as their first language. 86% (32) applicants trained outside the EU declared that English was their first language. It should be noted that we do not collect English Language data at the point of registration and therefore it is not possible this year to confirm how many new registrants have English as their first language. This will be possible in future years.
Table 1 Applications for entry onto the register by nurses trained outside the UK

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<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Total Applications</th>
<th>Accepted</th>
<th>Adaptation</th>
<th>Pending</th>
<th>Rejected</th>
<th>Registered</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>EU applicants</td>
<td>53 (75)</td>
<td>40 (51)</td>
<td>13 (15)</td>
<td>0 (8)</td>
<td>0 (1)</td>
<td>54 (49)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Non-EU applicants</td>
<td>37 (44)</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>36 (39)</td>
<td>0 (1)</td>
<td>1 (4)</td>
<td>29 (18)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>90 (119)</td>
<td>40 (51)</td>
<td>49 (54)</td>
<td>0 (9)</td>
<td>1 (5)</td>
<td>83 (67)</td>
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Table 2 Applications for entry onto the register by nurses trained within the EU/EEA

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Total Applications</th>
<th>Accepted</th>
<th>Adaptation</th>
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<th>Registered</th>
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<tr>
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<td>2 (0)</td>
<td>0 (0)</td>
<td>0 (0)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Bulgaria</td>
<td>1 (0)</td>
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<td>1 (0)</td>
<td>0 (0)</td>
<td>0 (0)</td>
<td>0 (0)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Denmark</td>
<td>0 (0)</td>
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<td>0 (0)</td>
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<td>0 (1)</td>
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<tr>
<td>France</td>
<td>0 (2)</td>
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<td>0 (0)</td>
<td>0 (1)</td>
<td>0 (1)</td>
<td>0 (1)</td>
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<td>Germany</td>
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<tr>
<td>Italy</td>
<td>0 (3)</td>
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<td>0 (0)</td>
<td>0 (0)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Lithuania</td>
<td>1 (0)</td>
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<td>1 (0)</td>
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<td>0 (0)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Netherlands</td>
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<td>1 (0)</td>
<td>0 (0)</td>
<td>0 (0)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Norway</td>
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<td>1 (0)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Poland</td>
<td>3 (2)</td>
<td>0 (0)</td>
<td>3 (0)</td>
<td>0 (2)</td>
<td>0 (0)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Portugal</td>
<td>9 (16)</td>
<td>4 (3)</td>
<td>5 (10)</td>
<td>0 (3)</td>
<td>0 (0)</td>
<td>3 (6)</td>
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<td>Republic of Ireland</td>
<td>32 (44)</td>
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Table 3 Applications for enter onto the register by nurses trained outside the EU/EEA

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Total Applications</th>
<th>Accepted</th>
<th>Adaptation</th>
<th>Pending</th>
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Key:

Accepted Application accepted without further assessment requirement. This is only applicable for nurses trained with the EU/EEA.

Adaptation Additional assessment required. This could take the form of a Period of Supervised Adaptation (PSA) in a UK veterinary practice and/or a passing the RCVS Pre-registration examinations. The Pre-registration examination is compulsory for nurses trained outside the EU/EEA.

Pending Application is incomplete and awaiting further information.

Rejected Applicant does not meet the minimum RCVS requirement for entry onto the register of veterinary nurses. Applications from veterinary surgeons fall into this category.

Current Challenges

The number of enquiries from veterinary technicians trained in east Europe has increased. Many of these do not reach assessment stage because they are unable to provide evidence of the content of the qualification. Record keeping at institutions appears to be poor. It should also be noted that the
veterinary technician qualification is a route to training as a veterinary surgeon. It is therefore envisaged that some of the successful applicants will eventually register as veterinary surgeons once they have gained more experience.

The number of Veterinary Surgeons trained overseas wishing to register as veterinary nurses, without a veterinary nursing qualification has increased. Enquirers are informed that only a veterinary nurse/veterinary technician qualification is accepted as a route to registration as a veterinary nurse. Wording to this effect will be added to the application form.

The cost to the applicant of translating documents is high. We receive a number of objections for the need for official translation of the course syllabus. Where possible we work with the applicant to identify the part of the syllabus to be translated. The need to translate documents and the use of an official translator will be strengthened on the application form.

There has been an increase of nurses trained outside the UK being employed as veterinary nurses prior to registration. We have recently received applications from people who have been working in the UK for up to 10 years. There is significant information on the application form and often within the reference to show that they have been delegated acts of veterinary surgery that they are not permitted to perform. The VN dept are vigilant especially where UK practices are detailed on the application form. Where there is clear evidence that the applicant has undertaken acts of veterinary surgery they are required to complete an assignment covering the role of the veterinary team and UK legislation. We also intend to write to the employer or the person providing the reference. The number of assignments completed in 2015/2016 is five.
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<td>Classification</td>
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<td>Summary</td>
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<tr>
<td>Author</td>
<td>Ben Myring</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Senior Policy and Public Affairs Officer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><a href="mailto:b.myring@rcvs.org.uk">b.myring@rcvs.org.uk</a></td>
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The RCVS review of Schedule 3 / The Role of the Veterinary Nurse Working Party

Background

1. In 2015 the RCVS led a campaign to ask the government to give legal protection to the title ‘veterinary nurse’. Given the government's deregulatory agenda it was always going to be challenging to persuade it to protect the title in this parliament, and sadly it eventually responded to the petition to explain that it will not introduce new legislation to criminalise improper use of the title ‘veterinary nurse’. While this is disappointing, the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra) has offered to look at other ways of bolstering the veterinary nursing profession.

2. Defra made the specific and substantial offer (without promising a specific outcome) of a review of Schedule 3 of the Veterinary Surgeons Act 1966. Not only does this give the RCVS the opportunity to seek to increase the role of veterinary nurses (‘VNs’) in anaesthesia, as agreed in principle by RCVS Council in 2015, it also grants the opportunity for a broader review of the Schedule. There may be an opportunity to change or simplify the language so that it is easier for vets and VNs to determine what can and cannot be delegated. This could be accompanied by changes to RCVS guidance on Schedule 3. In addition, Schedule 3 could be reformed in order to decouple the rights of VNs from those of farmers. The Exemption Orders and Associates Working Party will be examining Schedule 3 as it relates to farmers and animal owners so that the Role of the Veterinary Nurse working party can concentrate on the provisions relating to VNs.

3. The Defra offer is timely, as it coincides with the VN Futures project, which is already underway. The Schedule 3 review will take longer than the VN Futures project, but their aims overlap, and information gathered at VN Futures workshops can inform the Schedule 3 review and vice versa. The Schedule 3 review project will take responsibility for relevant actions generated by the VN Futures project.

4. The Schedule 3 review will also feed in to the Exemption Orders and Associates Working Party, which is currently examining how RCVS Associate status might work in practice, as well as conducting a review of the exemption orders currently in place.

The Review: Phase 1

5. The Schedule 3 review will involve three phases. Phase 1 is already underway. This involves desktop research undertaken by the Senior Policy & Public Affairs Officer, including:

   a. Historical research into the evolution of the Veterinary Surgeons Act 1966 and the development of Schedule 3.

   b. An overseas comparison to establish what VNs (and comparable ‘veterinary technician’ roles) are legally entitled to do in other jurisdictions, and to explore the nature of their training schemes. A formal survey will be sent out to various overseas regulators and competent authorities. Examination of historical comparisons suggests
that the VN profession abroad is usually less developed than in the UK, but there are exceptions. For instance, veterinary nurses in the Netherlands appear to have a larger role in anaesthesia.

6. Information gathering sessions: The RCVS organised a successful Schedule 3 workshop at the recent British Small Animal Veterinary Association (BSAVA) Congress, and holds Schedule 3 sessions at the VN Futures events being held across the country. Regional Question Time sessions will also be used to gather views.

7. A short and simple survey may be undertaken of British Veterinary Nursing Association (BVNA) members to establish their views on Schedule 3 reform as part of the VN Futures project.

Phase 2

8. Prior to RCVS Council in June, the RCVS Operational Board will be asked to approve and fund a formal working party to take the review forward. Membership will include key stakeholders such as the BVNA and BSAVA, and representatives of both VNC (including the Chair) and RCVS Council. At least one member will also sit on the Exemption Orders and Associates Working Party.

9. As the role of farmers is not to be covered by this working party, and as the term ‘Schedule 3’ is somewhat technical, it has been suggested that the working party be called ‘The Role of the Veterinary Nurse Working Party’

10. The working party may build on the desktop research by commissioning, with professional research company advice, a formal survey of both the veterinary and veterinary nursing professions to seek their views on the future role of the veterinary nurse. This would create a solid evidence base for decision-making.

11. The working party will then establish a settled position on what additional tasks, if any, should be available for delegation to veterinary nurses. It will also consider what changes to the RCVS’s guidance, if any, would be appropriate in order to give the professions more confidence around delegation.

Phase 3

12. Once a settled position has been arrived at, the RCVS will begin negotiations with Defra about the necessary reforms. Amendments to Schedule 3 would require a Ministerial Order, but substantial change may be possible by amending RCVS guidance.
This paper provides the analysis of the 2015 audit of CPD records of veterinary nurses.
Background

1. In November 2015, VN Education Committee received a paper about the initial findings of the 2015 CPD audit of Veterinary Nurses. This paper contains the full analysis of records and raises some of the issues that have been identified through the audit process.

Outcomes of the audit

2. Responses were received from 739 veterinary nurses (93%):
   a. 470 RVNs whose records show that they are compliant with the CPD requirement for the three year period 2012-2014 (64% of respondents).
   b. 104 RVNs who did not reach the CPD requirement for 2012-2014, but are compliant with the CPD requirement for 2013-2015 (Total percentage of 78%)
   c. 165 RVNs whose records show that they are not currently compliant with the CPD requirement of 45 hours over 3 years.

3. 59 RVNs have not responded to either the initial letter requesting their records or to the subsequent reminders.

4. Appendix 1 provides a further analysis of the audit results.

Non-compliance

5. 165 RVNs were not compliant with CPD requirement of 45 hours over 3 years (either for the years 2012-2014 or 2013-2015). 42% did not give any reason for being non-compliant. The main reasons for non-compliance were:
   a. Maternity leave (22%)
   b. Family Commitments (8%)
   c. Cannot find records (7%)
   d. Will not renew their registration (5%)
   e. Time or money (3%)
   f. Illness (2%)

6. Any RVN that did not reach the CPD requirement will be included in this year’s audit. A number of RVNs have been included in several audits but are still non-compliant. 53% of the non compliant RVNs have only been included in one audit, 18% in two audits, 9% in three and for 20% of the RVNs in this group this was the fourth audit that they have been included in and they are still non compliant.

7. RVNs that were non compliant, recorded an average of 28 hours over the three years. The average hours of CPD for nurses included in their first audit was 26 compared to 22 hours for RVNs that had been included in four audits. The average number of CPD hours for non compliant RVNs in the 2014 audit were slight higher but still between 25 and 28, with the lowest number for RVNs included in three audits.
8. The breakdown of CPD hours for the non compliant show that 56% of RVNs have recorded less than 30 hours of CPD over the three years. For RVNs that have been included in three audits the percentage is 73% and 61% for RVNs included in four audits. These figures are slightly higher compared to the results from the audit in 2014.

**Non Respondents**

9. 59 (7%) RVNs did not respond to any communication from the RCVS regarding their CPD, which is a better result than 2014 or 2013 when 12% of the RVNs were non responders.

10. The breakdown by age or years on the register show that almost 90% of non responders are between 25 and 45 and 70% of them had been on the register between 4 to 11 years.

11. The CPD Referral Group was set up in September 2015 and 21 nurses who had been included in 3 or 4 audits but not responded to any correspondence from the RCVS were referred to the Registrar for investigation. The outcomes of the investigation were:
   (a) 6 RVNs sent us their CPD records and were compliant with the CPD requirement and therefore no further actions were required.
   (b) 8 RVNs were non compliant with the CPD requirement and would therefore be asked to submit CPD records and a development plan by the 11th March 2016.
   (c) 6 RVNs did not respond to requests for CPD records and were therefore referred to the Professional Conduct Department.
   (d) 1 RVN voluntarily removed her name from the register so no further action was required.

**Analysis of CPD records**

12. The median number of CPD hours across all groups was 50. The mean number of hours was 89. The range of hours was 0-2000. Whilst 2000 was the maximum number of hours recorded in the 3-year period covered by the audit, there were just over ten records that showed more than 1000 hours of CPD.

13. The breakdown of CPD hours by age groups show that between 60-72% are compliant with the CPD requirement. Compliance is higher for the oldest group (72%) and lowest for the groups between 35-54 years old. This is comparable to 2014’s results and consistent with the reasons given for non-compliance such as maternity leave or family commitments.

14. The breakdown of CPD hours by the number of years on the register show that non compliance is highest for the group that has been on register between 31 and 49 years. For the other groups compliance is between 61 and 68%.

15. 71% of respondents used the PDR to record their CPD and 83% of RVNs that were using the PDR were compliant with the CPD requirement compared to 65% for non PDR users.

16. The most common types of CPD activity were different kinds of formal learning such as formal distance learning, studying for an external qualification, attending lectures, and
seminars/workshops. Formal learning accounted for 71% of all CPD hours compared to 65% in 2014. The main difference between CPD activities in 2014 and 2015 was that formal distance learning accounted for 11% of CPD in 2014 but it has risen to 27% in 2015.

17. For non compliant RVNs the most popular activities were lectures (27%), seminars (13%), in house training (13%) and ad hoc reading (12%). Amongst compliant RVNs the most popular activities were studying for external qualification (27%), lectures (15%), formal distance learning (12%) and seminars (11%). The most notable difference between the two groups is that in house training only accounted for 4% of the total number of CPD hours for compliant nurses compared to 13% for non compliant ones (6% overall).

Next steps

18. Other Professional bodies have started to move towards an outcome based approach to CPD and it has been several discussions in Council about changing the requirement. The CPD Policy Working Group was set up last year to review the policy and a paper outlining their suggestions will be presented to the Education Committee in June.

19. It is suggested that the next audit of CPD records will take place in June 2016 and include:
   a. A random sample of 8% of RVNs on the register
   b. RVNs who submitted a return in 2015 but fell some hours short of the overall requirement.
   c. RVNs who, despite reminders, failed to respond to requests to submit their CPD records in 2015, and yet remain active on the Register of Veterinary Nurses.
   d. RVNs who confirmed that they were not compliant with the CPD Requirement at the annual renewal.
### Annex A - Analysis of audit outcomes

#### Summary

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<th>Compliance (C)</th>
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<td>460</td>
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[Bar chart showing total percentages for C Total % and NC Total % across different groups for 2015 and 2014]
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### CPD Breakdown by years on the register

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Non-Compliance

Non compliant RVNS - number of audits

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Average number of CPD hours for Non compliant RVNs

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CPD hours breakdown for non compliant RVNs

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<tr>
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<tr>
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<tr>
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<tr>
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| Authors         | Michael Hepper  
|                 | Barrister/Chief Investigator  
|                 | 020 7202 0755  
|                 | m.hepper@rcvs.org.uk  
|                 | Eleanor Ferguson  
|                 | Solicitor/Head of Professional Conduct  
|                 | 020 7202 0718  
|                 | e.ferguson@rcvs.org.uk          |
Royal College of Veterinary Surgeons

Registered Veterinary Nurses Preliminary Investigation Committee

Chair’s report to VN Council 3 May 2016

Introduction

Since the last Report to Council there has been one meeting on 5 April 2016 of the RVN Preliminary Investigation Committee.

RVN Concerns received

Between 12 January 2016 and 18 April 2016 there were eleven new Concerns received against RVNs. Of these eleven new Concerns, six are currently under investigation by the Case Examiners Group (a veterinary and lay member on RVN PIC and a Case Manager) and Five Concerns of failing to provide the RCVS with their respective CPD records when requested to do so are currently being investigated by the Chief Investigator.

RVN Preliminary Investigation Committee

The total number of new cases considered by the Committee between January 2016 and 18 April 2016 was one. The Committee closed this case with advice issued to the RVN.

The RVN PIC Committee had previously adjourned one case for an investigation visit to be carried out. The further investigations are completed and the Committee has requested an extra ordinary meeting to consider this case, which will be reported in a future Report to VN Council.

The table overleaf shows the number, categories and stages of Concerns received against RVNs between 1 April 2011 (the date that RVNs were subject to regulation under the Rules agreed by VN and RCVS Council in November 2010) and 18 April 2016.
RVN Concerns registered between 1 April 2011 and 18 April 2016

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<td>Fees</td>
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<td>Promoting the Practice</td>
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<td>Running the business</td>
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<td>F</td>
<td>Treatment of animals by non-vet nurse</td>
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<td>Negligence/Inadequate Care</td>
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<td>29</td>
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<td>Other (for example, fraudulent registration and investigations involving other agencies)</td>
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<td><strong>114</strong></td>
<td><strong>32</strong></td>
<td><strong>2</strong></td>
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</table>

Data source – Profcon computer system complaints data. Category ‘X’ is a temporary field assigned to complaint files where a final category has not been identified.

Ongoing Investigations

The RVN PIC Committee has three ongoing cases. Of these three cases, one is adjourned pending the outcome of criminal court trial against an RVN. The trial date has been scheduled for 25 April 2016; one case was previously referred to the College’s external...
solicitors for statements. The statements have been taken and await witness signatures. When received, the case will be returned to the Committee for consideration. The third case considered by the Committee awaits further information from a third party. The outcome of these three cases will be reported in a future Report to VN Council.

Health Concerns

There are currently three RVNs being considered for the RCVS Health Protocol.

Referral to Disciplinary Committee

Since the last report the RVN PIC Committee has not referred any new cases to the RVN Disciplinary Committee.

MDH/18/04/2016