

Veterinary Nurses Council

Wednesday 12 May 2021 at 10.30am to be held remotely by Microsoft Teams

Agenda	Classification ¹	Rationale ²
1. Apologies for absence	Oral report Unclassified	n/a
2. Declarations of interest	Oral report Unclassified	n/a
3. Obituaries	Unclassified	n/a
4. Minutes of meeting held on 10 February 2021		
i. Unclassified minutes	Unclassified	n/a
ii. Classified appendix	Confidential	1,2,3,4
5. Matters arising	Oral report Unclassified	n/a
6. CEO update	Oral report Unclassified	n/a
Matters for decision by VN Council and reports from Committees (unclassified items)		
7. VN Education Committee		
Minutes of meeting held on 13 April 2021		
i. Unclassified minutes	Unclassified	n/a
ii. Classified appendix	Confidential	2,3
Matters of note		
8. Report on enrolments and registrations from overseas		
08.01 Report on registration of VNs educated outside the UK	Unclassified	n/a
08.02 Report on temporary student enrolments	Unclassified	n/a
9. Reports from RCVS Committees		

09.01	RVN Preliminary Investigation Committee Annual Report	Unclassified	n/a
09.02	RVN Disciplinary Committee	Unclassified	n/a
09.03	Standards Committee	Oral report Unclassified	n/a
10.	Policy and Public Affairs update	Oral report Unclassified	n/a
11.	Communications report	Oral report Unclassified	n/a
12.	VN Council membership	Oral report Unclassified	
13.	Any other business (unclassified)	Oral report Unclassified	
14.	Date of next meeting Wednesday 15 September 2021 at 10.30am	Oral report Unclassified	

Confidential and private items (closed session)

15.	Election of Chair and Vice-Chair for 2021/2022	Oral report	
16.	VN Education Committee confidential items		
	16.01 Confidential items from meeting of 13 April 2021 (see item 07.01 classified appendix)	Confidential	2,3
17.	Any other business (confidential items)	Oral report	
18.	Risk Register	Oral report	
19.	Items for RCVS Committees	Oral report	

Annette Amato
Secretary, VN Council
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¹Classifications explained

Unclassified	Papers will be published on the internet and recipients may share them and discuss them freely with anyone. This may include papers marked 'Draft'.
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²Classification rationales

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SUSAN FLAGG RVN

23.08.1954 – 01.04.2021

Passing of a good friend and colleague, it's with much sadness that Sue Jane Flagg passed away on 1st April 2021 after a short but brave fight with secondary breast cancer.

A truly amazing lady, who had accomplished so much during her 66 years. Sue trained as a veterinary nurse at the age of 54 qualifying 03.02.2011 at the age of 56 (surely she must be in a minority at her age)

As a young girl under instruction from her father Lou, she became a black belt in judo under 16 years of age, the youngest person to achieve this at the time.

Shortly after she enrolled in the wrens and was a mechanic maintaining helicopters, even then she was causing mischief, drinking Prince Charles glass of wine because she thought he had finished with it, and was told off on parade for giggling. She would regularly meet up with her comrades in future years, attending remembrance services in London and also social gatherings which either turned into bun fights or hilarious mobility scooter obstacle courses.

She met her first husband Gene apparently on the Judo mat, they had three children together Tom Kate and Jon, she was also step mum to Gene's two children Suzanne and Lynda. She was hugely proud of all her children and was always interested in their lives. More recently her gorgeous grandson Ethan was born who she was so proud of, and Sue regularly talked on line to him so he would recognize her voice.

Having left the Wrens Sue worked for 15 years at Caxton Decor initially doing their accounts but with time became their interior designer, it was here she met Ken her second husband who had two children Gemma and Ollie.

Creativity oozed from every pore - Sue was always making something for someone we all have personal items she created for us, during the recent fires in Australia she made hundreds of paw mittens for Koalas and Kangaroos, and scrub tops for nurses during the Covid crisis ; her home is festooned with home - made curtains and soft furnishings. Sue always gave great amusement for her brightly coloured clothes and especially her scarves and with every new pair of glasses the frames became increasingly more vibrant, as you can imagine her fancy dress outfits were amazing.

After Kens death she pursued a long term dream to qualify as a veterinary nurse, which she did qualifying 23.03.2011 at the age of 56. She locumed for a couple of years - for a variety of practices including Langport Veterinary Centre in Somerset, where she was offered a permanent position. Sadly she was diagnosed with breast cancer in 2015, but despite this she still came into work during her treatment if she felt strong enough, even for just an hour, helping our practice manager Sharon through RVC standards. Eventually once her treatment finished she returned to a full time position.

In 2016 Sue rescued Roly the lurcher who became the love of her life. Roly now lives with Tom and Gordon in Salisbury.

Sue was a much travelled lady, she went on cruise's whale watching, husky sledging and naked snow baths in Scandinavia despite being by far the oldest on the trip, escapades to America to see her daughter Kate and trips to Japan to see her Son Jon. Just to mention a few.

She also went to Africa twice on charity trips Malawi and Botswana one of which the Langport Veterinary practice sponsored her.

She was involved in lots of organisations outside of work, including - Langport community choir which in 2018 were involved in a concert in Temple Meads Bristol for Water Aid. Sue was also a keen participant Stitch witches a sewing club and - Kingsbury mayday festival committee in the village she lived in and making the new curtains for their new community hall. Sue loved live music and theatre and regularly was attending one or the other.

Sue's other big passion Cake !! no birthday went past without a yummy Sue cake.

In 2019 Sue felt it necessary to throw herself out of an aeroplane for a Rabies charity as always she looked for new challenges.

Sue had a terrific sense of humour she was always playing pranks on the younger nurses, we were all her daughters and she would scold and hug us in equal measure.

She was and shall always be much loved and respected from all who knew her, there isn't a church large enough to accommodate all those who would wish to attend to pay their respects at her service.

She has as always had the last laugh passing away peacefully on April fools day, with her son Tom and sister Karen by her side.

I think she would want us to grieve her passing but only for a short while!! Sue would wish us all to live life to the full as she did and some..

Summary	
Meeting	Veterinary Nurses Council
Date	12 May 2021
Title	Minutes of meeting of Veterinary Nurses Council (VNC) held on 10 February 2021
Summary	Minutes of meeting of Veterinary Nurses Council (VNC) held on 10 February 2021
Decisions required	None
Attachments	Classified appendix
Author	Annette Amato Committee Secretary a.amato@rcvs.org.uk / 020 7202 0713

Classifications		
Document	Classification¹	Rationales²
Paper	Unclassified	n/a
Classified appendix	Confidential	1,2,3,4

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Veterinary Nurses Council

Minutes of the meeting held remotely via Microsoft Teams on Wednesday 10 February 2021

Members:	Mrs Belinda Andrews-Jones	-	Vice-Chair
	Miss Alison Carr		
	Ms Elizabeth Cox		
	Miss Jane Davidson		
	Mr Dominic Dyer		
	Dr Joanna Dyer		
	Ms Sarah Fox		
	Mrs Susan Howarth		
	Mrs Andrea Jeffery		
	Mrs Katherine Kissick		
	Mr Matthew Rendle	-	Chair
	Dr Katherine Richards		
	Ms Stephanie Richardson		
	Mrs Claire Roberts		
In attendance:	Mrs Annette Amato	-	Committee Secretary
	Mr Luke Bishop	-	Media and Publications Manager
	Mrs Julie Dugmore	-	Director of Veterinary Nursing
	Ms Eleanor Ferguson	-	Registrar
	Miss Shirley Gibbins	-	Qualifications Manager
	Mrs Victoria Hedges	-	Examinations Manager
	Ms Lizzie Lockett	-	Chief Executive
	Mr Ben Myring	-	Policy and Public Affairs Manager
	Mrs Jenny Soreskog Turp	-	Lead for Postgraduate Education

Apologies for absence

1. There were no apologies for absence.

Declarations of interest

2. There were no new declarations of interest.

Obituaries

3. No written obituaries had been received. Council was encouraged to have a moment of reflection after the meeting, for all members of the professions who had passed since the last meeting, and for the on-going difficulties resulting from the current pandemic.

Minutes of the meeting held on 9 September 2020

4. The Minutes of the meeting held on 9 September 2020 were accepted as a correct record.

Matters arising

5. There were no matters arising from the minutes of the previous meeting.

CEO update

6. The CEO presented her update report, which provided a summary of activity against the 2020-2024 Strategic Plan and which had been submitted to RCVS Council in January.
7. The College was starting to make progress with some of the strategic projects within the plan, including the Veterinary Graduate Development Programme (Vet GDP) project and some of the work being developed on diversity and inclusion.
8. The Covid Taskforce continued to meet on a regular basis, usually twice a month, and the VNC Chair was a member of the Taskforce. She confirmed that any decisions made were ratified by RCVS Council, and Council was given a two-day window in which to make any objections. There had been a number of recent decisions affecting veterinary nurses, including the extension of the annual fee payment window, and an extension of the enrolment period without charge for VN students who had been unable to complete their practical training and assessments.
9. The RCVS premises have been closed in the main since March last year, with the exception of some staff visits in the autumn between lockdown periods. Support had been put in place to address staff wellbeing and mental health, as well as virtual social and other staff engagement events.
10. As reported in the veterinary press, only one nomination (Susan Howarth) had been received for VN Council by the deadline of 31 January. Susan would therefore remain on VN Council for a further three-year term, and the nomination period had been extended until 28 February for the remaining place. There have been 14 nominations received for RCVS Council.
11. Some work had been carried out around College Council culture, aiming to provide increased clarity on the role of Council members and the behaviours expected of them. The CEO suggested that it would be useful to discuss with VN Council which of the aspects or the workshops being carried out with RCVS Council it would find useful.
12. The RCVS was about to launch its Diversity and Inclusion Strategy, which had involved input from various staff members including members of the VN team. An action plan was being developed

- around student veterinary nurse diversity.
13. In response to a question on the Legislation Working Party consultation document and whether only certain aspects, if favoured in the responses, might be included in the final recommendations, the CEO confirmed that some areas may be contingent on others in order to work as a package, and on balance all views would be taken into account. It was a consultation, not a referendum, and it should always be front of mind that the RCVS was acting primarily in the public interest.
 14. It was confirmed that the RCVS would continue to work with ACOVENE (Accreditation Committee for Veterinary Nurse Education) from a European perspective.
 15. It was commented that the work taking place on RCVS Council culture would be a useful aspect for VN Council to discuss. VNC inclusion on work on the Risk Registers would also be welcomed. It was also suggested that a survey on the impact of Covid-19 on VNs would be useful.
 16. The CEO was praised by Council for her dedication and diligence, and for support provided for the staff.

VN Education Committee (VNEC)

17. Susan Howarth, Chair of the VNEC, presented the report of the two meetings of the VNEC had held since the previous meeting of Council, and highlighted the following points:
18. **Minutes of meeting held on 13 October 2020.** The minutes of the meeting on 13 October had been circulated for approval in November, together with a summary of the key points for Council's attention.
19. **Minutes of meeting held on 13 January 2021.**
20. A new FE student representative had been welcomed to the Committee. The Committee now had a full complement of members representing all areas.
21. In response to the Covid situation, as noted by the CEO, student enrolments had been extended without a further fee for those whose final assessments had been delayed. Temporary guidance had been provided to universities and colleges on how the Day One Skills could be achieved or partially achieved in situations other than in practice. This had been found to be very helpful.
22. The VN team had requested regular updates from providers to identify areas where support may be needed. This would feed back into the monitoring activity.
23. A review had been carried out of the number of Training Practice (TP) placements required and the number of TPs, which had indicated that there were sufficient training practices in the UK for the number of students, although there were a few providers that did not have sufficient affiliated practices to support the number of students on their programme. The guidance was being strengthened to address this issue, as well as inclusion in the revised accreditation standards.

23. It was confirmed the design of the programme was taken into account when assessing the required TP numbers. The number of TPs had been taken from the RCVS database and was not double counted; a TP could only have one primary centre, even though it may take students from other institutions. In such cases there was a Memorandum of Understanding between the two institutions.
24. The final sessions of the VN Patient-Based Assessment (VN-PBA) had been delivered by City & Guilds in December. It was confirmed that currently there were no universities planning to run the PBA, nor were any of the other awarding organisations.
25. The Committee had decided to increase the number of meetings to six each year in order to allow for timely consideration of accreditation reports and decision making. There would therefore be occasions where two meetings report to one VNC meeting.

Continuing Professional Development

26. Alison Carr presented the minutes from the meeting of the CPD Compliance Panel held on 14 January 2021 and drew attention to two points of specific interest.
27. The Committee had reviewed twenty cases of veterinary nurses who had been non-compliant, having fallen short of the number of required CPD hours by a considerable amount. By the time the meeting took place, six nurses had met the requirement and the others had been sent emails to confirm the steps that they should take to address the shortfall. The other cases of non-compliance reviewed by the Committee were veterinary surgeons.
28. The Committee had looked for the first time at the CPD pause requests report, and this would be reviewed at each meeting in the future. 129 requests had been received, of which 111 had been approved and 18 had been declined as the individuals had not provided a return-to-work plan despite several requests. Of the applications that had been approved, 32 were from veterinary nurses and 79 were from veterinary surgeons. Parental leave was the most common reason for a CPD pause request (approximately 83%). The system seemed to be working well.

Reports from RCVS Committees

Registered Veterinary Nurse Preliminary Investigation Committee (RVN PIC)

29. The report from the RVN PIC of activities since the previous meeting of Council was noted. It was commented that it would be helpful to see a comparison of the number of concerns raised on an annual basis, and the Registrar suggested that this could be included in the annual VN PIC Chair's report to VN Council. The Registrar also commented that the number of concerns raised against veterinary nurses was consistently low and had been over a period of time.

RVN Disciplinary Committee

30. The report of two disciplinary hearings which had taken place since the previous meeting of Council was noted. In response to a query as to whether there had been any impact on the

disciplinary hearings during the Covid pandemic, it was noted that one hearing had taken place in-house, due to the smaller size of the RVN panel. Other hearings had taken place remotely. Respondents were offered the opportunity to have remote hearings and these were generally accepted. It was necessary to strike a balance and to be able to hold hearings in a timely manner.

Standards Committee

31. Claire Roberts provided a brief update from the Standards Committee meeting held on 8 February.
32. **Common medicine pitfalls.** The Standards and Advice team had collated common medicines issues and queries that were regularly identified through Practice Standards assessments, advice queries, concerns and also discussed at the RCVS and VMD bi-annual meetings. A list of FAQs had been drafted and agreed by the Committee, to be linked to the supporting guidance and published within a Standards and Advice update.
33. **Microchipping consultation.** The Committee was made aware of the DEFRA consultation on proposals to introduce mandatory microchipping of cats, and the RCVS would respond in due course.
34. **Equine ID.** The Committee approved further minor updates to Chapter 30 of the supporting guidance following input from the British Equine Veterinary Association (BEVA) regarding ownership disputes.

Practice Standards

35. Andrea Jeffery reported the very good news that at its January meeting, RCVS Council had approved a pathway for RVNs to apply to become Practice Standards Assessors. The concerns which had been raised in the past regarding veterinary nurses having the authority to go into practices as assessors had been allayed. A fuller report from the recent meeting of the Practice Standards Group would be made at the next meeting,
36. Council agreed that this was a very positive and welcome step. It was felt that this would lead to a great deal of interest within the profession and would also be a positive enhancement to career pathways, as part of the strategic plan.

Policy and Public Affairs update

37. The Policy and Public Affairs Manager provided a brief update.
38. There continued to be a good response to the Legislation Working Party consultation, for which the deadline had been extended due to Covid. Over 800 responses had already been received, of which 30% were from veterinary nurses.
39. The VN research would be resumed this year.
40. The new Environment and Sustainability Working Party recently held its first meeting, which had

been very successful with presentations from a range of groups including the British Veterinary Association (BVA), corporate practices and Vet Sustain. The next step would be to scope out the vision and principles for the group.

41. The first scoping meeting of the Vet Tech Working Party had taken place. Both Working Parties were in the early stages, but Council would be kept informed and a series of blogs would be published.
42. It was commented that it was good to see these initiatives being advanced, despite the current situation.

VN Register report

43. Council noted a report showing statistics on the total number of registered veterinary nurses, including the number of new registrations, removals and restorations annually for the calendar years 2015 – 2020. Figures were also provided for the number of student enrolments for the past six academic years. The number of admissions to the Register for 2020 was lower than previous years, due to the delay in final assessments for many students caused by the Covid pandemic, but it was anticipated that the numbers would increase in 2021 due to many students having completed the VN-PBA towards the end of the 2020.
44. The Director of Veterinary Nursing added that it seemed likely, from College feedback, that the number of student enrolments for 2020/21 would be on a par with the numbers for the previous year.
45. The number of nurses currently undertaking the Period of Supervised Practice, required for those returning to the Register after an absence of five years or more, was lower than in previous years.
46. It was commented that the number of nurses removed from the Register following non-payment of the annual fee had been lower in 2021. This was a positive point to feed back to the Registration Department, who had made considerable efforts in the communications around this area.

Communications report

47. The Media and Publications Manager provided an overview of recent activities in the Comms Department.
48. The Diversity and Inclusion Strategy was due to be published next week, and the College was looking to include this in a wider variety of publications than usual, including HR and Education.
49. Practice Standards Scheme eNews would be issued later that week and would include items on RVNs as Practice Standards Assessors, a guide to how the remote assessment process works and the forthcoming update to Core Standards.
50. The February edition of RCVS eNews was in the planning stage, and any suggestions for content would be welcome.

51. A key area of work had been the publicity around the Vet GDP programme, which would replace the Professional Development Phase (PDP) programme for newly qualified veterinary surgeons in the summer. There had been a considerable amount of interest, and already over a thousand veterinary surgeons had signed up to act as mentors in this programme.
52. The events team had been working on input into the British Small Animal Veterinary Association (BSAVA) virtual congress, which would include a section of the stand on VN Futures, as well as a session delivered by the VN Futures Coordinator on this area.
53. All VNs had been notified by email of the extension of the VN Council election period. The Chair confirmed that he had already received many expressions of interest as a result of the email.
54. A virtual veterinary nurses evening was being planned for 27 May, and speakers were currently being sought. It was confirmed that this was an open event and all VN Council members were very welcome to attend. Details would be confirmed nearer the time.
55. Emma Lockley in the Comms team had been appointed as Student Graduate and Engagement Manager for both veterinary and veterinary nursing students, and would work with the VN Team on outreach.
56. The website and online platforms were currently being updated in line with the new government rules on accessibility.

Any other business

57. The was no other business raised.

Date of next meeting

58. Wednesday, 12 May 2021 at 10.30am.

Summary	
Meeting	Veterinary Nurses Council
Date	12 May 2021
Title	Minutes of meeting of VN Education Committee held on 13 April 2021
Summary	Minutes of the meeting of Veterinary Nurse Education Committee held on 13 April 2021
Decisions required	To approve
Attachments	Classified appendix
Author	Annette Amato Committee Secretary a.amato@rcvs.org.uk / 020 7202 0713

Classifications		
Document	Classification¹	Rationales²
Paper	Unclassified	n/a
Classified appendix	Confidential	2,3

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Veterinary Nurse Education Committee
Minutes of the meeting held on 13 April 2021

Members:	Mrs Donna Cotton	-	Employer representative
	Miss Julia Cox	-	Employer representative
	* Ms Sarah Fox	-	VN Council lay member
	Mrs Sarah Holman	-	FE veterinary nursing provider
	Mrs Susan Howarth	-	VN Council veterinary nurse (Chair)
	Miss Carla Husband	-	HE student representative
	Mrs Caroline McCormick-Clarke	-	FE student representative
	Professor Elizabeth Mossop	-	Independent educationalist
	Mrs Sarah Parkhouse	-	FE veterinary nursing provider
	Mrs Sarah Reynolds-Golding	-	HE veterinary nursing provider
	* Mrs Perdi Welsh	-	Post-registration veterinary nurse provider
*absent			
In attendance:	Mrs Annette Amato	-	Committee Secretary
	Mrs Jasmine Curtis		Enrolments Officer
	Mrs Julie Dugmore	-	Director of Veterinary Nursing
	Mrs Denise Chambers	-	Qualifications Assessor
	Miss Shirley Gibbins	-	Qualifications Manager
	Mrs Victoria Hedges	-	Examinations Manager
	Miss Sian Tanner	-	Qualifications Co-ordinator

Apologies for absence

1. Apologies for absence were received from Sarah Fox and Perdi Welsh. Both members had sent comments on all items where decisions were required, which were brought into the discussion at the relevant point.

Declarations of interest

2. Elizabeth Mossop confirmed that she had been appointed as an external representative on the Royal Veterinary College's Learning, Teaching and Assessment Committee. In regard to items on the agenda, Sarah Reynolds-Golding declared an interest as external examiner for Coventry University. Susan Howarth declared an interest as programme manager for Harper Adams University..

Minutes of the meeting of the Education Committee (VNEC) held on 13 January 2021

3.	The Committee approved the minutes of the meeting held on 13 January 2021, which had been previously circulated and submitted to Veterinary Nurses Council in February.
Matters arising on the Minutes	
4.	There were no specific matters arising on the previous minutes, other than items covered in the agenda and veterinary nursing update.
Veterinary Nursing update	
5.	The Director of Veterinary Nursing updated the Committee on recent developments and activities.
6.	A small review of the standards framework had been carried out taking account of stakeholder feedback, as the standards had now been in use for twelve months. The revisions had been approved by VN Council in February. The Comms department was currently in the process of preparing the revised version into an appropriate format for the website. In the meantime, those institutions currently undergoing accreditations or reaccreditations had been provided with a pdf version of the revised standards.
7.	The Covid taskforce had agreed that a full one-year enrolment extension should be granted to those students whose enrolment was due to expire between 1 March and 1 September 2021, without charge. The situation would be kept under review.
8.	Since 1 September 2020, a total of 1648 enrolment applications had been received. In general, enrolments were being processed within seven days, and no issues or delays had been reported.
9.	The enrolments officer was currently working with the IT department to develop an online system which would allow colleges to upload candidate details directly.
10.	The FAQs which had been placed on the website in March 2020 relating to completion of the Day One Skills, clinical placements and the OSCEs continued to be kept under review and updated as necessary.
11.	The Day One Competences and Day One Skills review is underway with a view to full stakeholder consultation in the Autumn.
12.	The pre-registration OSCE planned for March had been cancelled and all candidates due to attend have been entered for the 19 and 20 June session.
13.	The VN department underwent a restructuring in March to allow for career progression and succession, even distribution of workload and to better reflect the various roles within the department. Recruitment for two new roles was currently underway.

VN Licence to practise qualifications	
Action plan monitoring accreditation / re-accreditation	
14.	Wrexham Glyndwr University. All actions from the most recent accreditation have now been met.
Changes to accreditation status	
15.	University of Bristol. The Committee noted a paper requesting an accreditation extension of one year. Having reviewed the request, the Committee was in unanimous agreement that this should be extended as requested. The re-accreditation of this programme will now be due in the academic year 2021/22.
Quality Monitoring activities	
16.	The Committee was provided with full updates on quality monitoring activities for the following:
17.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Anglia Ruskin University • Coventry University • Middlesex University • University of Plymouth • University of South Wales • City & Guilds - The Open College of Equine Studies (TOCES)
18.	City & Guilds Patient Based Assessment (VN-PBA) update. The Examinations Manager provided a detailed report on the delivery and quality assurance of the VN-PBA. Veterinary Nurses Council had been provided with the report at its February meeting, and had agreed some changes to the VN-PBA structure, if it were to be delivered again in the future. It was reported that City & Guilds had informed its centres that it did not intend to deliver any further VN-PBA.
19.	City & Guilds OSCE. The Examinations Manager reported on the recent City & Guilds OSCE delivered by VetSkill, and the subsequent actions which were being monitored.
Action plan monitoring quality assurance	
20.	The Committee was updated on the quality monitoring of action plans for the following HEIs and Centres:
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • University of Bristol • Oxford Brookes University • Hartpury University • Central Qualifications - Central College of Animal Studies (CCOAS) • City & Guilds – Vet Partners Liphook

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • South Gloucestershire & Stroud College • University of Portsmouth
External Examiner updates	
21.	The Committee noted the list of current external examiners for the licence to practise qualifications, together with the relevant CVs and CPD information for new examiners. A separate list of the external examiners for the Certificate in Advanced Veterinary Nursing was provided.
22.	It was agreed that it would be timely to review the criteria for external examiners for both the licence to practise and the post-registration qualifications, and details will be brought to the next meeting of the Committee.
Post-registration qualifications	
Certificate in Advanced Veterinary Nursing Quality monitoring	
23.	Harper Adams University. It was noted that good progress was being made, and an extension to the timeline had recently been agreed.
Accreditation Action plan monitoring	
24.	Royal Veterinary College. It was reported that all actions were now complete with the exception of one relating to assessment which could not yet be carried out.
Items for publication	
25.	There were no specific items. The newly accredited CertAVN programmes would be added to the list on the website.
Any other business	
26.	There was no other business.
Meeting dates	
27.	The remaining meeting dates for 2021 were confirmed as follows: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Friday 25 June • Wednesday 4 August • Wednesday 13 October • Thursday 16 December
28.	Meeting dates for 2022 were confirmed and details would be circulated: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wednesday 16 February • Tuesday 12 April

	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Thursday 16 June• Wednesday 10 August• Wednesday 12 October• Tuesday 13 December
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Summary	
Meeting	Veterinary Nurses Council
Date	12 May 2021
Title	Report on registration of VNs educated outside the UK
Summary	This paper summarises the applications for registration from nurses trained outside the UK. It covers the period between 1 April 2020 and 31 March 2021.
Decisions required	None
Attachments	Annex A – Registration process for VNs educated outside the UK
Authors	Victoria Hedges Examinations Manager v.hedges@rcvs.org.uk / 020 7202 0782

Classifications		
Document	Classification¹	Rationales²
Paper	Unclassified	
Annex A	Unclassified	

¹Classifications explained

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Registration for holders of qualifications achieved outside the UK (2020/2021)

Background

1. RCVS considers applications from nurses educated outside the UK. Annex A provides an overview of the process followed to determine the suitability of applicant to join the register.
2. This paper provides details of the outcome of applications received between 1 April 2020 and 31 March 2021 from individuals intending to enter the register of veterinary nurses in the UK.

Outcome of applications received between 1 April 2020 and 31 March 2021

3. The tables below show the data for completed applications received. A completed application is one where all information including payment is received within the reporting period. The figures in brackets relate to the previous reporting period (1 April 2019 and 31 March 2020) and have been provide for comparison.

Table 1

Applications for entry onto the register by nurses trained outside the UK

Applicants qualification origin	Total Applications	Accepted	Adaptation	Rejected	Registered
EU	32 (41)	26 (30)	6 (9)	0 (2)	27 (37)
Non-EU	27 (34)	N/A	27 (33)	0 (1)	8 (25)
Total	59 (75)	26 (30)	33 (42)	0 (3)	35 (62)

Table 2**Applications for entry onto the register by nurses trained within the EU/EEA**

Applicants qualification origin	Total Applications	Accepted	Adaptation	Rejected	Registered
Belgium	0 (2)	0 (2)	0 (0)	0 (0)	0 (1)
Denmark	0 (2)	0 (2)	0 (0)	0 (0)	0 (2)
Croatia	0 (0)	0 (0)	0 (0)	0 (0)	1 (0)
France	1 (0)	0 (0)	1 (0)	0 (0)	0 (0)
Germany	1 (2)	(0)	1 (2)	0 (0)	2 (0)
Italy	2 (7)	2 (6)	0 (0)	0 (1)	0 (5)
Netherlands	1 (0)	1 (0)	0 (0)	0 (0)	1 (0)
Poland	0 (2)	0 (0)	0 (1)	0 (1)	1 (0)
Portugal	5 (7)	4 (5)	1 (2)	0 (0)	2 (14)
Republic of Ireland	20 (18)	19 (15)	1 (3)	0 (0)	20 (15)
Romania	1 (1)	0 (0)	1 (1)	0 (0)	0 (0)
Slovenia	1 (0)	0 (0)	1(1)	0 (0)	0 (0)

Table 3**Applications for entry onto the register by nurses trained outside the EU/EEA**

Applicants qualification origin	Total Applications	Accepted	Adaptation	Rejected	Registered
Australia	9 (17)	N/A	9 (17)	0 (0)	3 (14)
Canada	2 (2)	N/A	2 (2)	0 (0)	1 (2)
Hong Kong	0 (2)	N/A	0 (2)	0 (0)	0 (0)
New Zealand	4 (7)	N/A	4 (7)	0 (0)	1 (5)
Serbia	0 (1)	N/A	0 (0)	0 (1)	0 (0)
South Africa	6 (5)	N/A	6 (5)	0 (0)	2 (1)
USA	5 (0)	N/A	5 (0)	0 (0)	1 (3)
Zimbabwe	1 (0)	N/A	1 (0)	0 (0)	0 (0)

Key:

Accepted Application accepted without further assessment requirement. This is only applicable for individuals educated within the EU/EEA whose applications arrived before 1 January 2021.

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. As from 1 January 2021 the Examination is compulsory for all applicants except those who qualified at an ACOVENE accredited institution.

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.

4. We received 59 completed applications for the reporting period. This is a decrease on the previous year. The reporting period started at the beginning of the first Covid 19 Lockdown, which probably contributed to the reduction in applications. It should however be noted that there was an increase in applications from nurses educated in the Republic of Ireland and the USA.
5. As of 31 March 2021 there were 9 partially completed applications. Reasons for non-completion relate to lack of / or incorrect affidavits, no payment and insufficient evidence about the content of the qualification. Many of these omissions are likely to be caused by changes in the applicant's circumstances due to the Covid 19 Pandemic. Where applications are incomplete, we communicate with the applicant and support them to obtain the required information.
6. The number of applicants entering the register decreased from 62 in 2019/20 to 35 in 2020/21.
7. As of 31 March 2021, 456 nurses educated outside the UK are active on the register This equates to 1.9% of all RVNs on that date. It should be noted that this is a reduction of 17 from the previous year.
8. All applicants are given the option to declare their first language and confirm any English qualifications they have. Sixty eight percent of applicants declared English as their first language.
9. Two applicants provided information about employment/internships they had previously completed in the UK without first obtaining a temporary student enrolment. These applicants included details of procedures which they were not legally permitted to undertake. They were therefore required to complete an assignment covering the role of the veterinary team and UK legislation before entering the register. Where this occurs, the employer is reminded of the legislation around delegation to people who are neither students nor registered veterinary nurses.
10. One applicant was advised to withdraw their application because it would be rejected due to them not holding a specific veterinary nursing qualification.

Other information

11. The RCVS webpage dedicated to veterinary nurses educated outside the UK has been completely redesigned and is now more informative and welcoming.
12. We have also recorded a webinar providing details about the registration process for veterinary nurses educated outside the UK. This has been included as part of the Introduction to the UK Veterinary professions CPD course run by RCVS and VDS Training.
13. In conjunction with the IT team, we are moving the application process online. This will aid with better record keeping and more payment options. Applicants will eventually be able to book and pay for their examinations and other events through the 'My account' area and even register using this platform when they have met the registration criteria.

Registration process for VNs educated outside the UK

Background

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

Registration of veterinary nurses educated within the EU/EEA (pre 1 January 2021)

2. The EU directive 2013/55/EU sets out the general system for the recognition of evidence of training/education for the purpose of establishment in the host country (in this case the UK). It outlines that where someone is seeking to work in a regulated profession they must register with the relevant competent authority (in this case the RCVS). The competent authority must check whether the professional is eligible for recognition. This includes checking the level of the qualification, the content of the qualification, post qualification experience and CPD that they have undertaken. If there is a difference between the home country and the host country requirements, the competent authority in the host country can put compensation measures in place to ensure that the applicant meets their minimum requirements.
3. Recognition is also be granted to migrants whose profession is not regulated/recognised 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 consider their professional experience, and the applicant may in principle choose between the adaptation period or the aptitude test.
4. Holders of ACOVENE (the European Accreditation Committee for Veterinary Nurse Education) accredited qualifications are normally permitted to enter the register directly regardless of the time they have spent working in a veterinary practice. The exception to this is where an applicant has completed their qualification via distance learning. They are then processed as outlined in paragraph 2 and 3.
5. When receiving an application from a veterinary nurse educated in the EU, RCVS 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 that they take an aptitude test and/or complete a period of supervised adaptation. The VN Equivalency Officer determines this in conjunction with the Examinations Manager.

6. Veterinary nursing qualifications are not normally accepted if they are below Level 3 on the Qualification and Curriculum framework (QCF). This is equivalent to the European Qualifications Framework (EQF) Level 4. They are also not accepted if there is little evidence that the qualification leads the holder to work as a veterinary nurse in the country of issue.
7. All applicants need to include attestations of competence or 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.
8. Where holders of an EU veterinary nursing qualification did not train in an ACOVENE accredited institution their qualification is assessed against the RCVS Day One Skills for Veterinary Nurses and RCVS Day One Competences for Veterinary Nurses and the equivalence is determined.
9. Applications received after 1 January 2021 are processed using the mechanisms in place for veterinary nurses educated outside the EU/EEA with the following exceptions:
 - Holders of ACOVENE accredited qualifications detailed in these guidance notes will continue to have direct entry onto the register (except those delivered via distance learning).
 - Swiss nationals who started their qualification before the 1 January 2021 can apply for recognition in the UK under the EU rules in force before the end of the Transition Period, up until the 1 January 2024.

Registration of veterinary nurses educated outside of the EU/EEA

10. Where a qualification has been achieved outside the EU/EEA the application is considered by the VN Equivalency Officer. 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 was the case for applications received from Australia, New Zealand, South Africa, Hong Kong, Canada 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.
11. All other applications from individuals educated outside the EU/EEA are assessed on a case-by-case basis. Where the education is similar to that delivered 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 equal to the deficient training time must also be completed.
12. Applicants are permitted to work in practice by enrolling for an optional Period of Supervised Adaptation while they prepare for the Pre-registration examination.
13. Holders of veterinary degrees who do not also hold a veterinary nursing or veterinary technician qualification are not permitted to enter the register in the UK.

14. We hold monthly registration events which new registrants are required to attend. They receive a talk covering the role of the RCVS and the legislation in place in the UK. This is compulsory for all new registrants. During the Covid 19 Pandemic these have been delivered as online events.

Summary	
Meeting	Veterinary Nurses Council
Date	12 May 2021
Title	Report on temporary student enrolment
Summary	This paper summarises the applications for temporary student enrolment completed between 1 April 2020 and 31 March 2021.
Decisions required	None
Attachments	None
Authors	<p>Victoria Hedges Examinations Manager v.hedges@rcvs.org.uk / 020 7202 0782</p> <p>Jasmine Curtis VN Enrolments Officer j.curtis@rcvs.org.uk / 020 70501229</p>

Classifications		
Document	Classification¹	Rationales²
Paper	Unclassified	

¹Classifications explained

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²Classification rationales

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Report on temporary student enrolments

Background

1. Student veterinary nurses studying outside the UK may apply for temporary student enrolment to allow them to complete a short period of work experience in the UK.
2. Applications are either made on behalf of large groups of students travelling as part of an organised exchange programme or individuals travelling on their own.
3. The length of temporary student enrolment is normally for a maximum period of 12 weeks which can be split into two 6-week blocks. Only one temporary enrolment application is permitted. The majority of the student's required practical experience must be completed outside the UK.
4. The application must be supported by the student's school / college and the training practice that they will be attending.
5. This paper provides details of the outcome of applications for temporary student enrolment commenced between 1 April 2020 and 31 March 2021.

Temporary enrolment between 1 April 2020 and 31 March 2021

6. Table 1 shows details of application for temporary student enrolment for the reporting period. The figures in brackets relate to the previous reporting period (1 April 2019 and 31 March 2020) and have been provide for comparison.

Table 1

Applications for temporary enrolments

Applicants qualification origin	Number of Applications
Netherlands	0 (7)
Portugal	0 (3)
Republic of Ireland	23 (17)
USA	1 (0)
Total	24 (28)

Summary	
Meeting	Veterinary Nurses Council
Date	12 May 2021
Title	RVN Preliminary Investigation Committee Annual Report to VN Council
Summary	This report sets out the work of the Registered Veterinary Nurse (RVN) Preliminary Investigation Committee (PIC)
Decisions required	None
Attachments	None
Authors	<p>Sandra Neary Professional Conduct Officer s.neary@rcvs.org.uk / 020 7202 0730</p> <p>Gemma Crossley Head of Professional Conduct g.crossley@rcvs.org.uk / 020 7202 0740</p>

Classifications		
Document	Classification¹	Rationales²
Paper	Unclassified	N/A

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Registered Veterinary Nurses Preliminary Investigation Committee

Annual Report to VN Council

Introduction

1. Since the last Report to Veterinary Nurses Council, there have been two meetings of the RVN Preliminary Investigation Committee, which took place on 23 February and 6 April 2021.

RVN Concerns received / registered

2. Between 23 January 2021 and 19 April 2021 there were 9 new concerns relating to RVNs. Of these 9 new concerns:
 - Three were closed at Stage 1 of the concerns process.
 - Six are currently under investigation by the Case Examiner Group (a veterinary nurse and lay member on RVN PIC and a Case Manager).

RVN Preliminary Investigation Committee

3. There have been two new concerns considered by the RVN PIC between 23 January 2021 and 19 April 2021. The first case was closed with advice issued to the RVN. The second case was referred to external solicitors for formal statements to be taken. At the meeting on 6 April, the RVN PIC referred one ongoing case to the RVN Disciplinary Committee.

Ongoing Investigations

4. Three concerns are currently under investigation and these will be returned to the RVN PIC for a decision in due course.

Health Concerns

5. One RVN is currently being managed in the context of the RCVS Health Protocol.

Performance Concerns

6. There are currently no RVNs being managed in the context of the RCVS Performance Protocol.

Referral to Disciplinary Committee

7. Since the last report, the RVN PIC has referred one case to the RVN Disciplinary Committee. The hearing will be listed in due course.

A disciplinary hearing took place between 18 and 21 January 2021 in respect of Karen Tracey Hancock. The Veterinary Nurse Disciplinary Committee found all the charges against Mrs Hancock proven and directed the Registrar to remove her name from the Register. Mrs Hancock did not appeal the Committee's decision and her name was removed from the Register on 22 February 2021.

A disciplinary hearing took place on 3 and 4 March 2021 and has been reported on the RCVS website. The Disciplinary Committee directed the Registrar to remove the Respondent's name from the Register. The Respondent did not appeal the Committee's decision and their name was duly removed from the Register.

Professional Conduct Department

8. The table below shows the number, categories and stages of the 37 concerns relating to RVNs between 1 April 2020 and 31 March 2021.

RVN concerns registered between 1 April 2020 and 31 March 2021

Category	Number of Concerns	Currently under consideration by the Case Examiner Group (CEG)	Closed at Stage 1	Referred to Stage 2 - RVN PIC
Veterinary Care	21	7	12	2
24-hour emergency first aid and pain relief	2	2		
Veterinary Medicines	1			1
Communication and Consent	2		2	
Clinical and Client records	1	1		
Miscellaneous	3	3		
Conviction / notifiable occupation notification	6		4	2
Registration investigation	1		1	
Totals	37	13	19	5

In the preceding five years, the total number of concerns registered against RVNs for each year is as follows:

- 1 April 2019 – 31 March 2020 – **27**
- 1 April 2018 – 31 March 2019 – **37**
- 1 April 2017 – 31 March 2018 – **30**
- 1 April 2016 – 31 March 2017 – **35**
- 1 April 2015 – 31 March 2016 – **47**

Cases considered by RVN PIC

9. Between 1 April 2020 and 31 March 2021, the RVN PIC considered **8** new cases. Of these, 4 cases closed with advice to the RVN. 1 case was adjourned for further investigation and 3 cases were referred to the Disciplinary Committee. During the same period, the RVN PIC referred 1 ongoing case to the Disciplinary Committee.

Disciplinary Hearings

10. Between 1 April 2020 and 31 March 2021, there have been three DC hearing involving RVNs. The Veterinary Nurse Disciplinary Committee directed the Registrar to remove the names of all three RVNs from the Register.

Year overview

11. As a Committee the RVN PIC continues to work well and has adjusted to holding virtual meetings during the Coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic.

Two virtual training sessions were held in November 2020, with training being delivered by the College's lawyers via Zoom. As it can be difficult to maintain concentration for prolonged periods in this format, these were half-day sessions attended by PIC members and Profcon staff. Among the topics covered were dishonesty (including allegations of lying to the regulator), relevant recent case law, requests by PIC for further information (legitimate enquiry vs "fishing expeditions") and social media. A further training session is scheduled to take place in June.

I would like to take this opportunity to express my thanks to the RVN Preliminary Investigation Committee and in particular to Sarah Bedwell whose term comes to an end in June. Sarah has been a lay member on the Committee since 2013 and we are very grateful for the contribution she has made to the Committee over the last eight years.

Summary	
Meeting	Veterinary Nurses Council
Date	12 May 2021
Title	RVN Disciplinary Committee Report to VN Council
Summary	Update of Disciplinary Committee since the last VN Council meeting held on 10 February 2021
Decisions required	None
Attachments	None
Author	Yemisi Yusuph Clerk to the Disciplinary Committee Tel: 020 7202 0729 Email: y.yusuph@rcvs.org.uk

Classifications		
Document	Classification¹	Rationales²
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Veterinary Nurse Disciplinary Committee Hearings since the last Council Meeting on 10 February 2021

Background

1. Since the last Veterinary Nurse Council Meeting on 10 February 2021, the Veterinary Nurse Disciplinary Committee have met once to hear an Inquiry in relation to a Registered Veterinary Nurse (RVN).

Hearings

X Registered Nurse

1. On Wednesday 3 and Thursday 4 March, the RVN Committee met to hear an inquiry into a registered veterinary nurse.
2. At the outset of the inquiry, the respondent made an application for anonymity.
3. The Committee granted the application as they believed that there was sufficient evidence of a real and immediate threat to the respondent if proceedings were to be heard in public and their name was disclosed.
4. Throughout the hearing, the respondent was referred to as X to protect their safety.
5. The Committee first considered the facts of the case. They heard that in 2020, X had pleaded guilty to intentionally and knowingly attempting to communicate with a person under the age of 16 for their own sexual gratification. The Committee also heard that X was sentenced to a two-year probation order, ordered to register on the Sexual Offence Register for five years and the fact that they were also made subject to a Sexual Prevention Order for a period of five years.
6. From the outset of the hearing, X admitted all the charges against him. The Committee were presented with a certified copy of the conviction.
7. The Committee found the facts proven.
8. The Committee went on to consider whether the conviction amounted to serious professional misconduct. In doing so, they considered the aggravating factors surrounding the case. The first was that there was risk of actual harm to a minor. The second was that the misconduct was premeditated as X had been in contact with who they believed was a 15-year-old via a number of different platforms. The third was that X had displayed predatory behaviour, including sending pictures and making comments of a sexual nature. The last aggravating factor that was considered by the Committee was that it involved what X believed to be a vulnerable individual.

9. In mitigation, the Committee considered the fact there was no actual harm caused to a human or animal. It also took into account that the conduct related to a single isolated incident and that X had made open admissions earlier on.
10. The Committee concluded that the conviction amounted to serious professional misconduct and were satisfied that the sentence imposed on X, which included X being subject to a Sexual Harm Prevention Order until 2025, resulted in the profession of veterinary nurses being brought into disrepute and, in the Committee's judgement, public confidence in the profession would be undermined if the Committee did not find that the conviction rendered X unfit to practise as a veterinary nurse."
11. In considering what sanction to impose on X, the Committee heard from a character witness, who was also anonymous as revealing their identity could inadvertently lead to the identification of the respondent. The character witness stated that the respondent's actions were out of character, that they had a previously long and unblemished career, that they had made full admissions and demonstrated insight, and that they had a low risk of reoffending in the future.
12. "The Committee accepted that X had been an excellent veterinary nurse and that X's criminal conduct did not relate to X's practice as a veterinary nurse. However, in the Committee's judgement the aggravating factors outweighed the considerable mitigating factors in this case."
13. The Committee decided that a suspension order would not reflect the seriousness of the offence. As such, the Committee concluded that in order to maintain the reputation on the profession and the College as a regulator, the appropriate sanction was for X's name to be removed from the registered.
14. The full decision can be found here: [X Registered Nurse, Decision - Professionals \(rcvs.org.uk\)](#)

15.
Upcoming DCs

16. There is one RVN case waiting to be listed. The Clerk is currently working on this.