Veterinary Nurses Council

Wednesday 11 May 2022 at 10.30am to be held at Harper Adams University

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 9 February 2022**
	  i. Unclassified minutes
	  ii. Classified appendix
		Unclassified Confidential	n/a 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.	**E-certificates for Veterinary Nurses**	Unclassified	n/a
8.	**VN Education Committee**		

	8.01 Minutes of meeting held on 16 February 2022
	  i. Unclassified minutes
	  ii. Classified appendix
		Unclassified Confidential	n/a 2,3

	8.02 Meeting held on 14 April 2022	Oral report Unclassified	

9.	**Report on enrolments and registrations from overseas**		
	9.01 Report on registration of VNs educated outside the UK	Unclassified	n/a
	9.02 Report on temporary student enrolments	Unclassified	n/a
	9.03 Translation of documents	Unclassified	n/a
Matters for note			
10.	**ENQA (European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education)** update	Oral report Unclassified	
11.	**Reports from RCVS Committees**		
	11.01 RVN Preliminary Investigation Committee Annual Report	Unclassified	n/a
	11.02 Standards Committee	Oral report Unclassified	n/a
12.	**Policy and Public Affairs update**	Oral report Unclassified	n/a
13.	**Communications report**	Oral report Unclassified	n/a
14.	**Register report - update**	Unclassified	n/a
15.	**VN Council membership**	Oral report Unclassified	
16.	**Any other business (unclassified)**	Oral report Unclassified	
17.	**Date of next meeting** Wednesday 14 September 2022 at 10.30am	Oral report Unclassified	
Confidential and private items (closed session)			
18.	**Election of Chair and Vice-Chair for 2022/2023**	Oral report	
19.	**Risk Register**	Confidential	1,2,3,4
	12.30 – 1.15 BREAK		

PM			
20.	**Research presentation by Dr Andrea Jeffery**	Oral report	
21.	**Council Culture project**	Confidential	
22.	**Succession planning for VNC Chair**	Confidential	
23.	**VN Education Committee confidential items**		
	Confidential items from meeting of 16 February 2022 (see item 8 classified appendix)	Confidential	2,3
24.	**Items for RCVS Committees**	Oral report	
25.	**Any other business (confidential items)**	Oral report	
	Annette Amato Secretary, VN Council 0207 202 0713 / a.amato@rcvs.org.uk /		

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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Private	5. To protect information which may contain personal data, special category data, and/or criminal offence data, as listed under the General Data Protection Regulation

Summary

Meeting	Veterinary Nurses Council
Date	11 May 2022
Title	Minutes of meeting of Veterinary Nurses Council (VNC) held on 9 February 2022
Summary	Minutes of meeting of Veterinary Nurses Council (VNC) held on 9 February 2022
Decisions required	None
Attachments	Classified appendix
Author	Annette Amato

Committee Secretary

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Classifications

Document	Classification[1]	Rationales[2]
Paper	Unclassified	n/a
Classified appendix	**Confidential**	2,3,4

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RCVS | SETTING VETERINARY STANDARDS

Veterinary Nurses Council

Minutes of the meeting held on Wednesday 9 February 2022

Members:		Mrs Belinda Andrews-Jones	-	Vice-Chair
	^	Miss Alison Carr		
		Dr Niall Connell	-	Officer Team observer (non-voting)
	^	Ms Elizabeth Cox		
	^	Miss Jane Davidson		
	^	Mr Dominic Dyer		
	^	Ms Sarah Fox		
	^	Mrs Susan Howarth		
	^	Mrs Katherine Kissick		
		Mrs Donna Lewis		
		Dr Susan Paterson		
		Mr Matthew Rendle	-	Chair
	^	Dr Katherine Richards		
	^	Ms Stephanie Richardson		
	^	Mrs Claire Roberts		

^Denotes remote participant

In attendance:	Mrs Tash Goodwin-Roberts	-	Veterinary Nursing Registration Lead

Remote:	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
	Mr Robert Hewes	-	Head of Insight and Engagement
	Ms Lizzie Lockett	-	Chief Executive Officer
	Mr Ben Myring	-	Policy and Public Affairs Manager

Guests:	*Ms Rachael Buzzel*	-	*VN Times*
	Ms Caitlin Frances	-	*Visionline*
	Mr Josh Loeb	-	*BVA Journals*

Apologies for absence

1. There were no apologies for absence.

Declarations of interest

2. There were no new declarations of interest.

Obituaries

3. Council noted the obituary for Jean Turner RVN and the Chair spoke warmly in her memory. Council observed a minute's silence for all members of the professions who had passed away since the last meeting.

Minutes of the meeting held on 17 November 2021

4. The Minutes of the meeting held on 17 November 2021 were approved as a correct record.

Matters arising

5. There were no matters arising on the previous Minutes.

CEO update

6. The CEO presented her update report, which included a summary of activity against the 2020-2024 Strategic Plan as submitted to RCVS Council in January, and provided an update on further activities since the report had been prepared.

7. The RCVS had announced the purchase of its new permanent headquarters in Hardwick Street, Clerkenwell, which would provide sufficient space for any increased staff numbers, for committee and Council meetings and disciplinary hearings, and provided a good investment for the professions. The building currently had tenants and it was likely that the RCVS would not move in for at least a year. In the meantime, some shared office space was being rented in Chancery Lane, and committees would either meet remotely or in rented meeting rooms. The CEO thanked the Chair and Kathy Kissick who had been a part of the working group involved in sourcing the new premises.

8. In the meantime, normal activities were continuing as usual. The annual VN renewal fee period had recently ended and the Diamond Jubilee celebrations were continuing. The Council Culture project was still ongoing, looking at the various mechanisms and processes such as elections, nominations, inductions and training and once some decisions had been reached this information would come through to VN Council. It was recalled that it had been intended to provide Council with the report on the Council Culture work at the current meeting, but unfortunately there had been a slight delay as some of the working groups still needed to meet.

9.   The Workforce Summit had been held on 30 November looking at both the veterinary and veterinary nursing professions, preceded by some online insight groups which had fed into the meeting. The Summit had included representation from vets and veterinary nurses in practice, associations, employers, veterinary schools and government. Themes for the day provided by the insight groups had included return to work, career development, client interaction, workplace culture, work life balance and readiness for work. The report would be published shortly and further work would be carried out as a result.

10.   Council passed on their thanks to the Senior Team for keeping business running smoothly whilst undergoing all the changes.

E-Certificate for Veterinary Nurse Registration

11.   The Veterinary Nursing Registration Lead presented a paper summarising the feedback from the trial of the use of E-certificates for newly registered veterinary nurses, which had been agreed at the previous meeting of Council. The trial had commenced on 1 November 2021 and had included one large cohort of Higher Education applicants and all Further Education applicants from that date. There had been ten days at the beginning of the trial period when the communication had not made it sufficiently clear that registrants would be able to request a hard copy of the certificate at a later date, in addition to the electronic version. This had initially led to some negative feedback, but the communications had subsequently been revised and later feedback had been more positive.

12.   The overall theme of the feedback had been that individuals appreciated the environmental positives of the e-certificate and the practicalities of having immediate access to proof of registration, however they felt that a hard copy certificate had greater meaning, and they also would like access to this. The opportunity to obtain a hard copy of the certificate had been offered from 1 February 2022, and to date 20% of those with an E-certificate had requested a paper copy.

13.   Council was asked to consider continuing the trial period, whilst also offering the option to order a hard copy of the Certificate of Registration. It was confirmed that no charge would be made for the first hard copy, although there would be a charge for replacements, as is currently the case. The hope was expressed that there would be scope in the future to offer E-certificates for the Certificates in Advanced Veterinary Nursing and it was confirmed that this would be the case, as well as extending the digital concept to other areas.

14.   Council agreed that the trial should continue as outlined in the paper, although it should be made clear that the certificate was not in itself a confirmation that the holder was currently on the Register of Veterinary Nurses. Any communications, while supporting the use of the E-certificate, should also include reminders to check the online Register for confirmation of a nurse's registration status.

Veterinary Nurse Education Committee (VNEC)

15.   Susan Howarth, Chair of the VNEC, presented the minutes of the meeting of the VNEC held on 17 December, and drew attention to the following points:

16.	Student enrolments for the new academic year were progressing well and the new online enrolments process had now been introduced. Overall enrolment numbers would be reported to the June meeting of the Committee. The RCVS had continued to receive some applications from those who had completed their qualification, but had been unable to complete the required 1,800 required practice training hours due to the effect of the Covid pandemic, and these were being reviewed on a case by case basis according to the agreed guidelines.

17.	The Committee had agreed to a small programme change from one institution, and had received a number of reports and updates on action plan monitoring and quality monitoring activities carried out by the qualifications team.

Continuing Professional Development (CPD)

18.	Claire Roberts presented the update from the CPD Policy and Compliance Subcommittee. It had been pleasing to note that 98% of veterinary nurses were now using the 1CPD app. The Committee had been looking at ways to communicate the forthcoming mandatory introduction of the use of 1CPD in a supportive way. Suggestions as to how to communicate with some of the older age group, who sometimes were not so accustomed to use of apps, would be welcome.

19.	The use of QR codes to assist in recording of attendance at lectures, webinars and so on had been discussed. It was confirmed that the use of QR codes was intended to be a way of facilitating recording of some aspects of CPD and to encourage engagement with the app. The recording of the many other forms of CPD that did not involve formal attendance was also being actively encouraged and there were resources available on the RCVS website to assist with this.

Reports from RCVS Committees

Registered Veterinary Nurse Preliminary Investigation Committee (RVN PIC)

20.	Council noted the report of the work of the RVN PIC since November 2021.

Standards Committee

21.	There were no items to report from the Standards Committee.

Policy and Public Affairs update

22.	The Policy and Public Affairs Manager provided a brief update.

23.	A comprehensive preliminary workforce report had been drawn up for the Workforce Summit, which would now be built upon, looking at cohort studies to help to understand and ascertain the causes of leaving the Registers at different times, in the hope to be able to better address this in the future. There would also be some workforce modelling.

24.   There continued to be lobbying in relation to the proposed changes to the legislation, and there have been useful meetings recently including with the devolved assemblies, and meetings with the British Veterinary Association (BVA) and other stakeholders, which were going well.

25.   Together with the Comms Department, simple straightforward messaging was being developed around the legislation proposals, for use in the lobbying campaigns.

26.   The nurse prescriber research would be resumed in the coming year, having been put on hold for a couple of years during the Covid pandemic.

VN Register report

27.   Council noted a report showing statistics on the total number of registered veterinary nurses, including the number of new registrations annually for the calendar years 2016 – 2021. Information on removals from the Register would be available at the May meeting of Council. Figures were also provided for the number of student enrolments for the past six academic years, and the number of those enrolling for a period of supervised practice, having been unregistered for a period of five years or more.

Communications report

28.   The Media and Publications Manager provided an overview of recent VN-related activities in the Comms Department.

29.   The report of the Mind Matters Initiative (MMI) student veterinary nurse wellbeing discussion forum had recently been published and was available on the RCVS and MMI websites. This would be feeding into the MMI strategy, so veterinary nursing would have a prominent voice in MMI, going forward.

30.   As mentioned earlier, the Workforce Summit report was due to be published imminently, and there would also be a report of the MMI Veterinary Mental Health Research Symposium published within the next week.

31.   The *VN Education* digital newsletter providing updates and key developments within VN education for Awarding Organisations, Higher Education Institutions, Centres and Training Practices was to be revived, having been suspended during the pandemic.

32.   Work was currently being carried out to produce careers materials for secondary school children, under the auspices of the VN Futures School Ambassadors programme.

33.   The revised VN Standards framework would shortly be published on the website.

34.   A press release had been issued earlier in the week announcing the VN Council election nominations. There were nine candidates standing for the available two places. The voting period would commence in mid-March. The Chair commented that the comms around the election had worked well, and thanked the Comms team.

35.   There would be a webinar held on 13 July 2022 for student veterinary nurses and veterinary nurses, on dealing with difficult situations that may crop up within the first few months of practice.

Any other business (unclassified)

36.   There was no other business raised.

Date of next meeting

37.   Wednesday 11 May 2022 – venue to be confirmed.

Summary

Meeting	Veterinary Nurses Council
Date	11 May 2022
Title	E-certificate for VN Registration
Summary	This paper is to follow up on the previously approved trial of e-certificates for newly qualified Veterinary Nurses.
Decisions required	Consider and approve the issuing of e-certificates to all newly registered Veterinary Nurses, as well as offering the option to request a physical copy at the point of registration.
Attachments	none
Author	Tash Goodwin Roberts Veterinary Nursing Registration Lead tash@rcvs.org.uk 0207 050 1246

Classifications

Document	Classification[1]	Rationales[2]
Paper	Unclassified	n/a

Background

1. At the September 2021 meeting of VN Council, it was agreed that a trial of e-certificates for newly qualified Veterinary Nurses could proceed. This is already in place for Veterinary Surgeons and has been well received. The functionality allows members access to their registration e-certificates at any time through their My Account login. They can use this as an electronic document or print off to put on display.

Implementation of trial

2. The trial commenced on 1 November 2021. It was decided to include one large cohort of Higher Education applicants, and this went ahead as planned with Hartpury University. All Further Education applicants from 1 November 2021 to date have also been included in the trial.

3. There was a period of ten days at the beginning of the trial period, during which the email communication did not effectively explain that a hard copy of the certificate would become available at a later date. This led to some negative feedback, as Nurses believed that the e-certificate was the only version that would be available to them. Once we reviewed the early feedback, we promptly updated our communications to clarify this point.

Further trial data

4. As agreed at the February 2022 meeting of VN Council, the trial continued with a view to obtaining further feedback and data around requests for hard copy certificates. This is outlined below under the feedback data section.

Feedback data

5. As of 19 April 2022, there have been 770 RVNs included in the trial. Each received an email inviting them to provide their feedback on the e-certificate. We have had 93 responses (12%, in line with the Veterinary Surgeons at 11.4%). Below are the overall ratings (out of 10):

Ease of access	8.60
Content	6.62
Printing	6.11
Layout	6.03

6. Based on the further feedback that we have obtained, the overall theme remains consistent. Individuals appreciate the environmental positives of the e-certificate and the practicalities of having immediate access to proof of registration, however they feel that a hard copy certificate has greater meaning, and they would like access to this, also.

7. The main message from the VNs that have completed the survey, is that they would like the option to request a physical copy of their Certificate of Registration, as well as having access to an e-certificate.

8. While e-certificates have been in place on a trial basis, we have been monitoring the number of requests for hard copies that we have received. If numbers were low, this would have had a significantly positive impact on the amount of time spent producing and posting registration packs to nurses. If numbers were high, this would have resulted in additional work for the VN Registration team as, during the trial, certificates would be produced and posted separately from RVN badges. This would also incur additional postage fees.

9. Between 1 November and 14 April, there were 747 new registrants, 366 [49%] of which went on to request a hard copy certificate. Between 1 March [the date that hard copies were available to request immediately upon registration] and 14 April, there were 169 new registrants, 104 [62%] of which went on to order a hard copy certificate.

Next steps and considerations

10. The trial has painted a very clear picture of what the VN population want from a certificate of registration. Whilst we strongly believe that the e-certificate itself will have a very positive impact on the profession, we must be mindful of the sentimental value that a physical certificate has.

11. Moving forward, as a part of the registration application form itself, we propose that we include a page explaining the benefits of the e-certificate, giving applicants the option to opt in or out of receiving a hard copy of their certificate. This part of the form will be mandatory; therefore, the applicant will be required to select an option before they can proceed.

12. We will continue to issue e-certificates to all new registrants as standard.

13. There will be no cost for either of these certificates, however the fee for replacement hard copy certificates will remain unchanged.

Decision required

14. VN Council is invited to consider and approve the issuing of e-certificates to all newly registered Veterinary Nurses, as well as offering the option to request a physical copy at the point of registration.

Summary

Meeting	Veterinary Nurses Council
Date	11 May 2022
Title	Minutes of meeting of VN Education Committee held on 16 February 2022
Summary	Minutes of the meeting of Veterinary Nurse Education Committee held on 16 February 2022
Decisions required	None
Attachments	Classified appendix
Author	Annette Amato Secretary to VN Council a.amato@rcvs.org.uk / 020 7202 0713

Classifications

Document	Classification[1]	Rationales[2]
Paper	Unclassified	n/a
Classified appendix	**Confidential**	2,3

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Veterinary Nurse Education Committee
Minutes of the meeting held on 16 February 2022

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	-	Qualifications Assessor
	Mrs Julie Dugmore	-	Director of Veterinary Nursing
	Miss Shirley Gibbins	-	Qualifications Manager
	Mrs Victoria Hedges	-	Examinations Manager
	Mrs Tori Page	-	Qualifications Assessor
	Miss Sian Tanner	-	Qualifications Co-ordinator
	Mrs Kirsty Williams	-	Education Quality Improvement Manager

Apologies for absence

1.   Apologies for absence were received from Donna Cotton, Sarah Fox and Caroline McCormick-Clarke.

Declarations of interest

2.   Sarah Reynolds-Golding left the meeting for the item on appointment of External Examiners.

Minutes of the meeting of the Education Committee (VNEC) held on 17 December 2021

3.   The Committee accepted the minutes of the meeting held on 17 December 2021 as a correct record.

Veterinary Nursing update

4.   The Director of Veterinary Nursing updated the Committee on recent developments and activities.

5.   **Student enrolments**. The online enrolment process had been implemented on 10 January and was working well.

6.   **Registration applications.** There had been no further applications received since the previous meeting, from students who had completed their registrable qualification but had been unable to complete the 1,800 required practice training hours due to the effect of the Covid pandemic.

7.   **VetSkill.** Following the decision at the previous meeting to grant conditional accreditation**,** the required audit of the Day One Competences, Day One Skills and Professional Behaviours had been carried out by the December 2021 deadline. A full response to the audit report had recently been received from VetSkill and was being reviewed.

8.   **In-house recording tool.** Work on the development of an in-house recording tool equivalent to the Nursing Progress Log (NPL), as part of the RCVS' overall IT strategy, had been delayed for various reasons. An update paper would be brought to VN Council at its May meeting and in the meantime, the NPL would continue to be issued.

9.   **Review of Day One Competences, Day One Skills, and Professional Behaviours.** Veterinary Nurses Council had ratified the proposed amendments to the RCVS Day One Competences (DOC), Day One Skills (DOS) and Professional Behaviours (PB) for Veterinary Nurses at its meeting on 9 February 2022 with no amendments. These would be implemented from September 2022 and would be sent out to all Accredited Education Institutions (AEIs) in PDF format by the end of the week.   The revised versions would be prepared for publication on the website by the Comms Department before September.

10.   **Communications.** The *VN Education* digital newsletter for AEIs, centres and training practices was to be revived and the meetings for educators would also be reinstated, enabling communication of key themes and updates to all educators.

VN Licence to practise qualifications

Action plan monitoring accreditation/re-accreditation

11.   The Committee was provided with oral updates from members of the qualifications team on the action plan monitoring for the following Accredited Education Institutions (AEIs):
- Lantra Awards
- University of Portsmouth

- University of South Wales

Quality Monitoring activities

12. The Committee was provided with papers setting out full updates on quality monitoring activities and the actions which had been taken, for the following universities and centres:
- Edinburgh Napier University
- Middlesex University
- Writtle University College
- University of Glasgow
- University of Bristol

13. In response to a query, it was confirmed that there is not a specific requirement in the RCVS standards that students should undergo a mock OSCE, although students are required to be appropriately assessed.   The formative element of assessment would always be discussed and considered fully as part of the accreditation process.

14. It was noted that there had been a trend towards the inclusion of more suggestions and actions around wellbeing in the monitoring reports, and that wellbeing had been incorporated more fully into the revised DOC, DOS and PBs. This in turn would tie in with the pre-accreditation support to be provided to AEIs and guidance on the focus on wellbeing would be included as part of the new processes.

Action plan quality monitoring - quality assurance

15. Oral reports were provided on the monitoring of action plans and future planned actions for the following AEIs and centres:
- ChesterGates Veterinary Training Centre
- Coventry University
- Oxford Brookes University
- North Highland College
- Royal Agricultural University (Plumpton College)
- University of Chester
- University of Plymouth

16. The Qualifications Manager responded to a query on what sanctions may be imposed if an institution or centre does not respond to actions. Initially it was likely that the risk rating could be affected, resulting in additional auditing activity, and persistent failure could lead to refusal to enrol any new students. It was noted that there may be differences in sanctions for centres and Awarding Institutions. It was also confirmed that centres and institutions are always encouraged to set realistic timescales for meeting their actions, relevant to the type of action. Actions should be sensible and achievable. Guidance on these issues would be included in the next educators forum.

Programme changes

17.   **Royal Agricultural University (Askham Bryan College).** It was reported that all actions had been met relating to the change agreed by the Committee at its last meeting.

External Examiners

18.   The Committee noted the current list of external examiners for VN Licence to Practise qualifications, together with the details of a new appointment for one institution, and an update provided by one centre on ongoing recruitment.

19.   One member reported that she had attended the Qualifications and Assessment Authority (QAA) external examiner training event, which had been very useful. The Qualifications Manager reported that she was liaising with Advance HE and it was hoped that the RCVS would be able to develop its own VN specific External Examiner training, through the RCVS Academy, in the not too distant future.

Post-registration qualifications

Diploma in Advanced Veterinary Nursing Quality Monitoring

20.   **University of Central Lancashire (UCLan).** The Committee noted the report of a quality monitoring review of the Diploma in Advanced Veterinary Nursing (DipAVN) provision delivered at Myerscough College and validated by UCLan. UCLan had been found to be compliant in all areas that had been audited and there were no actions to be addressed.

VN Pre-registration Examination

21.   The Examinations Manager updated the Committee on the tender process for a new examination venue for the Pre-registration examination. The applications had been reviewed by a panel comprised of four members of the Examinations Board. It had been agreed to appoint MYF training as the examination centre for a contract period of three years, with the option to extend to five years, with effect from March 2022.

22.   It was reported that Professor Mossop would be standing down as Chair of the Pre-registration Examination Board, and the Committee thanked her for all her support, having carried out the role for a number of years. The next meeting would be chaired by Julia Cox, the current Vice-Chair. A member of the Committee would be needed to replace Professor Mossop on the Board, and the Examinations Manager offered to circulate further information for any Committee member who was interested.

Items for publication

23.   It was confirmed that dissemination of information on the pre-accreditation support programme would be discussed with the Comms Team.

Meeting dates 2022

24.   Meeting dates for 2022:
- Thursday 14 April
- Thursday 16 June – in person, all day meeting, venue to be confirmed.
- Wednesday 10 August
- Wednesday 12 October
- Tuesday 13 December

Summary

Meeting	Veterinary Nurses Council
Date	11 May 2022
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 2021 and 31 March 2022.
Decisions required	None
Attachments	Annex A – Registration process for VNs educated outside the UK
Authors	Victoria Hedges

Examinations Manager

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Classifications

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Paper	Unclassified	
Annex A	Unclassified	

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Registration for holders of qualifications achieved outside the UK (2021/2022)

Background

1. RCVS considers applications from individuals intending to enter the register of veterinary nurses in the UK. Annex A provides an overview of the process followed to determine the suitability of applicants.

2. This paper provides details of the outcome of applications received between 1 April 2021 and 31 March 2022.

Outcome of applications received between 1 April 2021 and 31 March 2022

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 2020 and 31 March 2021) and have been provided for comparison.

Table 1

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

Applicants qualification origin	Total Applications	Accepted (ACOVENE)	Adaptation	Rejected	Registered
Australia	11 (9)	0 (0)	11 (9)	0 (0)	6 (3)
Belgium	1 (0)	1 (0)	0 (0)	0 (0)	2 (0)
Canada	2 (2)	0 (0)	2 (2)	0 (0)	1 (1)
Croatia	1 (0)	0 (0)	0 (0)	1 (0)	0 (1)
France	0 (1)	0 (0)	0 (1)	0 (0)	0 (0)
Germany	0 (1)	0 (0)	0 (1)	0 (0)	2 (2)
Italy	1 (2)	0 (2)	1 (0)	0 (0)	2 (0)
Netherlands	0 (1)	0 (1)	0 (0)	0 (0)	0 (1)
New Zealand	2 (4)	0 (0)	2 (4)	0 (0)	1 (1)

Applicants qualification origin	Total Applications	Accepted (ACOVENE)	Adaptation	Rejected	Registered
Poland	1 (0)	0 (0)	0 (0)	1 (0)	0 (1)
Portugal	2 (5)	2 (4)	0 (1)	0 (0)	5 (2)
Republic of Ireland	15 (20)	15 (19)	0 (1)	0 (0)	11 (20)
Romania	0 (1)	0 (0)	0 (1)	0 (0)	0 (0)
Slovenia	0 (1)	0 (0)	0 (1)	0 (0)	0 (0)
South Africa	11 (6)	0 (0)	11 (6)	0 (0)	7 (2)
USA	9 (5)	0 (0)	8 (5)	1 (0)	3 (1)
Zimbabwe	2 (1)	0 (0)	2 (1)	0 (0)	1 (0)
Total	58 (59)	18 (26)	37 (33)	3 (0)	41 (35)

Key:

Accepted Application accepted without further assessment requirement. This is only applicable for individuals educated in an institution accredited by ACOVENE.

Adaptation Additional assessment required. This is normally in the form of the Pre-registration examination, but in some cases could include a compulsory Period of Supervised Adaptation (PSA) in a UK veterinary practice and/or the completion of an assignment. The Pre-registration examination is compulsory for everyone except for those educated in 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. There were 58 completed applications received for the reporting period. This is a slight decrease on the previous year. The reporting period started during the Covid 19 pandemic, which probably contributed to the reduction in applications. It should be noted that 44 of these applications arrived in the second half of the reporting period when travelling restrictions were being lifted. There has been a significant increase in applications from USA and South Africa, even compared with pre-pandemic levels.

5. As of 31 March 2022 there were 11 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. 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 increased from 35 in 2020/21 to 41 in 2021/22.

7. As of 31 March 2022, 470 nurses educated outside the UK are active on the register. This equates to 2.2% of all RVNs on that date. It should be noted that this is an increase of 14 from the previous year.

8. All applicants are given the option to declare their first language and confirm any English qualifications they have. Seventy four percent of applicants declared English as their first language.

Other information

9. The VN Examinations Team are currently working with the Academy Team to develop materials to support the application and examination process.

10. All applicants are now able to pay their application and examinations fees through the 'My Account' area which assists with the smooth processing of applications and reduces delays caused by paying with bank transfers and cheques.

11. The proposal for financial support for applicants holding refugee status was agreed by FRC. To date we have not received any application from individuals requiring access to this support package.

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 at an ACOVENE accredited institution

2. Holders of ACOVENE (the European Accreditation Committee for Veterinary Nurse Education) accredited qualifications are normally permitted to enter the register directly. The exception to this is where an applicant has completed their qualification via distance learning. They are then processed as outlined below. It should be noted that ACOVENE requires a minimum of 500 hours of clinical practical to be undertaken.

Registration of veterinary nurses educated at a non ACOVENE accredited institution

3. Where a qualification has been achieved at an institution which is not accredited by ACOVENE the applicant is required to provide evidence that they hold a qualification which aligns closely to those delivered in the UK. Applicants are required to map their syllabus/curriculum to the RCVS Day One Skills and Day One Competences and provide evidence that the educational level is at a minimum of Qualification and Curriculum Framework (QCF) Level 3. Where this is aligned the applicant must pass the RCVS Pre-registration examination before applying to enter the register.

4. Where a large number of applications are received from one country/awarding organisation, VNC is asked to consider accepting the qualification so that future applicants holding that qualification are not required to provide their syllabus/curriculum. This was the case for applications received from Australia, Portugal, 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.

5. Mechanisms are in place to ensure that when a qualification changes, applicants are required to submit the syllabus/curriculum.

6. 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.

7. Applicants are permitted to work in practice by enrolling for an optional Period of Supervised Adaptation (PSA) while they prepare for the Pre-registration examination.

8. 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.

9. 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. These are delivered online.

Summary

Meeting	Veterinary Nurses Council
Date	11 May 2022
Title	Report on temporary student enrolments
Summary	This paper summarises the applications for temporary student enrolment completed between 1 April 2021 and 31 March 2022.
Decisions required	None
Attachments	None
Authors	Victoria Hedges Examinations Manager v.hedges@rcvs.org.uk / 020 7202 0782 Lucy Blampied VN Enrolments Officer l.blampied@rcvs.org.uk / 020 8148 5562

Classifications

Document	Classification[1]	Rationales[2]
Paper	Unclassified	

¹Classifications explained

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²Classification rationales

Confidential	1. To allow the Committee or Council to come to a view itself, before presenting to and/or consulting with others 2. To maintain the confidence of another organisation 3. To protect commercially sensitive information 4. To maintain public confidence in and/or uphold the reputation of the veterinary professions and/or the RCVS
Private	5. To protect information which may contain personal data, special category data, and/or criminal offence data, as listed under the General Data Protection Regulation

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 several short blocks or one long block.   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 2021 and 31 March 2022.

Temporary enrolment between 1 April 2021 and 31 March 2022

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 2020 and 31 March 2021) and have been provided for comparison.

Table 1

Applications for temporary enrolments

Applicant's qualification origin	Number of Applications
Netherlands	7 (0)
Germany	1 (0)
Republic of Ireland	13 (23)
Belgium	1 (0)
Total	22 (24)

Summary

Meeting	Veterinary Nurses Council
Date	11 May 2022
Title	Translation of documents
Summary	This paper sets out the rationale for changes to the process for the translation of documents presented by individuals educated outside the UK who apply to join the register in the UK.
Decisions required	To agree: The use of translation software to translate documents submitted by individuals educated outside to the UK applying to join the Register of Veterinary Nurses.
Attachments	None
Author	Victoria Hedges RVN Examinations Manager v.hedges@rcvs.org.uk 0207 2020782

Classifications

Document	Classification[1]	Rationales[2]
Paper	**Unclassified**	

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Change to initial registration process for veterinary nurses educated outside the UK

Background

1. The RCVS has processes in place to register veterinary nurses educated outside the UK. The application process includes a requirement to provide the syllabus / curriculum relating to the qualification undertaken by the applicant. If any of the documents are not in English, the applicant must also submit official translations in English. These can be certified by their school or by a qualified translator or translation company.

2. Applicants are informed that the RCVS can assist with identifying the individual parts of the document which require translation. We do this by using free translation software such as Google translate. The applicant is then told the page numbers which need to be officially translated. The cost of translation is generally high with on average between 50-100 pages of text needing to be translated. This cost is a barrier to some applicants.

3. Over time we have been able to compare the official translation with the one produced using the translation software and it is relatively accurate. Often there will be sentences that are incorrect but the key words that our assessor is looking for are clear and there is normally sufficient information to reach a conclusion about the applicant's suitability to join the register.

4. This paper outlines the proposed process for translating documents for applicants educated outside the UK applying to join the Register of Veterinary Nurses.

Discussion/ issues

5. Applicants who are required to submit a translated copy of their syllabus / curriculum will be given the option to submit it in a MS Word or PDF format in the original language. This will be translated by the VN Dept using free translation software. The document will be converted to a PDF file in a format that cannot be altered. This will be returned to the applicant in order for them to complete the application form.

6. Applicants will not be permitted to use translation software themselves because it is possible to alter the document and we need to be assured that this has not happened.

7. The proposal to assist with the translation of documents will assist around 10-20 applicants per year.

8. The process of translating documents using translation software is relatively quick and would not add significantly to the workload of the department.

9. Applicants already benefit from tailored advice on the parts of their document which need to be translated.   This service would be an extension to this.

10. The cost saving to applicants is significant and may encourage applications from individuals who are unable to make the commitment to have the documents translated.

11. A small number of applicants do not possess a copy of the syllabus in the file format required for the RCVS to translate. This will also be the case where the translation using the translation software is poor and insufficient for the intended purpose.

Financial issues / PR implications

12. There is no additional cost to the RCVS. The time it takes to complete the translation process using translation software is in the region of 5-10 minutes which is insignificant considering the support already provided.

13. The benefit to the applicant is significant and will hopefully contribute to the view that the RCVS is a supportive regulator.

Conclusions

14. The VN Dept has experience using translation software to translate parts of applications from individuals educated outside the UK. This has assisted applicants to identify the parts that need to be officially translated. Following comparison of the documents, the translation software is relatively accurate and sufficient for the purpose we require.

15. It is therefore proposed to offer applicants the option to have their documents translated by the RCVS.

Recommendations

16. VNC is requested to consider the proposal outlined in the paper and confirm it accepts the use of translation software to translate documents submitted by individuals educated overseas applying to enter the Register of Veterinary Nurses.

Summary

Meeting	VN Council
Date	11 May 2022
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	Sandra Neary Professional Conduct Officer / Secretary to the RVN PIC s.neary@rcvs.org.uk / 020 7202 0730 Gemma Crossley Head of Professional Conduct g.crossley@rcvs.org.uk / 020 7202 0740

Classifications

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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 no meetings of the RVN Preliminary Investigation Committee. The meetings which were due to take place on 22 February and 5 April 2022 were cancelled as there were no new or ongoing cases requiring a decision. The next meeting is scheduled to take place on 17 May.

RVN Concerns received / registered

2. Between 27 January 2022 and 21 April 2022, there were 12 new concerns relating to RVNs. Of these 12 new concerns:

   • One was closed at Stage 1 of the concerns process.

   • Ten are currently under investigation by the Case Examiner Group (a veterinary nurse and lay member on RVN PIC and a Case Manager).

   • One has been referred to Stage 2 of the concerns process.

RVN Preliminary Investigation Committee

3. No new concerns have been considered by the RVN PIC between 27 January and 21 April 2022.

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, no cases have been referred to the RVN Disciplinary Committee.

A disciplinary hearing took place between 24 March and 1 April 2022. As at the date of this report, the decision has not been published.

Professional Conduct Department

8. The table below shows the number, categories and stages of the **36** concerns relating to RVNs between 1 April 2021 and 31 March 2022.

RVN concerns registered between 1 April 2021 and 31 March 2022

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	20	10	8	2
24-hour emergency first aid and pain relief	2	1	1	
Communication and Consent	3	2	1	
Miscellaneous	4	2	2	
Advertising and publicity	2		2	
Euthanasia of animals	1	1		
Conviction / notifiable occupation notification	2			2
Veterinary teams and leaders	1	1		
CPD compliance	1	1		
Totals	**36**	**18**	**14**	**4**

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

- 1 April 2020 – 31 March 2021 – **37**
- 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 2021 and 31 March 2022, the RVN PIC considered **8** new cases. Of these, 2 cases closed with no further action and 2 cases closed with advice to the RVN. 4 cases were referred to the College's external solicitors for formal statements to be taken. During the same period, the RVN PIC made a decision on 3 ongoing cases. 1 case was closed with advice to the RVN, and 2 cases were referred to the Disciplinary Committee.

Disciplinary Hearings

10. Between 1 April 2021 and 31 March 2022, there have been two DC hearing involving RVNs. The first hearing in relation to Laura Benson took place in June 2021. The Veterinary Nurse Disciplinary Committee concluded that Ms Benson should be given a nine-month suspension. In respect of the hearing in relation to another RVN, which took place between 24 March and 1 April 2022, as at the date of this report, the decision has not been published.

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. The Committee continues to meet remotely at the present time.

Training sessions for all PIC members and staff took place on 30 June and 22 September 2021 covering a range of issues and case studies, including conflicts of interest and the use of formal advice to respondents. In addition, an unconscious bias training day was attended by PIC members and staff on 19 November 2021. This was delivered by an external provider over Zoom.

I would like to take this opportunity to express my thanks to the RVN Preliminary Investigation Committee and in particular to Arun Midha whose term comes to an end in June. Arun has been a lay member on the Committee since July 2014, and we are very grateful for the contribution he has made to the Committee over the last eight years.

Summary

Meeting	Veterinary Nurses Council
Date	11 May 2022
Title	VN Register Report
Summary	This paper was provided for information to VN Council in February 2022. At that time, it was not possible to provide a figure for the number of registered veterinary nurses removed from the register, as there had been an extension of the annual fee payment period due to Covid-19.
	The attached paper is as submitted in February, with the addition of the annual removals due to non payment of annual fee. The following statistics are included:
	a. The number of registered veterinary nurses as at 1 February 2022. Figures for the previous five years are also included.
	b. Number of removals from the register due to non-payment of annual fee.
	c. New registrations for the calendar years 2016- 2021 including the qualification route of the new registrants.
	d. New student enrolments per academic year.
	e. Number of veterinary nurses undertaking a Period of Supervised Practice (PSP).
Decisions required	None
Attachments	None
Author	Annette Amato
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Classifications

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Veterinary Nurses Register

Number of registered VNs

	18/01/2017	18/01/2018	24/01/2019	04/02/2020	03/02/2021	01/02/2022
Number of Registered Veterinary Nurses	14337	15449	16864	18246	18882	20916
Number of Nurses removed for non-payment of annual fee (annually – usually carried out in January)	247 *(17 restored to register by 18/01/2017)*	296 *(59 restored to register by 18/01/2018)*	450 *(124 restored to register by 24/01/2019)*	409 *(84 restored to register by 04/02/2020)*	314 *(24 restored to register by 04/02/2021)*	*316* *(Removals carried out in February 2022)* *54 nurses restored within one month of being removed*

Number of admissions to the register (new registrants for the calendar year)

	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021
UK Further Education qualification	719	945	1197	1081	483	1727
UK Higher Education qualification	400	401	406	503	445	478
Overseas qualification	90	89	78	62	41	39
Total new registrations	1209	1435	1681	1646	969	2244

Student enrolments for each academic year (from 1 July to 30 June)

Student Enrolments	2015/2016	2016/2017	2017/2018	2018/2019	2019/2020	2020/2021
	1797	1935	1990	2109	1860	1910

Period of Supervised Practice (PSP)

Number of nurses commencing a Period of Supervised Practice

Period of Supervised Practice commenced	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021
	46	44	40	34	21	33