

Veterinary Nurses Council  
Wednesday 10 May 2023 at 10.00am to be held remotely by Microsoft  
Teams

Agenda		Classification <sup>1</sup>	Rationale <sup>2</sup>
1.	<b>Apologies for absence</b>	Oral report Unclassified	n/a
2.	<b>Declarations of interest</b>	Oral report Unclassified	n/a
3.	<b>Obituaries</b>	Unclassified	n/a
4.	<b>Minutes of meeting held on 8 February 2023</b> i. Unclassified minutes ii. Classified appendix	Unclassified Confidential	n/a 2,3,4
5.	<b>Matters arising</b>	Oral report Unclassified	n/a
6.	<b>CEO update</b>	Oral report Unclassified	n/a
<b>Matters for decision by VN Council and reports from Committees (unclassified items)</b>			
7.	<b>VN Education Committee</b>		
	7.01 Minutes of meeting held on 21 February 2023 i. Unclassified minutes ii. Classified appendix	Unclassified Confidential	n/a 2,3
	7.02 Meeting held on 18 April 2022	Oral report Unclassified	
8.	<b>Report on enrolments and registrations from overseas</b>		
	8.01 Report on registration of VNs educated outside the UK	Unclassified	n/a
	8.02 Report on temporary student enrolments	Unclassified	n/a

<b>Matters for note</b>			
9.	<b>Reports from RCVS Committees</b>		
	9.01 RVN Preliminary Investigation Committee Annual Report	Unclassified	n/a
	9.02 Standards Committee	Oral report Unclassified	n/a
	9.03 Advancement of the Professions Committee	Oral report Unclassified	n/a
	9.04 RVN Disciplinary Committee	Unclassified	n/a
10.	<b>Communications report</b>	Oral report Unclassified	n/a
11.	<b>VN Council membership</b>	Oral report Unclassified	n/a
12.	<b>Any other business (unclassified)</b>	Oral report Unclassified	n/a
13.	<b>Date of next meeting</b> Wednesday 13 September 2023 at 10.30am	Oral report Unclassified	n/a
<b>Confidential and private items (closed session)</b>			
14.	<b>Election of Chair and Vice-Chairs for 2023/2024</b>	Oral report	
15.	<b>Policy and Public Affairs Update</b>	Oral report	
16.	<b>Continuing Professional Development (CPD)</b> Update from CPD Policy and Compliance Subcommittee	Confidential	4
17.	<b>VN Education Committee confidential items</b>		
	17.01 Confidential items from meeting of 21 February 2023 (see item 7.01 classified appendix)	Confidential	2,3
	17.02 Confidential items from meeting of 18 April 2023	Oral report	
18.	<b>VN Education Committee Terms of Reference</b>	Confidential	1

19.	<b>VN Council Terms of Reference</b>	Confidential	1
20.	<b>Risk Register</b> 20.01 Update on changes since the previous meeting  20.02 Items identified from the meeting to add to Risk Register	Confidential  Oral report	1,2,3,4
21.	<b>Items for RCVS Committees</b>	Oral report	
22.	<b>Any other business (confidential items)</b>	Oral report	
	Annette Amato Secretary, VN Council 0207 202 0713 / <a href="mailto:a.amato@rcvs.org.uk">a.amato@rcvs.org.uk</a> /		

## **<sup>1</sup>Classifications explained**

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Private	<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>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</li></ol>

<b>Summary</b>	
Meeting	Veterinary Nurses Council
Date	10 May 2023
Title	Minutes of meeting of Veterinary Nurses Council held on 8 February 2023
Summary	Minutes of meeting of Veterinary Nurses Council (VNC) held on 8 February 2023
Decisions required	None
Attachments	Classified appendix ( <b>confidential</b> )
Author	Annette Amato Secretary <a href="mailto:a.amato@rcvs.org.uk">a.amato@rcvs.org.uk</a> 020 7222 0713

<b>Classifications</b>		
<b>Document</b>	<b>Classification<sup>1</sup></b>	<b>Rationales<sup>2</sup></b>
Paper	Unclassified	n/a
Classified appendix	<b>Confidential</b>	<b>1,2,3,4</b>

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## Veterinary Nurses Council

Minutes of the meeting held at the Royal College of Nursing, 20 Cavendish Square, London W1G 0RN, on Wednesday 8 February 2023

<b>Members:</b>	Mrs Belinda Andrews-Jones	-	Vice-Chair
	Miss Jessica Beckett		
	Miss Alison Carr		
	Dr Niall Connell	-	Officer Team observer (non-voting)
	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		
	Miss Holly Witchell		

\*Denotes absent

<b>In attendance:</b>	Mrs Annette Amato	-	Committee Secretary
	Mrs Julie Dugmore	-	Director of Veterinary Nursing
	Ms Eleanor Ferguson	-	Registrar
	Miss Shirley Gibbins	-	Qualifications Manager
	Mrs Victoria Hedges <sup>^</sup>	-	Examinations Manager
	Mr Ian Holloway	-	Director of Communications
	Ms Lizzie Lockett	-	Chief Executive
	Mr Ben Myring	-	Policy and Public Affairs Manager
	Mrs Jenny Soreskog-Turp	-	Lead for Postgraduate Education

<sup>^</sup>Denotes remote

<b>Guests:</b>	Ms Rachael Buzzel <sup>^</sup>	-	VN Times
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## Apologies for absence

1. Apologies for absence had been received from Stephanie Richardson.

### Declarations of interest

2. There were no new declarations of interest.

### Obituaries

3. The Vice-Chair presented this item, and expressed condolences to the family and friends of Catriona Lishman RVN who had recently passed away. The Vice-Chair then paid tribute to the mothers of three members of the Council who had passed away since the last meeting, all of whom had been sources of unfailing support to them throughout their careers, and through that support to the veterinary nursing profession.
4. Council observed a minute's silence in their memory, and for all members of the professions who had passed away since the last meeting.

### Minutes of the meeting held on 16 November 2022

5. The Minutes of the meeting held on 16 November 2022 were approved as a correct record, subject to the inclusion of Jessica Beckett and Holly Witchell in the list of attendees.

### Matters arising

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

### CEO update

6. Council noted the CEO update, providing a summary of activity against the 2020 – 2024 Strategic Plan, as submitted to RCVS Council in January 2023. The format of the paper had been updated following feedback from the September meeting of RCVS Council, with removal of some of the historical background information, and the inclusion of a Red/Amber/Green (RAG) rating against each item.

### Veterinary Nurse Education Committee (VNEC)

7. Susan Howarth, Chair of the VNEC, presented the minutes of the meeting of the VNEC held on 13 December 2022 and highlighted a few key points.
8.
  - A new employer representative had joined the Committee.
  - The Committee had approved an additional member to the visitor panel for Further Education (FE) accreditations.
  - The pre-accreditation support programme for all Accredited Education Institutions (AEIs) continued to progress well, with very positive feedback.



- The quality assurance team had reported on the many quality monitoring activities undertaken for the AElS and their delivery centres.
- The actions for the post-registration qualifications were progressing and on target or had already been met.
- The Committee had been provided with an overview of the pre-registration examinations delivered in 2022. A total of 113 candidates had sat the examination during the year, with an overall pass rate of 78% over the year.
- Measures had been taken to reduce waste in the examinations, and a report would be provided to the RCVS Green Team, which it was hoped would be used as evidence towards the Investors in the Environment accreditation scheme, and possibly general pointers which could be shared with educators for their examinations.
- It was hoped that the enrolment process for the Certificate in Advanced Veterinary Nursing could be streamlined by the development of an online system for the future.

### Continuing Professional Development (CPD)

9. The Lead for Postgraduate Education presented the report and analysis from the 2022 Audit of CPD for Veterinary Nurses. This was the first audit that had been targeted at specific groups, including samples from those who were not using 1CPD and those who were non-compliant 1CPD users, as well as those non-responders and non-compliant nurses from the previous audit or at annual renewal. The main reasons for non-compliance had been family commitments and illness.
10. It was reported that as the use of 1CPD has been mandatory since 2022, in future it would no longer be necessary to carry out random audit samples to check compliance, instead 1CPD would be continually monitored. It was noted that the number of non-responders and non-compliant had increased with the targeted group, and hopefully going forward the focus on these groups, rather than random audits, would be helpful in identifying problem areas and providing more targeted help and guidance.
11. It was suggested that there may be a lack of knowledge among some VNs about how they could pause their CPD in certain circumstances, and that maybe further targeted communications and guidance might be helpful.

### Reports from RCVS Committees

#### Registered Veterinary Nurse Preliminary Investigation Committee (RVN PIC)

12. Council noted the report of the work of the RVN PIC since the last report in November 2022.

## Standards Committee

13. Claire Roberts provided a brief update on items discussed by the Standards Committee meeting held on 6 February 2023.

## Advancement of the Professions Committee (APC)

14. Belinda Andrews-Jones reported on matters covered at the APC meeting on 7 February 2023.
15. Work had been carried out on the workforce action plan, which had set out seven ambitions. These would be covered in a series of webinars, the first of which would take place on 16 February, on leadership. The webinars would be recorded. It was also commented that the workforce action webinars were very relevant for veterinary nurses and they should be encouraged to attend.
16. A ViVet student innovation competition, open to all student veterinary nurses and veterinary students, would be launched shortly. There would be a winner and runner up, but all entrants would be eligible to be included in a poster campaign for the innovation symposium, which would take place in the autumn.
17. Work was being carried out on the development of an innovation assessment tool for use in practice.
18. On diversity and inclusion, a survey would shortly be sent out to veterinary surgeons, veterinary nurses and students, on disability and chronic illness. The RCVS had also contributed to the Federation of Veterinarians in Europe (FVE) campaign on diversity, equality and inclusion. Three further interviews with Black, Asian and minority ethnic (BAME) veterinary professionals had been produced, related to Black History Month.
19. The group had been looking into ways to encourage GP veterinary surgeons to become involved in the Fellowship.
20. The Mind Matters Initiative (MMI) had completed the campfire series, and was working on Mental Health First Aider courses and also courses for managers on mental health in the workplace.
21. VN Futures had collaborated with MMI to run a series of in-person workshops in Manchester, Guildford and Wolverhampton, and with BSAVA (British Small Animal Veterinary Association) to run a neurodiversity stream at the BSAVA Congress in April.
22. A short leadership and management course had been developed on the RCVS Academy, and RCVS Knowledge had produced a 16-hour free CPD course on the management of medicines.
23. There was some discussion on engaging veterinary care assistants, and why some veterinary care and animal nursing assistants do not transition to training for the VN profession. The comments would be fed back to the VN Futures Board.

## Policy and Public Affairs update

24. The Policy and Public Affairs Manager provided a brief update.
25. An exit survey for veterinary nurses had been launched in February 2023, following the annual fee renewal process. It was hoped to build a more formal picture of the reasons for leaving the Register, rather than relying on anecdotal impressions. Questions covered demographics including socio-economic background, qualification route to becoming a veterinary nurse, disability and dependants. It would also cover the type of work carried out as a veterinary nurse, their intentions for the future and any plans to return.
26. A workforce modelling study was due to be launched shortly, in collaboration with the Institute of Employment Studies, to obtain useful data on shortages of vets and veterinary nurses, vacancy rates in different parts of the country and to track the impact of the shortages. This study was reliant on data from outside sources, and any suggestions from Council members as to good sources of data that might be helpful for the model would be appreciated.
27. In regard to the exit survey, a question was asked as to when the first round of data might be expected. It was accepted that it was likely that it would take some years to build up sufficient data, and that it was not possible to chase for information once a veterinary nurse was no longer registered.
28. It was suggested that anonymised data from exit surveys from members of the major employers group would be helpful. It was also suggested some universities might be able to share data from alumni groups.

## Communications report

29. The Director of Communications reported on recent veterinary nursing related activities.
30. A very successful Veterinary Nurses Day had been held in Oxford on 4 February, with two ceremonies during the day, welcoming newly qualified VNs to the Register as well as celebrating the first group of VNs who had achieved the Certificate in Advanced Veterinary Nursing. He reported that VN days were the biggest event carried out by the RCVS and always very well received. A total of over 500 people had attended the ceremonies.
31. The Chair added his thanks to all those who had organised the event, which had included a very well received guest speaker, Amy Martin RVN, who talked about mental health. Two further events were being planned for later in the year.
32. The next edition of the *VN Education* e-newsletter would be published in due course, and any items for inclusion should be passed to the VN team.
33. A newsletter was being prepared for VN Futures School Ambassadors, to provide support and guidance. The newsletter would include a survey to help gauge what further support might be needed.

34. Promotion of the Certificate in Advanced Veterinary Nursing had been identified as an area of focus for the next weeks and months, including the preparation of a number of case studies.
35. Work was ongoing around student engagement, to develop more direct lines of communication with VN and veterinary students from year one. The Chair added that the talks that he and the President had carried out to first-year students had been very positive. The Director of Veterinary Nursing confirmed that she was working with Emma Lockley, who was organising the student engagement, on development of this area to more universities and also to include Further Education (FE) students in future.

#### **VN Register report**

36. 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 2017 – 2022, and removals in January 2023 for non-payment of the annual fee. Data was 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.

#### **Any other business (unclassified)**

37. Dominic Dyer updated Council on developments in regard to the issues around the import of rescue dogs and the safeguarding measures which had been put in place. Further updates would be provided at future meetings.

#### **Date of next meeting**

38. Wednesday 10 May 2023. This would be a remote meeting starting at 10.00am.

<b>Summary</b>	
Meeting	Veterinary Nurses Council
Date	10 May 2023
Title	Minutes of meeting of VN Education Committee held on 21 February 2023
Summary	Minutes of the meeting of Veterinary Nurse Education Committee held on 21 February 2023
Decisions required	To approve
Attachments	Classified appendix ( <b>confidential</b> )
Author	Annette Amato Committee Secretary a.amato@rcvs.org.uk / 020 7202 0713

<b>Classifications</b>		
<b>Document</b>	<b>Classification<sup>1</sup></b>	<b>Rationales<sup>2</sup></b>
Paper	Unclassified	n/a
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## Veterinary Nurse Education Committee

### Minutes of the meeting held on 21 February 2023

<b>Members:</b>	* 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 Sophia Hoyland	-	HE student representative
	* Miss Betsy Malamah-Thomas	-	Employer representative
	Professor Elizabeth Mossop	-	Independent educationalist
	Mrs Sarah Parkhouse	-	FE veterinary nursing provider
	Mrs Sarah Reynolds-Golding	-	HE veterinary nursing provider (Deputy Chair)
	Mrs Perdi Welsh	-	Post-registration veterinary nurse provider
Miss Leigh Willson	-	FE student representative	

\*absent

<b>In attendance:</b>	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 Kirsty Williams	-	Education Quality Improvement Manager

### Apologies for absence

1. Apologies for absence were received from Donna Cotton, Susan Howarth and Betsy Malamah-Thomas.

### Declarations of interest

2. Two members declared an interest in relation to specific items on the agenda. These were noted at the relevant item and where considered necessary, the member left the meeting for the discussion of the item. Professor Mossop added membership of the Office for Students' TEF (Teaching Excellence Framework) panel to her general declaration of interests.

### Minutes of the meeting of the Education Committee (VNEC) held on 13 December 2022

3. The Committee approved the minutes of the meeting held on 13 December 2022 as a correct record. These had been previously circulated to the Committee, and had been presented to VN Council for approval at its meeting on 8 February 2022.

### Matters arising

4. There was one matter arising from the previous minutes. This item is included in the confidential appendix.

### Veterinary Nursing update

5. The Director of Veterinary Nursing updated the Committee on recent developments and activities.
6. **Enrolments.** In the period between 1 August 2022 and 21 February 2023, 1,809 enrolment applications had been processed, and a further 128 applications were pending completion, either awaiting payment or notification of completion of the cohort by the centre.
7. **Registrations.** No applications had been received since the previous meeting from students requiring special consideration in respect of the completion of the required practice training hours due to the effect of the Covid pandemic, but the provision would remain in place for the time being to ensure that any students potentially affected could apply for consideration.
8. **Veterinary nursing team.** An Examinations Administrator had been recruited at the end of 2022 and had started in post in early January 2023. An appointment had also been made to the role previously named as Qualifications Co-ordinator, and the new staff member would start on 27 March. In the meantime other staff members were assisting with the workload.
9. **Veterinary Nurses' Days.** A very successful Veterinary Nurses' Day had been held in Oxford, on 4 February 2023. There had been two separate sessions, with a total of 170 recently registered veterinary nurses attending, and three RVNs who had achieved the Certificate in Advanced Veterinary Nursing. These events continued to prove to be very popular and it was hoped to hold two further Veterinary Nurses Days in 2023. There had been very positive feedback regarding the keynote speaker, and it was hoped that she would be able to participate again.
10. **RCVS Academy.** The Academy was currently working on producing a support package for newly registered veterinary nurses, focusing on pastoral rather than clinical aspects. It was hoped that the package would be launched in May, to tie in with VN month.
11. **VetSkill Skills log.** A productive meeting had been held with VetSkill in early February. VetSkill had been listening to feedback from its centres and was looking to provide them with an option to use the Nursing Progress log (NPL) as a platform for students to log their DOS completion. Although this would normally be brought as a paper for consideration, as it involved a potential change in the assessment method, the NPL is so well known and



widely used with full confidence, the Director of Veterinary Nursing had agreed to bring it as an oral report to the meeting. Vetskill had put appropriate RPL mechanisms in place, and a number of centres had already indicated a desire to transfer to the NPL.

12. **ENQA (European Network for Quality Assurance in Higher Education) review.** The Education Quality Improvement Manager reported that the ENQA review visit to the RCVS, originally planned for April 2023, had now been postponed to 5 – 7 June 2023 and all members of VNEC and VN Council had been requested to provide information on their availability during the dates of the visit, in case they were requested to attend a meeting as part of the accreditation event.
13. It was confirmed that although the ideal would be for attendance in person, it had been indicated that remote attendance could be accommodated. Not all members would be selected. The questions asked at the meetings would be based on the RCVS Self Assessment report (SAR), which would be uploaded with its annexes into BoardEffect so that all members could access this easily. Those selected to attend would be notified as soon as possible, and would be fully briefed in advance.

### Matters for decision

#### Licence to practise qualifications

14. **Re-accreditation- University of Bristol.** The Qualifications Manager presented the accreditation report from the event which took place in November 2022, together with the action plan.
15. Following a full discussion of the accreditation report, the Committee agreed that full accreditation should be granted for a five-year period, for the BSc(Hons) Veterinary Nursing and Companion Animal Behaviour.
16. Arising from the discussion on the rationale for meeting the accreditation requirements, and following observations made by the Education Quality Improvement Manager when observing other accreditation visits as to whether standards had or had not been met, the Committee agreed that there should be further discussion on the options available for the classification of each standard. A paper should be brought to the next meeting, to consider the options available and the wording to be used.
17. **Change to accreditation status – VetSkill.** VetSkill had achieved full accreditation for its Level 3 Diploma in Veterinary Nursing (Companion Animal) qualification in October 2021. The Level 3 Diploma in Veterinary Nursing (Equine) had been accredited at a separate event, and therefore had remained on provisional accreditation. The first group of VetSkill students had attended the summative OSCE in November 2022, and the Committee was provided with the report. The processes for delivery and quality assurance had mirrored those used for the Companion Animal qualification, and all Standards had been met with no actions or suggestions.

18. The Committee agreed that full accreditation should be granted for the Vetskill Level 3 Diploma in Veterinary Nursing (Equine).

### Certificate in Advanced Veterinary Nursing qualifications

19. Perdi Welsh left the meeting for the discussion of this item.
20. **Royal Veterinary College.** The Royal Veterinary College had submitted a request to extend the accreditation cycle of its CertAVN provision for its four programmes which were due for re-accreditation in 2025. The RVC had a further suite of CertAVN programmes which were due for re-accreditation in 2027, and the request, supported by the senior leadership of the institution, the programme lead and the academic quality team, was to align the re-accreditation for all CertAVN programmes in 2026, bringing the later programmes forward by one year and the earlier programmes back by one year.
21. The Committee agreed unanimously that the request should be granted, and that re-accreditation for all the RVC's CertAVN programmes should take place in 2026.

### Matters for note

### Licence to practise qualifications

### Pre-accreditation support

22. The Qualifications Manager provided a report on the current status of the pre-accreditation support package for all Accredited Education Institutions (AEIs) and meetings which had been planned for the current year. This was still ongoing and continued to be well received, with some very positive feedback.
23. Meetings would be arranged in due course for AEIs due for re-accreditation in 2024/2025.

### Action plan monitoring accreditation/re-accreditation

### Quality Monitoring activities

24. The Committee was provided with papers setting out full updates on quality monitoring activities and the actions which had been taken, for the following Accredited Education Institutions (AEIs) and centres:
  - Central Qualifications
  - City & Islington College
  - Coleg Gwent
  - University of Chester
  - Wrexham Glyndwr University

### Action plan quality monitoring - quality assurance

25. Oral updates were provided on the monitoring of action plans and future planned actions for the following AEIs and centres:
- Anglia Ruskin University
  - Coleg Sir Gar
  - Goddard Veterinary Nursing College
  - Hartpury University
  - Lantra Awards
  - North Highland College
  - Reaseheath College
  - Royal Agricultural University / Plumpton College
  - South Staffordshire College
  - University of Central Lancashire
  - University of Chester
  - University of Glasgow (SRUC Aberdeen)
  - University of Plymouth
  - University of South Wales
  - Wrexham Glyndwr University

### External Examiners

26. The Committee noted the Curriculum Vitae and CPD records which had been provided for a newly appointed external examiner (EE) for an Awarding Organisation (AO). It was accepted that this information was for note only, provided that the Committee was satisfied that the EE met the requirements set out by the AO.
27. The Qualifications Manager confirmed that when the new Senior Qualifications Officer had started in post at the end of March, they would make contact with all AEIs in order to update the External Examiner lists, and full details would be provided to the Committee later in the year.

### Other matters for report

28. **Sheffield College.** It was confirmed that the RCVS had been notified by VetSkill that Sheffield College would cease to be a delivery site for its Level 3 Diploma in Veterinary Nursing, and a suitable exit strategy was being followed.

### Post registration qualifications

#### Certificate in Advanced Veterinary Nursing Action plan monitoring

29. **Hartpury University.** It was reported that actions were progressing and responses had been provided by the University which were awaiting review. Actions were being met.

### VN Pre-registration Examination

30. **VN Pre-registration Examination.** The Examinations Manager reported that the next pre-registration examination was being run in the forthcoming weekend, with thirty four entries, including one equine candidate.
31. **VN Pre-registration Examination Multiple Choice Question (MCQ) assessment outcomes.** The first draft of the assessment outcomes document had been prepared by the multiple choice examinations developer who had been employed on a fixed term contract, as reported at the previous meeting. The document was currently being reviewed and it was hoped that the next draft would be available for the information of the Committee at its next meeting.

### Items for publication

32. The new RCVS Academy support package for newly registered veterinary nurses should be publicised.

### Any other business

33. The Deputy Chair reported that the Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education (QAA) had convened an Advisory Panel group on the VN subject sector benchmarks, and some members of the Committee are on the panel.
34. The Deputy Chair raised the issue of ChatGPT – an artificial intelligence chatbot – and wondered how this might impact on VN assessment in the future. It was expected that the universities and awarding organisations would be aware of this and would need to create robust rules to deal with this in the future. The Director of Veterinary Nursing confirmed that this was due to be discussed by the RCVS senior leadership team.

### Meeting dates 2023

35. The remaining meeting dates for 2023 were confirmed as follows:

- Tuesday 18 April
- Wednesday 14 June (in person)
- Thursday 10 August
- Thursday 12 October
- Monday 11 December

Remote meetings would start at 9.30am. The venue and start time for the in-person meeting would be confirmed, and was likely to be in London.

<b>Summary</b>	
Meeting	Veterinary Nurses Council
Date	10 May 2023
Title	Report on registration of VNs educated outside the UK
Summary	<p>This paper summarises the applications for registration from nurses educated outside the UK. It covers the period between 1 April 2022 and 31 March 2023. Where a number of applications have been received from holders with a certain qualification these have been detailed in order that VNC may consider accepting these qualifications in future without submitting the qualification syllabus.</p>
Decisions required	<p>VNC is invited to consider exempting applicants who hold the following qualifications from providing their qualification syllabus/curriculum.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Cert IV in Veterinary Nursing ACM40418 – Australia.</li> <li>• Bachelor of Veterinary Technology / BSc Science with extended Major in Veterinary Technology awarded by the University of Queensland before 2022 (including 2022) – Australia.</li> <li>• Advanced Diploma in Veterinary Nursing awarded by SCOPE between 2016 and 2022 – New Zealand.</li> <li>• National Diploma in Veterinary Nursing NCF 2491 – Australia.</li> <li>• Diploma in Veterinary Nursing awarded by the University of Zimbabwe between 2006 and 2022 – Zimbabwe.</li> </ul>
Attachments	Annex A – Registration process for VNs educated outside the UK
Authors	<p>Victoria Hedges Examinations Manager <a href="mailto:v.hedges@rcvs.org.uk">v.hedges@rcvs.org.uk</a> / 020 7202 0782</p>

<b>Classifications</b>		
<b>Document</b>	<b>Classification<sup>1</sup></b>	<b>Rationales<sup>2</sup></b>
Paper	Unclassified	n/a
Annex A	Unclassified	n/a

**<sup>1</sup>Classifications explained**

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## Registration for holders of qualifications achieved outside the UK (2022/2023)

### 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. In keeping with our current processes, where a large number of applications are received from holders of qualifications from one country or awarding organisation, VNC is invited to consider accepting the qualification so that future applicants holding that qualification are not required to map their qualification to the RCVS Day One Competences (DOC) and RCVS Day One Skills (DOS).
3. This paper provides details of the outcome of applications received between 1 April 2022 and 31 March 2023.

### Outcome of applications received between 1 April 2022 and 31 March 2023

4. Table 1 details the data for completed applications processed between 1 April 2022 and 31 March 2023. A completed application is one where all information has been received and the decision has been conveyed to the applicant. The figures in brackets relate to the previous reporting period (1 April 2021 and 31 March 2022) and have been provided for comparison.

#### Key:

<b>Accepted</b>	Application accepted without further assessment. Applicants are invited to register without completing examinations. This is only applicable for individuals educated in an institution accredited by ACOVENE.
<b>Adaptation</b>	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.
<b>Rejected</b>	Applicant does not meet the minimum RCVS requirement for entry onto the register of veterinary nurses. Applications from veterinary surgeons fall into this category.



**Table 1****Applications for entry onto the register by nurses trained outside the UK**

<b>Applicant qualification origin</b>	<b>Total Applications</b>	<b>Accepted (ACOVENE)</b>	<b>Adaptation</b>	<b>Rejected</b>	<b>Registered</b>
Australia	18 (11)	0 (0)	18 (11)	0 (0)	15 (6)
Belgium	0 (1)	0 (1)	0 (0)	0 (0)	0 (2)
Canada	0 (2)	0 (0)	0 (2)	0 (0)	1 (1)
Croatia	0 (0)	0 (0)	0 (0)	0 (1)	0 (0)
France	1 (0)	0 (0)	1 (0)	0 (0)	1 (0)
Germany	1 (0)	0 (0)	1 (0)	0 (0)	0 (2)
Hong Kong	21 (0)	0 (0)	21 (0)	0 (0)	5 (0)
Italy	0 (1)	0 (0)	0 (1)	0 (0)	0 (2)
Netherlands	4 (0)	3 (0)	1 (0)	0 (0)	3 (0)
New Zealand	5 (2)	0 (0)	5 (2)	0 (0)	6 (1)
Poland	0 (1)	0 (0)	0 (0)	0 (1)	0 (0)
Portugal	3 (2)	2 (2)	1 (0)	0 (0)	2 (5)
Republic of Ireland	22 (15)	22 (15)	0 (0)	0 (0)	24 (11)
Slovenia	0 (0)	0 (0)	0 (0)	0 (0)	1 (0)
South Africa	8 (11)	0 (0)	8 (11)	0 (0)	10 (7)
USA	7 (9)	0 (0)	7 (8)	0 (1)	9 (3)
Zimbabwe	7 (2)	0 (0)	7 (2)	0 (0)	1 (1)
<b>Total</b>	<b>97 (58)</b>	<b>27 (18)</b>	<b>70 (37)</b>	<b>0 (3)</b>	<b>78 (41)</b>

5. There were ninety seven completed applications processed in the reporting period. This is an increase of 40% on the previous year. As usual, the highest number of applications were received from applicants educated in the Republic of Ireland. This is closely followed by applicants educated in Hong Kong. Over the last ten years 30 applications have been received from veterinary nurses educated in Hong Kong. Twenty-one of these were received during this reporting period. Another area of significant increase has been from applicants who hold the Diploma in Veterinary Nursing awarded by the University of Zimbabwe.
6. With the exception of those educated in the Republic of Ireland, very few applications were received from veterinary nurses educated within the EU.
7. As of 31 March 2023 there were 12 partially completed applications. Reasons for non-completion relate to lack of / incorrect affidavits, non-payment or insufficient evidence about the content of the qualification. As of 31 March, four applications were with the Equivalency Officer for further scrutiny. Where applications are incomplete, we communicate with the applicant and support them to obtain the required information.
8. The number of applicants entering the register increased from 41 in 2021/22 to 78 in 2022/23.
9. As of 31 March 2023, 513 nurses educated outside the UK were active on the register. This equates to 2.3% of all RVNs on that date. It should be noted that this is an increase of 43 RVNs from the previous year.

## Items for consideration by VNC

### Consideration to accept applications without submission of the course content

10. Annex A contains the process followed to 'accept' a qualification where a large number of applications are received from candidates who achieved their qualification in a particular country or with a particular awarding organisation.
11. Table 2 outlines qualifications which are currently 'accepted' and highlights proposed changes to the list. The rationale for the proposed changes is detailed below.

#### **Australia**

12. Over the last two years we have received five applications from veterinary nurses holding the Cert IV in Veterinary Nursing ACM40418. This qualification was approved in 2018 and superseded the Cert IV in veterinary Nursing with the following qualification codes RUV40404, ACM40410 and ACM40412. These are all 'accepted' to proceed to the Pre-registration examination. In all cases the Equivalency Officer has confirmed that the qualification (ACM40418) is a veterinary nursing qualification covering most of the DOC / DOS.
13. VNC has previously agreed that holders of the Bachelor of Veterinary Technology / BSc Science with extended Major in Veterinary Technology awarded by the University of Queensland before 2018 can proceed to the Pre-registration examination without providing a

syllabus. We have received three applications from veterinary nurses graduating between 2018 and 2022 and the Equivalency Officer has confirmed that the qualification is a veterinary nursing qualification covering most of the DOC / DOS.

**Hong Kong**

14. As already reported, we have, in the last year, received twenty-one applications from graduates of the Advanced Diploma in Veterinary Nursing, awarded by the School of Continuing and Professional Education (SCOPE) City University of Hong Kong. The Equivalency Officer has confirmed that the qualification(s) awarded between 2016 and 2022 are veterinary nursing qualifications covering most of the DOC / DOS.

**New Zealand**

15. Over the last two years we have received four applications from veterinary nurses holding the National Diploma in Veterinary Nursing NCF 2491. This qualification was approved in 2019 and superseded the National Diploma in Veterinary Nursing NCF 0222 which are all 'accepted' to proceed to the Pre-registration examination. In all cases the Equivalency Officer has confirmed that the qualification (NCF 2491) is a veterinary nursing qualification covering most of the DOC / DOS.

**Zimbabwe**

16. During the last two years we have received seven applications from holders of the Diploma in Veterinary Nursing awarded by the University of Zimbabwe. In all cases the Equivalency Officer has confirmed that the qualification(s) awarded between 2006 and 2022 are veterinary nursing qualifications covering most of the DOC / DOS.

**Table 2 – Qualifications accepted without submission of syllabus/curriculum**

Country	Awarding/accrediting Organisation	Qualification	Code	Year accredited	Syllabus required	Proposed Change
Australia	Government approved Regional Training Organisations	Certificate IV in Veterinary Nursing	ACM40412	2012	No	None
		Certificate IV in Veterinary Nursing	ACM40410	2010	No	None
		Certificate IV in Veterinary Nursing	RUV40404	2004	No	None
		Certificate IV in Veterinary Nursing	RUV40198	1998	Yes	None
		Certificate IV in Veterinary Nursing	ACM40418	2018	Yes	Remove requirement to submit syllabus.
	University of Queensland	BSc Science with extended Major in Veterinary Technology	No info	No Info	Before 2018 (No)	Remove requirement to submit syllabus for qualifications issued before 2022 (including 2022)
	La Trobe University	Bachelor of Veterinary Nursing	No info	No info	Yes	None
Canada	Various organisations accredited by the CVMA	All CVMA accredited qualifications	N/A	N/A	No	None

Country	Awarding/accrediting Organisation	Qualification	Code	Year accredited	Syllabus required	Proposed Change
Hong Kong	Hong Kong Polytechnic University	BSc (Hons) in veterinary nursing	N/A	2010	Awarded in 2014	None
	School of Continuing and Professional Education (SCOPE) City University of Hong Kong	Advanced Diploma in Veterinary Nursing	163-30280	2016	Yes	Remove requirement to submit syllabus
			173-30280	2017	Yes	Remove requirement to submit syllabus.
			183-30280	2018	Yes	Remove requirement to submit syllabus.
			193-30280	2019	Yes	Remove requirement to submit syllabus
			203-30280	2020	Yes	Remove requirement to submit syllabus
			213-30280	2021	Yes	Remove requirement to submit syllabus
223-30280	2022	Yes	Remove requirement to submit syllabus			
New Zealand	Training organisations approved by the New Zealand Qualifications authority	National Diploma in Veterinary Nursing	NCF 0222	1996	No	None
		National Diploma in Veterinary Nursing	NCF 2491	2019	Yes	Remove requirement to submit syllabus.
		National Diploma in Veterinary Nursing with strands in Companion Animal, and Equine Veterinary Nursing	NCF 4389	2021	Yes	None

Country	Awarding/accrediting Organisation	Qualification	Code	Year accredited	Syllabus required	Proposed Change
	Massey University	Bachelor of Veterinary Technology	Before 2018	No information	No	None
Portugal	Castelo Branco University of Applied Sciences	Bachelor in Veterinary Nursing	Before 2018	No information	No	None
South Africa	University of Pretoria	University Diploma in Veterinary Nursing	0812002	Before 2022	No	None
		Bachelor of Veterinary Nursing	0813006	After 2019	Yes	None
USA	Various organisations accredited by the AVMA	AVMA-accredited college qualifications	N/A	N/A	No	None
Zimbabwe	University of Zimbabwe	Diploma in Veterinary Nursing	N/A	N/A	Yes	Remove requirement to submit syllabus for qualifications issued between 2006-2022

## Other information

17. The VN Examinations Team has designed a course aimed at veterinary nurses educated outside the UK. The course covers all aspects of the application process including completing the application forms, sitting the Pre-registration examination and the Code of Professional Conduct for Veterinary Nurses. This has been well received.
18. In order to align our processes with those used by the Registration Team, it has been agreed that where qualification certificates are not available or have not been issued a letter from the school will be accepted to confirm that the qualification has been awarded. This allows applicants to register before finding employment or applying for visas. This increases employment prospects. It should be noted that if there is concern about the validity of the letter further evidence will be required.

## Recommendations

19. VNC is invited to consider exempting applicants who hold the following qualifications from providing the course syllabus/curriculum. Applicants will continue to be required to pass the RCVS Pre-registration Examination and we will continue to spot check applications.
  - Cert IV in Veterinary Nursing ACM40418 – Australia.
  - Bachelor of Veterinary Technology / BSc Science with extended Major in Veterinary Technology awarded by the University of Queensland before 2022 (including 2022) – Australia.
  - Advanced Diploma in Veterinary Nursing awarded by SCOPE between 2016 and 2022 – Hong Kong.
  - National Diploma in Veterinary Nursing NCF 2491 – New Zealand.
  - Diploma in Veterinary Nursing awarded by the University of Zimbabwe between 2006 and 2022 – Zimbabwe.

## **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. If this is aligned the applicant is permitted to proceed to the RCVS Pre-registration examination which they must pass before applying to enter the register.
4. Where a large number of applicants have a qualification 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 some applications received from Australia, Portugal, New Zealand, South Africa, Hong Kong, Canada and the USA. These applicants are still 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 used to hold monthly registration talks covering legislation and the Code of Professional Conduct. In March 2023 the RCVS Academy launched a module covering the content of the talk. This has been made a compulsory part of the registration process. for all applicants.

<b>Summary</b>	
Meeting	Veterinary Nurses Council
Date	10 May 2023
Title	Report on temporary student enrolments
Summary	This paper summarises the applications for temporary student enrolment completed between 1 April 2022 and 31 March 2023.
Decisions required	None
Attachments	None
Authors	<p>Lucy Blampied VN Enrolments Officer <a href="mailto:l.blampied@rcvs.org.uk">l.blampied@rcvs.org.uk</a> / 020 8148 5562</p> <p>Victoria Hedges Examinations Manager <a href="mailto:v.hedges@rcvs.org.uk">v.hedges@rcvs.org.uk</a> / 020 7202 0782</p>

<b>Classifications</b>		
<b>Document</b>	<b>Classification<sup>1</sup></b>	<b>Rationales<sup>2</sup></b>
Paper	Unclassified	

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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 for a maximum period of 12 weeks which can be undertaken as one block or split into several short blocks.. 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 2022 and 31 March 2023.

### Temporary enrolments between 1 April 2022 and 31 March 2023

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 2022 and 31 March 2023) and have been provided for comparison.

**Table 1**

#### Applications for temporary enrolments

Applicant's qualification origin	Number of Applications
Belgium	0 (1)
Germany	0 (1)
Netherlands	5 (7)
Portugal	1 (0)
Republic of Ireland	12 (13)
Italy	1 (0)
Total	19 (22)

<b>Summary</b>	
Meeting	VN Council
Date	10 May 2023
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 / Secretary to the RVN PIC <a href="mailto:s.neary@rcvs.org.uk">s.neary@rcvs.org.uk</a> / 020 7202 0730</p> <p>Gemma Crossley Head of Professional Conduct <a href="mailto:g.crossley@rcvs.org.uk">g.crossley@rcvs.org.uk</a> / 020 7202 0740</p>

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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 21 February and 4 April 2023. The next meeting is scheduled to take place on 16 May.

#### RVN Concerns received / registered.

2. Between 24 January and 18 April 2023, there were 10 new concerns relating to RVNs. Of these 10 new concerns:
  - One case was closed by the Stage 1 PIC.
  - Eight are currently under investigation by a Case Manager, Veterinary Nurse, Veterinary surgeon, and a lay member (Stage 1 PIC).
  - One case was referred to Stage 2 PIC.

#### RVN Preliminary Investigation Committee

3. There have been two new cases considered by the RVN PIC between 24 January and 18 April 2023. Both cases were referred to external solicitors for formal statements to be taken.

#### Ongoing Investigations

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

#### Health Concerns

5. At the RVN PIC meeting on 4 April 2023, the Committee considered a case where the Respondent RVN has been subject to undertakings given under the RCVS Health Protocol for a number of years. The Committee agreed that the case should be closed, and the Respondent released from their undertakings. There are no other RVNs on the health protocol.

#### Performance Concerns

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

#### Referral to Disciplinary Committee

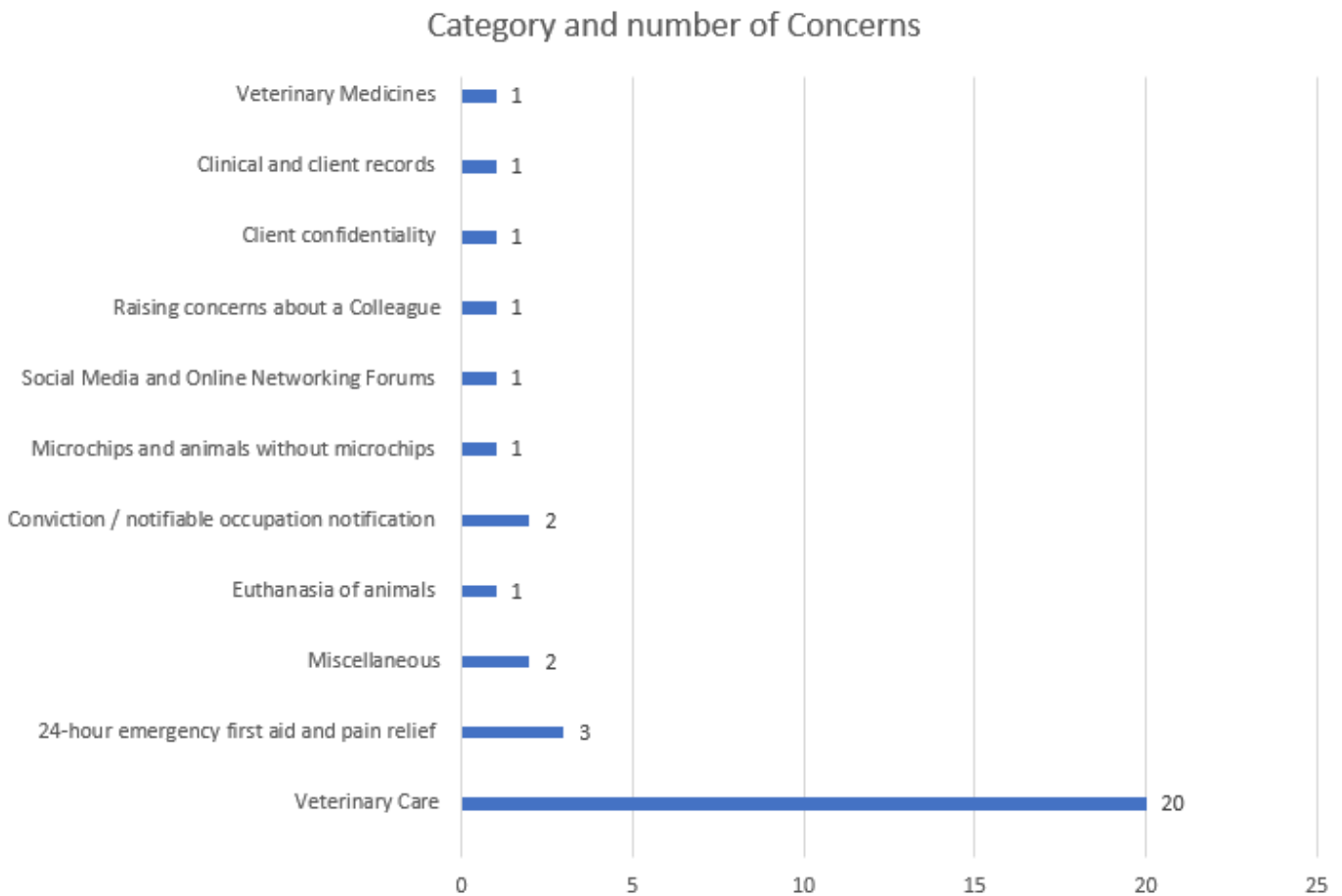
7. Since the last report, one case has been referred to the RVN Disciplinary Committee and the hearing dates will be confirmed in due course.

### Disciplinary Hearings

8. A disciplinary hearing took place between 27 and 31 March 2023 in relation to Libby Morris. The Disciplinary Committee found all the allegations proved and decided that the RVN's name should be suspended from the Register for a period of six months.

### Professional Conduct Department

9. The chart below shows the number and categories of the **34** concerns relating to RVNs registered between **1 April 2022 and 31 March 2023**.



10. Of the 34 concerns registered between 1 April 2022 and 31 March 2023:

- 18 were closed at Stage 1 (5 with formal advice issued to the RVN).
- 3 were referred to Stage 2 - RVN PIC
- 1 was referred to Stage 3 (Disciplinary Committee)
- 12 are currently under investigation at Stage 1.



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

- 1 April 2021 – 31 March 2022 – 36
- 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

### Cases considered by RVN PIC (Stage 2)

11. Between 1 April 2022 and 31 March 2023, the RVN PIC considered **10 new cases**. Of these:

- 1 case closed with formal advice issued to the RVN.
- 1 case was adjourned for further investigation.
- 5 cases were referred to external solicitors for formal statements to be taken.
- 3 cases were referred to the Disciplinary Committee.

During the same period, the RVN PIC considered **3 ongoing cases**, all of which were referred to the Disciplinary Committee.

### Disciplinary Hearings

12. Between 1 April 2022 and 31 March 2023, there have been five DC hearings involving RVNs. The Disciplinary Committee concluded that the conduct of the RVNs amounted to serious professional misconduct in all the cases. In terms of sanction, two RVNs were removed from the Register, two RVNs received a period of suspension from the Register (3 and 6 months respectively) and one RVN received a reprimand and formal warning as to her future conduct.

### Year overview

13. The new concerns process commenced on 1 October 2022. Both Case Managers and PIC members have worked hard to ensure that the new process is running smoothly and to address any initial issues that have arisen.

The majority of the Stage two PIC meetings continue to be held remotely. The meetings on 28 June 2022 and 21 February 2023 were held in person and two more face to face meetings are scheduled to take place on 27 June and 31 October 2023.

Training took place for members of the department and Committee members, both new and existing on 23 September 2022. This covered the changes to the concerns process, as well as other matters and updates to the relevant field of law. A further training day is scheduled to take place in person on 15 May 2023.

The RVN PIC has recently welcomed Susan Holt RVN whose term began in March 2023. At the end of June 2023, we will say goodbye to our Chair and Vice-Chair (Suzanne Edwards RVN and Susan Little MRCVS) who have served on the Committee for 8 years. We are very grateful for the contributions they have made to the Committee, and we will miss their vast experience and knowledge.

<b>Summary</b>	
Meeting	Veterinary Nurses Council
Date	10 May 2023
Title	Disciplinary Committee Report
Summary	Update of RVN Disciplinary Committee
Decisions required	None
Attachments	None
Author	Yemisi Yusuph Disciplinary Committee Clerk Tel: 020 7202 0729 Email: y.yusuph@rcvs.org.uk

<b>Classifications</b>		
<b>Document</b>	<b>Classification<sup>1</sup></b>	<b>Rationales<sup>2</sup></b>
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## Report of the RVN Disciplinary Committee

### Hearings

#### Libby Morris RVN

Between Monday 27 March to Friday 31 March 2023, the RVN Committee met to hear the Inquiry into Miss Libby Morris.

The Inquiry was in relation to three charges that were brought against her. All three charges involved concerns about her care for a post-operative German Shepherd dog at a Devon veterinary practice on 25 December 2020.

The first charge was that she left the dog unattended between 12.15pm and 2.30pm, made clinical records entries before leaving the practice indicating she'd made these entries at 2pm when she had not, and at 1.41pm sent a message to a veterinary surgeon colleague in which she purported to be providing contemporaneous updates about the dog's condition and circumstances when she was not, in fact, with the animal. The second charge alleged that her conduct from the first charge was potentially detrimental to the dog's welfare, while the third charge alleged that the same conduct was dishonest and/or misleading.

At the outset of the hearing Miss Morris admitted the majority of the charges, although she denied that she had made the clinical record dishonestly on the basis that she had innocently omitted to correct a time entry she had earlier made in the records as a "prompt". After considering evidence from the College's and Miss Morris's witnesses, the Committee found that she had been dishonest as she knowingly pre-entered the incorrect time in order to cover up for a period of absence from the practice.

With all the charges having been admitted or found proven, the Committee then went on to consider whether the charges amounted to serious professional misconduct. In making this decision, the Committee considered the aggravating and mitigating factors in Miss Morris's conduct. In terms of aggravating factors, the Committee found that there was: a real risk of injury to the animal having left it unattended for more than two hours while it was recovering from a serious emergency procedure; dishonesty; recklessness regarding the dog's welfare; pre-meditated misconduct as she had knowingly made the false clinical record in advance; breach of client trust; and, breach of the position of trust and responsibility placed in her as she was on-call that day and had the sole responsibility for the dog.

In terms of mitigation, the Committee considered that this was a single isolated incident, albeit involving a series of misconduct, in respect of one animal, and that, although there was a risk of harm in leaving a vulnerable animal unattended, her actions did not directly lead to any harm coming to the animal, which did, however, subsequently die from post-operative complications.

Overall, the Committee found that Miss Morris's conduct would undermine the public trust and confidence placed in the veterinary nursing profession as a whole as well as bring the profession into disrepute and so found that her actions amounted to serious professional misconduct.

In deciding the most appropriate sanction for Miss Morris, the Committee took into account the previously mentioned aggravating and mitigating factors, but also considered a number of further pertinent mitigating factors. These were: Miss Morris's youth and inexperience at the time of the misconduct; her previously unblemished career; her open and frank admissions to the majority of the charges; her efforts to avoid repeating such behaviours; efforts to remediate past misconduct; the significant lapse of time between the incident and the disciplinary hearing; demonstration of insight into her misconduct; and positive personal character references and testimonials.

Mrs Judith Way, chairing the Committee and speaking on its behalf, said: "In deciding the proportionate sanction the Committee considered the nature and extent of the dishonesty it had found proved. When considering where the dishonesty fell on a scale of dishonesty, it noted that the respondent had acted dishonestly within her practice as a veterinary nurse, on three clinical records, but that the dishonesty related to a single incident and one patient with the aim of extending her time away from the practice on Christmas Day. It therefore concluded that this could be described as middle ranging dishonesty (not the most or least serious type of dishonesty).

Overall, having considered all the matters above, the Committee concluded that Miss Morris should receive a suspension of 6 months.