

Veterinary Nurses Council

Wednesday 15 November 2023 at 10.00am to be held remotely by
Microsoft Teams

Agenda

	Classification¹	Rationale²
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 13 September 2023		
i. Unclassified minutes	Unclassified	n/a
ii. Classified appendix	Confidential	1,2,3,4
5. Matters arising	Oral report	n/a
6. CEO update	Oral report	n/a
Matters for decision by VN Council and reports from Committees (unclassified items)		
7. VN Education Committee Minutes of meeting held on 12 October 2023		
i. Unclassified minutes	Unclassified	n/a
ii. Classified appendix	Confidential	2,3,4
8. Standards Review	Unclassified	n/a
9. Continuing Professional Development (CPD) Minutes of meeting of CPD Policy and Compliance Sub- Committee held on 16 October 2023	Unclassified	n/a

Matters for note

- | | | | |
|-------|---|-----------------------------|-----|
| 10. | Reports from RCVS Committees | | |
| 10.01 | VN Preliminary Investigation Committee | Unclassified | n/a |
| 10.02 | Standards Committee | Oral report
Unclassified | n/a |
| 10.03 | Advancement of the Professions Committee | Oral report
Unclassified | n/a |
| 11. | Policy and Public Affairs update | Oral report
Unclassified | n/a |
| 12. | Communications report | Oral report
Unclassified | n/a |
| 13. | Any other business (unclassified) | Unclassified | |
| 14. | Date of next meeting
Wednesday 28 February 2024 | | |

Confidential and private items (closed session)

- | | | | |
|-------|--|---------------------|----------------|
| 15. | Risk Register | | |
| 15.01 | Risk Register Summary | Confidential | 1,2,3,4 |
| 15.02 | Any items arising from the current meeting to be added to the Risk Register | | |
| 16. | VN Education Committee confidential items
Confidential items from meeting of 12 October 2023 | Confidential | 2,3,4 |
| 17. | BEVA Schedule 3 Guidance | Unclassified | n/a |
| 18. | Governance | Confidential | 1,2 |
| 19. | Items for RCVS Committees | Oral report | |
| 20. | Any other business (confidential items) | Oral report | |

Annette Amato
Secretary, VN Council
0207 202 0713 / a.amato@rcvs.org.uk

¹Classifications explained

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Private	The paper includes personal data which should not be disclosed at any time or for any reason, unless the data subject has agreed otherwise. The Chair may, however, indicate after discussion that there are general issues which can be disclosed, for example in reports to committees and Council.

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Obituary

Holly Jones RVN 1986 - 2022

I only knew Holly briefly but she was a force to be reckoned with.

She tried very hard to pass her final OSCEs, sitting them several times before finally passing in 2022, only to sadly pass away a year later.

She was passionate, dedicated and loved by many.

Taken far too young, RIP Holly

Donna Lewis
September 2022

Summary	
Meeting	Veterinary Nurses Council
Date	13 September 2023
Title	13 September 2023 VN Council Minutes
Summary	Minutes of meeting held on Wednesday 13 September 2023
Decisions required	To approve the unclassified minutes and classified appendix
Attachments	Classified appendix (confidential)
Author	Annette Amato Committee Secretary a.amato@rcvs.org.uk / 020 7202 0713

Classifications		
Document	Classification¹	Rationales²
Paper	Unclassified	n/a
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Veterinary Nurses Council

Minutes of the meeting held on Wednesday 13 September 2023 at the Royal College of Nursing, 20 Cavendish Square, London W1G 0RN

Members:

Mrs Belinda Andrews-Jones	Chair
Miss Jessica Beckett	
Miss Linda Belton	Officer Team observer (non-voting)
Mrs Anita Bickerdike	
Miss Alison Carr*	
Ms Sarah Fox*	
Mrs Susan Howarth	Vice-Chair
Mr Tim Hutchinson	
Mrs Katherine Kissick*	
Mrs Donna Lewis	
Mr Matthew Rendle	Vice-Chair
Ms Stephanie Richardson	
Mr Simon Williams	
Miss Holly Witchell	
Professor James Wood^	

*Denotes absent

^Denotes remote

In attendance:

Mrs Annette Amato	Committee Secretary
Mr Luke Bishop	Media and Publications Manager (open session only)
Ms Jacqui Delaloye^	Head of Finance (agenda item xx only)
Mrs Julie Dugmore	Director of Veterinary Nursing
Miss Shirley Gibbins	VN Qualifications Lead
Mrs Victoria Hedges	VN Examinations Quality Lead
Ms Lizzie Lockett	Chief Executive
Mr Ben Myring	Policy and Public Affairs Manager

Guests:

<i>Ms Lacey Pitcher</i>	<i>VN Times (open session only)</i>
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Welcome to new members

1. The Chair welcomed new members Linda Belton, Anita Bickerdike, Tim Hutchinson, Simon Williams and James Wood.

Apologies for absence

2. Apologies for absence had been received from Alison Carr, Sarah Fox and Katherine Kissick.

Declarations of interest

3. There were no new declarations of interest to report.

Obituaries

4. No written obituaries had been received. Council stood to observe a minute's silence for all members of the professions who had passed away since the last meeting.

Minutes of the meeting held on 10 May 2023

5. The Minutes of the meeting held on 10 May 2023 were approved as a correct record.

Matters arising

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

CEO update

7. Council noted the CEO's paper which provided a detailed synopsis of activity against the 2020-2024 Strategic Plan. The College had entered the last phase of the current strategic plan and was starting to develop a new plan, which should be in place for 2025 onwards. The CEO updated Council on a number of other recent and forthcoming activities:
8. The RCVS Academy courses for clinical coaches, newly qualified veterinary nurses and veterinary nurses from overseas applying to enter the RCVS Register were being well received, and new courses had been released the previous week on dealing with wildlife and strays.
9. The first meeting of the Public Advisory Group was due to take place on 22 September, with an induction on the work of the RCVS, and the first stream of work would focus on providing advice on the website for animal owners.
10. The RCVS would be represented at several forthcoming congresses, the first being the British Veterinary Nursing Association (BVNA) congress in early October.
11. The new Charter Case Committee had been launched, intended to deal with the cases that would meet the threshold for serious professional misconduct, but at the lower end of the spectrum where it was considered to be more proportionate and compassionate not to hold a public hearing. The outcome would be made public, but the sanctions available would be lower than those used

by the Disciplinary Committee. The Preliminary Investigation Committee had received training to enable members to identify appropriate cases.

12. The Competition and Markets Authority (CMA) had launched a review the previous week into the veterinary services market for household pets, which was likely to include some areas where the RCVS has jurisdiction, such as out-of-hours care and communication with clients, and others where the RCVS does not have jurisdiction, such as the regulation of practices. The CMA would be meeting with the RCVS shortly to discuss further. Three surveys had been published on the government website (a link had been included on the RCVS website), for veterinary professionals, pet owners and others allied to the industry, and all those with an interest were encouraged to respond.
13. The schedule of meetings for RCVS Committees to the end of 2024 had been agreed, with a move away from a Committee Week. Some Committees had opted for a change in the number of meetings per year, although VN Council would continue with four meetings per year, two in person and two remote. The dates would be circulated shortly.

Veterinary Nurse Education Committee (VNEC)

14. Susan Howarth, VNEC Chair, presented the unclassified sections of the minutes of three meetings of VNEC, which meets six times a year. Attention was drawn to the following:

Meeting held on 18 April 2023.
15. The Committee had agreed the following:
 - Provisional accreditation for the FdSc Veterinary Nursing awarded by University Centre Askham Bryan
 - Re-accreditation of the BSc Veterinary Nursing and BSc (Hons) Veterinary Nursing awarded by the University of Glasgow
16. The Committee had discussed the classifications used in the reporting format for accreditation visits and quality monitoring reports and had agreed to re-introduce an option of “partially met”, in addition to the current options “met” or “not met” for classification of each standard. This had been re-introduced with immediate effect and seemed to be working well.
17. The Committee had discussed the proposed format of the pre-registration knowledge examination. The general process and procedures had been agreed, and further details on the format were to be developed for consideration at future meetings.
18. The pre-accreditation support visits to Accredited Education Institutions (AEIs) continued to be well received and were now mandatory for any future accreditation and reaccreditation events.
19. Council ratified these minutes.

Meeting held on 14 June 2023.

20. The Committee had welcomed a new appointment to the Committee, Nick Cutland, as the independent Further Education (FE) regulatory expert. This appointment had been created in the recent review of the Terms of Reference, to ensure the correct balance and overview of the Committee's discussions. The position of independent educationalist had been replaced by an independent Higher Education (HE) regulatory expert.
21. The Committee had reviewed accreditation reports and action plans, and had agreed the following:
- Full accreditation for a period of two years for the following programmes awarded by Central Qualifications:
 - CQ Level 3 Diploma in Veterinary Nursing Small Animal Practice
 - CQ Level 3 Diploma in Veterinary Nursing Equine Practice
 - Full accreditation for a twelve-month period for the Coventry University veterinary nursing degree programmes:
 - FdSc Veterinary Nursing
 - BSc (Hons) Veterinary Nursing
 - Full accreditation for a twelve-month period for the Harper Adams University veterinary nursing degree programmes listed below:
 - BSc/BSc (Hons) Veterinary Nursing
 - BSc/BSc (Hons) Veterinary Nursing with Companion Animal Behaviour
 - BSc/BSc (Hons) Veterinary Nursing with Small Animal Rehabilitation
 - Full accreditation for five years for the Foundation Degree (FdSc) Veterinary Nursing Science awarded by Nottingham Trent University.
 - Change of status from Provisional accreditation to Full accreditation for the existing BSc(hons) in Veterinary Nursing awarded by the University of Chester.
22. The Committee had been informed of a boycott by some members of the University and College Union (UCU) on marking and assessment. This had started in April, although not all members were taking part. The Committee had agreed that each university delivering VN qualifications should be contacted to enquire whether they were engaging in the action, and if so, how any issues were being mitigated and what information was being provided to students. The possibility of strike action and its effects on students should also be monitored.
23. The Director of Veterinary Nursing added that a number of FE colleges had also been balloted on strike action, and reassured the Council that the College was keeping a watching brief on this, and would continue to monitor the situation.

24. Council ratified these minutes.

Meeting held on 10 August 2023.

25. The following accreditation decisions had been taken:

- Provisional accreditation for the University of Greenwich FdSc in Veterinary Nursing delivered by Plumpton College.
- Voluntary Terminal accreditation for the Royal Agricultural University FdSc in Veterinary Nursing delivered by Plumpton College.
- Change of status from Provisional to Full accreditation for the FdSc in Veterinary Nursing awarded by Wrexham Glyndwr University.

26. The Committee had discussed the options presented for the format of the pre-registration knowledge examination, and had agreed the final format, which had been attached to the minutes for information.

27. Council ratified the minutes.

Continuing Professional Development (CPD)

28. Stephanie Richardson presented the Minutes of the meeting of the CPD Policy and Compliance Subcommittee held on 14 July 2023.

29. The Subcommittee had been very pleased to see from the 1CPD data report that compliance with the requirement to use 1CPD for 2022 had been around 90% for both veterinary nurses and vets, although there had been some concern about the numbers completing the required hours but not reflecting. There would be additional guidance provided online on reflection, and comms highlighting the positive news on 1CPD compliance.

30. There had been some concerns on the presentation of the data in the report for those who were unable to be compliant, in order to accurately reflect the reasons, and there had been discussion on the topic of non-compliance and the terminology used. This would be reviewed and updated. The Subcommittee had also been informed of ongoing 1CPD development work.

31. The Subcommittee had discussed in detail three applications for exemption from the use of 1CPD, for which there are clear rules. Arising from these discussions, further clarification would be requested from the Registrar regarding situations where information provided in support of exemption requests may have drawn attention to matters relevant to the individual's fitness to practise.

Reports from RCVS Committees

Registered Veterinary Nurse Preliminary Investigation Committee (RVN PIC)

32. Council noted the report of the RVN PIC Committee that had been circulated with the agenda.

Standards Committee

33. There were no unclassified items to report from the recent meeting of the Standards Committee.

Advancement of the Professions Committee (APC)

34. Matthew Rendle reported on the meeting of the APC, which had been held the previous day, at which the structure of the meetings had been reviewed, with a view to making these more dynamic, and providing the opportunity once a year to look at the work being carried out by specific work streams and to explore possible synergies.
35. An overview had been provided on the VN Futures Schools Ambassadors project.

RVN Disciplinary Committee

36. Council noted the report from the Disciplinary hearing that took place between 31 July and 3 August 2023.

VN Futures report

37. Matthew Rendle provided an update on the work of VN Futures. The next meeting of the Board would take place at BVNA Congress in early October. The workstreams had been divided between the RCVS and BVNA to ensure each group was working to their strengths.

Communications report

38. The Media and Publications Manager provided an overview of recent VN-related activities in the Comms Department.
39. Work was currently being carried out on the *VN Education* e-newsletter, due to be issued in October, with contributions by several VN team members. This publication had last been issued in March 2022.
40. The nominations period for the 2024 RCVS honours and awards, which included the VN Golden Jubilee Award, would be launched later in the month. Thought had been given to improving the nomination process, and suggestions for further improvements would be welcomed.
41. It was hoped that the suggestion made in an earlier meeting to publish case studies from previous Jubilee Award holders would be progressed. It was confirmed that the intention was to provide a one-week intensive focus of publicity for each of the Awards, and previous Jubilee Award recipients would be contacted to assist with the content for this.

42. The new VN Guidance on Religious Clothing and Beliefs was due to be published as part of the VN Futures project.
43. Forthcoming events with veterinary nursing involvement included the British Equine Veterinary Association (BEVA) Congress, at which the Director of Veterinary Nursing would be part of a discussion panel on Schedule 3. BVNA Congress would be in early October, with the key themes on the RCVS stand being Schedule 3 and delegation. Representatives of VN Council were being sought to attend the London Vet Show in November. The Mind Matters Mental Health Research Symposium would take place in Manchester on 10 October, with many items relevant to the veterinary nursing profession. The next Fellowship Day would take place on 27 November in London and would welcome and celebrate the achievements of the new Fellows awarded their Fellowships in 2023.
44. Work was being carried out on updating and re-design of the website content, including updating the 1CPD area, testing new content with stakeholders, and promoting the RCVS Academy courses, especially the VN Starting Out course for newly registered RVNs. The Academy courses were also being promoted via Instagram, which seemed to be a popular social media platform for veterinary nurses.

Any other business (unclassified)

45. There was no other business.

Date of next meeting

46. The next meeting would be held on Wednesday 15 November 2023. This would be a remote meeting, starting at 10.00am

Summary	
Meeting	Veterinary Nurses Council
Date	15 November 2023
Title	Minutes of meeting of VN Education Committee held on 12 October 2023
Summary	Minutes of the meeting of Veterinary Nurse Education Committee held on 12 October 2023
Decisions required	To approve
Attachments	Classified appendix
Author	Annette Amato Committee Secretary a.amato@rcvs.org.uk / 020 7202 0713

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Veterinary Nurse Education Committee

Minutes of the meeting held on 12 October 2023 held remotely via Teams

Members:

	Mrs Sarah Batt-Williams	HE veterinary nursing provider
*	Miss Julia Cox	Employer representative
*	Mr Nick Cutland	FE Independent regulatory expert
*	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
	Mrs Sarah Parkhouse	FE veterinary nursing provider
	Mrs Sarah Reynolds-Golding	HE independent regulatory expert
	Mrs Perdi Welsh	Post-registration veterinary nurse provider
	Miss Leigh Willson	FE student representative

*absent

In attendance:	Mrs Annette Amato	Committee Secretary
	Mrs Jasmine Curtis	Qualifications Assessor
	Mrs Julie Dugmore	Director of Veterinary Nursing
	Miss Shirley Gibbins	Qualifications Lead (QL)
	Miss Abigayle Gomez	Senior Qualifications Officer
	Mr Matthew Hall	Qualifications Assessor
	Mrs Victoria Hedges	VN Examinations Quality Lead (VNEQL)
	Miss Lisa Hilton	Examinations Assessor
	Miss Tori Thornton	Qualifications Assessor
	Mrs Kirsty Williams	Education Quality Improvement Manager (EQIM)

Apologies for absence

1. Apologies for absence were received from Julia Cox, Nick Cutland and Sarah Fox.

Declarations of interest

2. There were no declarations of interest relevant to items for decision on the agenda.

Minutes of the meeting of the Education Committee (VNEC) 10 August 2023

3. The Committee approved the minutes of the meeting held on 10 August 2023 as a correct record.

Matters arising

4. There were no matters arising from the previous minutes other than those which were covered throughout the agenda.

Veterinary Nursing update

5. The Director of Veterinary Nursing provided an update on recent activities and issues of note:
 6. **Educator forums.** Several Educator Forums had been organised in different parts of the country, in order to reinstate networking opportunities for VN educators, to provide general updates and answer questions. Of the three events originally scheduled, one had been cancelled due to lack of uptake. The remaining two had been well subscribed and were planned to go ahead.
 7. **BVNA Congress.** Members of the VN Team, VN Council and RCVS Academy had attended the British Veterinary Nursing Association (BVNA) Congress earlier in October. The RCVS stand had been busy throughout the Congress. The Academy had launched the Nurse Return course and the BVNA had run a VN Futures session on Flexible Working. These had taken place in the hub, and although not very well attended, the audience had been highly engaged. It had therefore been agreed for future congresses that there would be a collaborative project between BVNA and RCVS on a particular theme, which would take place as part of the main programme.
 8. **VN Futures.** Consideration was being given as to how the VN futures project could be developed, now that it had been running for eight years, and aiming to increase engagement. The School Ambassadors Programme resources would now be handed over to STEM (Science, technology, engineering, and mathematics) and a data sharing agreement was currently being arranged.
 9. **City & Guilds (C&G).** The certification end date for the City & Guilds Level 3 Diploma in Veterinary Nursing had now passed. All active students who had not achieved the Award by the end date of 31 August 2023 had been transferred by their colleges to other Awarding Organisations or had withdrawn.
 10. **Accreditation fees.** Following the report at the June meeting of the Committee that the accreditation fees were to be increased, specific details had been sent to all Accredited Education Institutions (AEIs), and an article had been included in the recent issue of *VN Education*. No feedback had yet been received from any institution.
 11. **Registrations.** No applications for veterinary nurse registration had been received since the previous meeting, from students requiring special consideration in respect of the
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completion of the required 1,800 clinical training hours due to the effect of the Covid pandemic.

Matters for decision

12. **Accreditation statuses**

The Committee was presented with a proposed update to the existing Accreditation Statuses for Accredited Education Institutions (AEIs).

13. In recent meetings of the Veterinary Nurse Education Committee (VNEC) discussions had arisen around the suitability of the accreditation statuses being applied in certain situations. It had been suggested that the existing statuses were restrictive and did not allow the Committee flexibility to apply a status change without significant issues already having been identified. Additionally, there had been no appropriate wording for a programme to voluntarily close, without using the terminology 'terminal accreditation'. This could be misleading if a stakeholder could not appreciate that this had been a decision taken by the AEI, as opposed to VNEC placing the programme onto terminal accreditation.
14. The new proposed options would provide transparency and allow for additional safeguards with existing provision demonstrating non-compliance, and an option for voluntary terminal accreditation had been included. The definitions of each category had been amplified, to provide further clarification, and the sequence of accreditation statuses had been restructured to allow a more logical progression.
15. Committee members commented that the proposals were very clear and reflected the discussions which had been held in previous meetings. The Chair reported that comments received from those members of the Committee who had been unable to attend the meeting were in agreement with the proposals and the suggested wording for the different statuses. The Committee discussed the guidance on the two new proposed categories.
16. **Probationary Accreditation.** Queries were raised on two aspects. Regarding how long concerns should be noted before considering moving an AEI to this category, the Committee was assured that due to the level of audit activity carried out by the VN qualifications team, which was also tied to the risk rating for the AEI, issues and potential problems could be quickly flagged up and acted upon.
17. On the question of whether a specified time limit should be set to enable an AEI to address concerns before moving a programme from Probationary to Terminal Accreditation, it was suggested that review of the category should be ongoing, on a case by case basis reviewed by the Committee, but that a maximum time limit of 12 months should be allowed. It was accepted that each situation was different, and the impact on the students must always be considered.
18. **Voluntary Terminal accreditation.** A query was raised on the proposal that this category should always be flagged as high risk. It was accepted that there can be different reasons

for an AEI to decide to move into this category which may have an impact on the risk rating, and if there were issues, these should be picked up as part of the usual audit activity and that risk banding would be applied in the usual way. It was therefore agreed that it would not be necessary to apply a high risk status automatically to any AEI with voluntary terminal accreditation status.

19. Following a full discussion regarding the detail of the explanatory wording of the proposed categories, a number of changes were agreed. The revised categories are listed below.
- 20.
- **Provisional accreditation** is granted for Accredited Education Institutions (AEIs) with new qualifications that have made substantial progress towards meeting the accreditation standards. Once the first cohort of students completes the qualification, the Veterinary Nurse Education Committee (VNEC) will be presented with all Quality Monitoring (QM) reports undertaken and consider the AEI for full accreditation. Students undertaking provisionally accredited qualifications may be required to pass the RCVS pre-registration examinations. Provisional accreditation will not normally be extended for more than two years, following the first cohort's completion. Provisionally accredited programmes are automatically deemed to be high-risk and will be audited accordingly.
 - **Full accreditation for 5 years** is given to qualifications that meet, or exceed, all the accreditation standards. Where a Provisionally Accredited programme has been awarded Full Accreditation, this will be for the remainder of the 5-year cycle. The RCVS will undertake a full programme review before the end of the agreed accreditation period.
 - **Full accreditation for a shorter period** is applied where deficiencies are identified in an existing programme; accreditation will be subject to the deficiencies being addressed within a set period. The RCVS will undertake a full programme review before the end of the agreed accreditation period.
 - **Probationary accreditation** is applied where a fully accredited programme is deficient in its resources or procedures and has failed to meet the RCVS Standards. Students may be required to pass the RCVS pre-registration examinations, as well as all qualification requirements, in order to be deemed competent in the RCVS Day One Competences and Skills. This will be at the discretion of VNEC and will be considered on a case-by-case basis.
 - **Terminal accreditation** is instigated where a programme is significantly non-compliant with the standards and has been unable to address the concerns within a timely manner. Students completing a programme which is assigned terminal accreditation may be required to pass the RCVS pre-registration examinations, as well as all qualification requirements. VNEC will communicate additional conditions

to the AEI as required, depending on the rationale for the decision being taken. The programme will move into an exit strategy and specific details and evidence will be requested by the Veterinary Nursing Department to maintain oversight whilst the final students complete the programme. The provision is quality monitored in accordance with a high-risk provider.

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

21. At the conclusion of the discussion, the Committee approved the statuses with the amendments to wording as agreed. It was further agreed that the new accreditation categories should be implemented with immediate effect, going forward. The Committee would have the option to consider these statuses at accreditation or when issues were flagged to the Committee as a result of audit activity. Re-classification should not be carried out on existing provision, with the exception of the designation of any AEIs which had already elected to take voluntary terminal accreditation. In these cases, the new status and relevant guidance should be applied.

22. **Accreditation panel member approval**

The Committee considered and discussed the completed person specifications, Curriculum Vitae and CPD records for two proposed panel members at accreditation events. Both applicants were appointed as educator representatives for licence to practise programmes, one for the Higher Education (HE) panel and one for the Further Education (FE) panel.

Matters for note

Licence to practise qualifications

23. **Pre-accreditation support**

The Qualifications Lead (QL) provided an update report on the current status of the pre-accreditation support package for Accredited Education Institutions (AEIs) and meetings which had been planned for the remaining institutions which were due to receive a support visit, and one proposed new provision.

24. In response to a query regarding feedback from the ENQA (European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education) accreditation event in June, the Education Quality Improvement Manager reported that the detailed report had not yet been received.

Action plan monitoring accreditation/re-accreditation

25. Full oral updates were provided on the action plan monitoring for the following, and clarification was provided on points raised by the Committee:
- University of Bristol
 - Central Qualifications
 - Coventry University
 - Harper Adams University
 - Nottingham Trent University
 - University Centre Askham Bryan
 - University of Glasgow
 - University of Greenwich / Plumpton College

Quality Monitoring activities

26. 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:
- Anglia Ruskin University
 - Chester Veterinary Training College Dereham
 - Lantra Awards
 - Lynwood School of Veterinary Nursing
 - Royal Agricultural University / Askham Bryan College
 - The Open College of Equine Studies (TOCES)
27. **Colleges exiting VN provision.** It was reported that all the Colleges formerly delivering the City & Guilds Level 3 Diploma that had notified that they were exiting provision, no longer had any VN students. The colleges which had withdrawn were as follows: Canterbury, Hadlow, Chichester, Sheffield, Halesowen, South Gloucestershire & Stroud and SRUC Aberdeen. The students had either completed the Award, withdrawn or transferred to another qualification.
28. **Delivery sites transferring to another Awarding Organisation.** Information was provided on the delivery sites which had transferred provision from Vetskill to Lantra Awards.

Action plan quality monitoring

29. Oral updates were provided on the monitoring of action plans and future planned actions for the following AEIs and centres:
- Lite Limited
 - Northumberland College
 - Nottingham Trent University
 - Royal Agricultural University / Plumpton College
 - Scotland's Rural College (SRUC) Oatridge
 - University of Central Lancashire (UCLan)

- University of Chester
- Wrexham University

Post-Registration Qualifications

Quality Monitoring Activities

30. An oral update was provided on the monitoring of the Certificate in Advanced Veterinary Nursing (CertAVN) programmes for the following:
- University of Central Lancashire (UCLan)

Update papers were provided on audit activity for:

- Royal Veterinary College
- University of Glasgow

Arising from the discussion on student feedback regarding communication, it was flagged up that universities and providers could be requested to ensure that there is an inclusive approach to communication with and for students.

Other items

31. **VN Pre-Registration Examination**

The VN Examinations Quality Lead reported that following on from the MCQ process agreed at the last meeting, the RCVS was in the final stages of partnering with TestReach Ltd to deliver the MCQ. TestReach offers the ability to have a question banking system and produce statistics for the examination papers. In addition, they offer live invigilation which will mean that candidates will be observed while they take the examination online. It was anticipated that all being well, the first examination would be available on 25 and 27 March 2024 with further dates available in July and November 2024. All applicants submitting after 30 November 2024 would be informed that they needed to complete both the OSCE and MCQ examinations.

32. **Statistical report**

The Committee noted statistics on student enrolments for each academic year (1 July to 30 June) over the last five years. It was reported that it had come to light that some duplicate enrolment records had been inadvertently created when a change to the enrolment upload process had been introduced. This had affected the enrolment numbers reported in October 2022. The problem had now been identified and the duplicate records had been removed. The figures presented to the Committee for the enrolments in 2022 had been corrected and were accurate in the current paper.

33. It was noted that the information on the total number of new student enrolments was provided to Veterinary Nurses' Council annually at its February meeting, as well as information on the number of newly registered veterinary nurses via the HE and FE routes, and those educated overseas.

34. The Chair requested that similar statistics on the CertAVN could be provided. This would be looked into.

Items for publication

35. There were no specific items for publication arising from the meeting. The newly published issue of *VN Education* had been circulated to the Committee and to VN Council members by email, and going forward each issue would be sent to VNEC and VNC as soon as it was available. It had been agreed with the Comms team that *VN Education* would be published annually in May and October.

Any other business

36. No items were identified.

Date of next meeting

37.
 - Monday 11 December

Meeting dates 2024

38.
 - Wednesday 14 February
 - Tuesday 16 April
 - Thursday 20 June (in person, full day meeting)
 - Wednesday 14 August
 - Tuesday 15 October
 - Thursday 12 December

Summary	
Meeting	Veterinary Nurses Council
Date	15 November 2023
Title	Review of the RCVS Standards Framework for Veterinary Nurse Education and Training
Summary	<p>The RCVS Standards Framework for Veterinary Nurse Education and Training (the Standards) was ratified by Veterinary Nurses Council (VNC) in November 2019, for implementation from January 2020.</p> <p>In line with RCVS VN quality assurance processes the Standards are due for review in 2024.</p>
Decisions required	To agree a small working group, reporting to Veterinary Nurse Education Committee, to review the Standards.
Attachments	n/a
Author	<p>Julie Dugmore</p> <p>Director of Veterinary Nursing</p> <p>j.dugmore@rcvs.org.uk</p>

Classifications		
Document	Classification¹	Rationales²
Paper	Unclassified	n/a

¹Classifications explained

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²Classification rationales

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Review of the RCVS Standards Framework for Veterinary Nurse Education and Training

Background

1. In 2018, following accreditation from the European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education (ENQA), it was agreed that a comprehensive review of the RCVS Accreditation Standards for veterinary nursing would be carried out.
2. The RCVS Standards Framework for Veterinary Nurse Education and Training (the Standards) was ratified by Veterinary Nurses' Council (VNC) in November 2019, for implementation January 2020.
3. Following feedback generated by accredited educational institutions (AEI) their delivery sites and training practices, along with accreditation panel members, the RCVS veterinary nursing team conducted a small-scale review and made the following minor amendments:
 - a. Moving a requirement to a different Standard where it was better aligned with the desired outcomes.
 - b. Rewording a requirement to clarify the desired outcomes.
 - c. Removing a requirement where the desired outcome was repeated.
 - d. Adding further evidence examples to support evidence submissions for both accreditations and quality monitoring.
4. The above amendments were agreed by VNC at its February 2021 meeting.

Current position

5. To ensure they remain relevant and fit-for-purpose, RCVS VN policies and procedures are reviewed every five years. As the current Standards were initially agreed by VNC in 2019, they are due for review in 2024.
6. As mentioned above, the Standards underwent an extensive review in 2019, followed by a smaller review in 2021 and recent feedback from all stakeholders does not suggest that major amendments are needed or will be required.

Discussion/ issues

7. With the above in mind, the following small task and finish working group, supported by the Director of Veterinary Nursing and the VN Qualifications Lead is proposed:
 - Chair – member of Veterinary Nurses' Council

- Two Veterinary Nurse Education Committee members – both the independent Higher and Further Education Regulatory experts, to ensure we continue to comply with national regulatory requirements.
8. The working group will agree its terms of reference and develop a timeline for consultation and completion. It is envisaged that the new Standards Framework will be agreed by VNC and ready for implementation in academic year 2024.
 9. The group will report to Veterinary Nurses' Council via the Veterinary Nurse Education Committee. A specific paper detailing the process, consultation responses along with any proposed amendments will be presented to VNC. All proposed amendments will be detailed as tracked changes complete with rationale.
 10. As previously, there will be a grace period for Accredited Educations Institutions (AEIs) undergoing accreditation and quality monitoring activities at the beginning of academic year 2024. AEIs with accreditation events scheduled before 1 January 2025 will have the option of utilising the new Standards or continuing with the existing Standards. This approach will ensure AEIs do not have to re-submit applications or be concerned that they are being assessed against a set of Standards with which they are unfamiliar.
 11. Quality monitoring activities which take place prior to 1 January 2024 will be completed against the existing Standards, with all AEIs being reminded that compliance against the new Standards will be expected moving forward.

Financial issues / PR implications

12. There is a cost implication in terms of the time-resource required by the Veterinary Nursing and Communications Teams, although this review and subsequent re-publishing of the Standards falls within the remit of the role requirements of the personnel involved.
13. It is envisaged that the working group will be required to meet a maximum of three times throughout the duration of the review. These meetings can be facilitated on-line which will keep costs to a minimum.

Conclusions

14. In order to ensure that the Standards remain relevant and fit for purpose, and to meet RCVS VN quality assurance processes, a review of the current Standards, requirements and supporting guidance is required.

Decision

15. Veterinary Nurses' Council is asked to approve the working group proposal.

Summary	
Meeting	Veterinary Nurses Council
Date	15 November 2023
Title	Continuing Professional Development (CPD)
Summary	Minutes from the meeting of the CPD Policy and Compliance Sub-Committee on the 16 October 2023
Decisions required	None
Attachments	None
Author	Jenny Soreskog-Turp Lead for Postgraduate education j.soreskog-turp@rcvs.org.uk / 020 7202 0701

Classifications		
Document	Classification¹	Rationales²
Paper	Unclassified	n/a

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CPD Policy and Compliance Sub-Committee Notes of the meeting held on 16 October 2023

Present:	Linda Ford	Chair
	Jessica Beckett	
	Claire Bloor	
	Danny Chambers	
	Donna Lewis	
	Stephen May	
	Stephanie Richardson	
	Alison Reid	
	Holly Witchell	
	James Wood	
 In attendance:	 Joanne Stetzel	 Head of Marketing and Digital Communications
	Jenny Soreskog-Turp	Lead for Postgraduate Education
	Rebecca Smith	Education Officer

Welcome and Apologies

1. The Chair welcomed everyone especially the new members, Ms Witchell and Mr Chambers.

Minutes of the meeting on the 14 July 2023

2. The minutes of the meeting held on 14 July 2023 were received and approved as a true and accurate record.

Matters arising

3. All actions from previous meeting were covered by the agenda.

Comms Update

4. Ms Stetzel provided an update about CPD comms plan and told the committee that the focus at the moment was to make users aware of changes in 1CPD, that hours will not be counted until they have been reflected upon.
5. She also informed the committee that they have a new web content developer in the team and they will review the information on the RCVS website. They have started with CPD

section, so all information is now on one page so that members don't have to click on links that takes them away from the main page. Previously much of the content was in frequently asked questions, which is now instead in the main body of content.

6. The Committee felt that the changes were positive, and they liked the layout but thought that it would be useful to note down queries that we receive following the launch so that we can check if the changes are having a positive outcome on queries received by the Education Department.

Action: Education Dept to keep log of CPD queries before/after launch of new website

7. The committee discussed what more could be done to raise awareness about reflection being part of the requirement and the ease of recording them using 1CPD. They felt it would be useful to understand the profile of members who have yet to record any reflections.

Action: 1CPD Report to include information about members who have yet to record reflections in 1CPD.

8. Earlier in the year, members of Education Committee had recorded videos about how they reflect so it was suggested to share those again via the social channels. Ms Stetzel asked members to get in touch if they could share social media posts on their own social media networks.

Action: Comms to re-use reflection videos from earlier in the year.

Action: Members to contract comms if they can help share social media posts.

9. The committee suggested that we contact providers of CPD to encourage them to allow a few minutes at the end of a CPD activities where members can record their reflections.

Action: Update comms plan to include liaison with providers re time for reflections

1CPD Data

10. The committee received and noted the 1CPD data report. They were pleased to see the improved changes to the report format.

1CPD Development work

11. The Committee received the paper about 1CPD development work and noted the priorities for development for 1CPD.
12. The committee were pleased to see that most high priorities items have been completed already or will be in the next week. Once they are completed, the dev team will start working on other projects so it will take some time before other lower ranked priorities will be reviewed and dealt with.

1CPD Exemptions

13. The committee received further information about an application that was reviewed at the last meeting, which included emails with the registrar Eleanor Ferguson regarding fitness to practice issues.

14. The registrar could not see a problem with from a fitness to practice perspective, but it was suggested that we introduce a declaration to the exemption application form asking the applicant to declare that the matters relevant to their request for an exemption did not affect their fitness to practise.

Action: Include fitness to practice statement to 1CPD exemption applications

15. The committee were sympathetic to member's application but rather than receive an exemption the committee felt that it would be more appropriate in the first instance to ask whether the member of the team helping her with CPD could instead have access to her 1CPD account and update it online rather than sending paper records.

Action: Education department to liaise with member about support to upload records to 1CPD

Any other business

16. There were no other items of business to discuss.

Follow up of non-compliant members

Alison Reid and Claire Bloor left the meeting for this item

17. There are over 3000 members that are not using 1CPD or not recorded enough hours for 2022 and they have been contacted in batches. 200 members received letters by recorded delivery to update record or get in touch with plans for 2023. 109 of those are still non-compliant and have not been in touch. The committee felt that they could now be referred to the professional conduct department.
18. The committee were reassured that the batches were selected based on risk – so members with the fewest hours recorded in 1CPD or not using 1CPD were contacted first. The committee requested that we contact the next 200 on our list and report back at the next meeting.

Next Meeting

19. The next meeting is on the 14 March 2024.

Jenny Soreskog-Turp

October 2023

j.soreskog-turp@rcvs.org.uk

Summary	
Meeting	VN Council
Date	15 November 2023
Title	RVN Preliminary Investigation Committee 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 s.neary@rcvs.org.uk / 020 7202 0730</p> <p>Gemma Crossley Head of Professional Conduct g.crossley@rcvs.org.uk / 020 7202 0740</p>

Classifications		
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Registered Veterinary Nurses Preliminary Investigation Committee

Report to VN Council

Introduction

1. Since the last Report to Veterinary Nurses Council, there has been one meeting of the RVN Preliminary Investigation Committee which took place on 19 September. The next meeting is scheduled to take place on 31 October.

RVN Concerns received / registered.

2. Between 31 August and 23 October 2023, there were 12 new concerns relating to RVNs. Of these 12 new concerns:
 - Eleven are currently under investigation by a Case Manager, Veterinary Nurse, Veterinary surgeon, and a lay member (Stage 1 PIC).
 - One case has been referred to Stage 2 PIC.

RVN Preliminary Investigation Committee

3. There have been three new cases considered by the RVN PIC between 31 August and 23 October 2023. One case was closed with formal advice issued to the Respondent RVN. Two cases were referred to external solicitors for formal statements to be taken. At the meeting on 19 September, the Committee considered an ongoing case which it referred to the RVN Disciplinary Committee.

Ongoing Investigations

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

Health Concerns

5. There are currently no RVNs 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, one case has been referred to the RVN Disciplinary Committee and the hearing dates will be confirmed in due course.

Disciplinary Hearings

8. No disciplinary hearings have taken place since the last report.