

RCVS Day One Competences, Skills and Professional Behaviours for Veterinary Nurses

For consultation
November 2021

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Introduction

We have launched a six-week consultation to seek feedback on a set of proposed new day one competences, day one skills (small animal and equine) and professional behaviours required of newly-qualified veterinary nurses joining the RCVS Register.

What are day one requirements?

The RCVS Day One Competences, Skills and Professional Behaviours for Veterinary Nurses are the minimum essential requirements that all student veterinary nurses are expected to have met in order to join the RCVS Register of Veterinary Nurses.

The requirements incorporate knowledge, skills and behaviours and ensure veterinary nurses are safe and competent to practise on day one, as follows:

- A. **Day One Competences:** the minimum essential competences we expect all student veterinary nurses to have met when they register.
- B. **Day One Skills Lists (small animal):** the essential clinical skills, that veterinary nurses are expected to possess upon entering small animal clinical practice.
- C. **Day One Skills Lists (equine):** the essential clinical skills, that veterinary nurses are expected to possess upon entering equine clinical practice.
- D. **Professional behaviours and attributes:** the behaviours newly-qualified veterinary nurses are expected to demonstrate upon entering the profession.

Having utilised the current version of the requirements since 2016, the skills and competences for veterinary nurses are due for review in order to remain current and reflective of practice requirements.

Background

The proposed new requirements have been developed over the past few years by a working group comprising RCVS Veterinary Nurses Council

members, veterinary nurse educators, students, and small animal and equine veterinary nurses.

In November 2019 members of the RCVS Veterinary Nursing Team visited various Colleges across the UK and met with a range of student veterinary nurses, Clinical Supervisors, Internal and External Quality Assurers and Lecturers.

The next step in the consultation process was unfortunately delayed due to the Covid-19 pandemic, however, work was commenced again in April 2021.

A working group was created, with representation from both small animal and equine veterinary nurses, students, educators, and Clinical Supervisors. The group was chaired by Matthew Rendle, Chair of VN Council. The working group initially reviewed feedback from the meetings held in November 2019 and agreed to some initial amendments.

Following this, a number of meetings were held during the summer of 2021 with veterinary nursing educators, allowing a first opportunity for those delivering and assessing the DOC/DOS/PB to consider their relevance, currency and usability. The feedback from these sessions has been reviewed by the working group, who have now agreed to the proposals within this consultation.

Upon conclusion of the consultation, the responses will be reported to the working group, which will have a final opportunity to amend and agree the proposals, before being submitted to VN Council for consideration.

The aim is that VN Council will agree to the new version of the requirements in its February 2022 meeting.

Key changes

Some of the key changes in the new proposals include:

- bolstered requirements for newly-qualified veterinary nurses to have a greater understanding of the key considerations when deciding what can be delegated to a veterinary nurse and when to accept such delegation;
- an understanding on how to collaborate with the veterinary team on Quality Improvement (QI) activities; and,
- a greater emphasis on making sure that VNs are looking after their health and wellbeing.

The new proposals have also clarified the wording of much of the guidance to make it easier to understand and removed a previous requirement for student veterinary nurses to have gained endoscopy experience.

Who should respond?

We are keen to reflect the opinions of all those involved in the training of student veterinary nurses and welcome comments from all veterinary nurses, veterinary surgeons, students and practice managers.

Whilst not every member of the professions will be actively training student veterinary nurses, upon completion of the day one requirements, registered veterinary nurses will undertake roles in many different areas of the veterinary sector industry, so it is important they are fully prepared for this.

The aim of this consultation is to provide an effective representation of what the professions desire from future RVNs.

How to respond

The link to the online survey is available via www.rcvs.org.uk/VNdayone.

In this survey, for each competence/skill/behaviour, we ask whether you think it and its supporting guidance is current and relevant. If you disagree, or are not sure, we ask you to detail your reasoning.

You can choose to answer the questions in all of the sections, or you can use the drop-down menu to skip straight to a particular section.

Please note: the initial 'About you' questions are mandatory, but we do not ask you to identify yourself personally, so all responses are anonymous. If you are responding on behalf of an organisation, however, please provide the name of that organisation.

Finally, because this is a fairly lengthy consultation and you cannot save your progress, we recommend you use this PDF consultation document to prepare your responses offline, and then copy/paste them into the online survey.

The deadline for all responses is **5pm on Wednesday, 22 December 2021**.

A. RCVS Day One Competences for Veterinary Nurses

Overview

This section sets out the minimum essential competences that the RCVS expects all student veterinary nurses to have met when they register, to ensure that they are safe to practise on day one, in whichever area of the profession they start to work.

Competence is a concept that integrates knowledge, skills and attitudes, the application of which enables the professional to perform effectively, including being able to cope with contingencies, change, and the unexpected. The standard of competence expected at any given time will depend upon the individual's level of experience and responsibility in a continuous way. Competence is therefore a relative term and increasing levels of competence will be expected throughout the professional's career.

Defined in this way, there is an important difference between 'competence' and 'skills'. An example of a competence would be "administer nursing care correctly". This may include a number of associated skills such as assess and record temperature, pulse and respiration, assess levels of consciousness, groom and bathe patients, hand feed patients etc, which would, in the main, be assessed and recorded during the student's clinical placement as evidence of developing competence. The more generic 'competence' requires more than just acquisition of technical skills: it involves applying relevant knowledge and having the confidence and ability to transfer what has been learnt to a variety of contexts and new unpredictable situations.

'Day One Competence' which incorporates the Day One Skills is the minimum standard required for registration as a veterinary nurse with the RCVS and is the starting point for a variety of roles in the veterinary profession. After registration, ongoing professional development will be needed in whichever field the new veterinary nurse decides to enter, and some roles may require further training and qualifications, eg Specialist theatre nursing, education.

A new veterinary nurse who has achieved day one competence should be capable and confident enough to practise veterinary nursing at a primary care level on their own (including simple calculations), under direction from a veterinary surgeon, while knowing when it is appropriate to refer the care to more experienced colleagues. New veterinary nurses are likely to need more time to perform some functions. Support and direction from more senior colleagues should be available.

Achievement of day one competence is necessary but not sufficient for a student veterinary nurse to qualify for registration to practise in the UK. In addition to day one competence, all student veterinary nurses must, at all times, demonstrate competence in reading and writing the English language in order to be able to cope with the variety of situations they will encounter in veterinary practice.

The new veterinary nurse must be fully conversant with and abide by the [RCVS Code of Professional Conduct and its supporting guidance](#), covering:

- professional competence
- honesty and integrity
- independence and impartiality
- client confidentiality and trust
- professional accountability.

These principles, and compliance with the professional responsibilities set out in the Code, must underpin all their work as veterinary nurses.

The latest version of the *Code* and supporting guidance can be found on the RCVS website www.rcvs.org.uk/advice-and-guidance/.

The day one competences below are set out under the broad headings of:

- General professional skills and attributes expected of newly registered veterinary nurses
- Practical and clinical competences expected of new veterinary nurses.

There are many ways in which these competences can be learnt and assessed, but the RCVS leaves the decisions on the details to universities and awarding organisations, subject to quality monitoring and periodic accreditation visits. Universities and awarding organisations are responsible for developing the Licence to Practise qualification for their students, encompassing a variety of assessment methods (which must include formal reading and writing assessment based on veterinary terminology) and ensuring that they have met the Day One competences by the time they apply to register. They are greatly assisted in this by the RCVS Day One Skills List, which provides the essential practical skills that must be assessed throughout the course of their training.

Day one competence may be gained in relation to the care of either horses (or other equidae), large (farm) animals or small animals, which should include dogs, cats and exotic species or all or a combination of the three.

Day One Competences

- 1 Be fully conversant with, and adhere to the RCVS Code of Professional Conduct.**

Guidance:

The RCVS Code of Professional Conduct is available on the RCVS website at www.rcvs.org.uk/VNcode.

- 2 Understand the ethical and legal responsibilities of the veterinary nurse in relation to patients, clients, the veterinary team, society, and the environment.**

Guidance:

To abide by the principles in the Code of Professional Conduct, newly registered veterinary nurses need to be able to make professional judgements based on sound principles. They must be able to think through the dilemmas they face when presented with conflicting priorities and be prepared to justify the decisions they make.

Newly registered veterinary nurses must take account of the possible impact of their actions beyond the immediate workplace, for example, on public health, the environment and society more generally.

Identify ethical issues and participate in the ethical decision-making process, applying frameworks and identifying ways of refining the impact of such decisions. Reflect upon the decision-making process and help colleagues and clients who wish to raise concerns about ethical issues.

3 Demonstrate knowledge of the organisation and legislation related to a veterinary business.

Guidance:

This includes:

- *knowing one's own and the employer's responsibilities in relation to employment, financial and health and safety legislation, the position relating to non-veterinary staff, professional and public liability*
- *ability to work with various information systems in order to effectively communicate, share, collect, manipulate, and analyse information*
- *understand the importance of complying with professional standards, protocols, and policies of the business*
- *knowledge of legislation affecting veterinary businesses.*

4 Promote, monitor and maintain health and safety in the veterinary setting; demonstrate knowledge of systems of quality assurance; apply principles of risk management to their practice.

Guidance:

This includes knowledge and explanation of the procedure for reporting adverse incidents and the procedures for avoiding them. It also includes following safe practices relating to the dangers in the workplace. Newly registered veterinary nurses are expected to have a knowledge and understanding of Quality Improvement and clinical auditing procedures and be able to suggest improvements to their practice.

5 Communicate effectively with clients, the public, professional colleagues, and responsible authorities, using language appropriate to the audience concerned.

Guidance:

Effective communication, including both verbal and non-verbal communication, includes active listening and responding appropriately, and utilising the appropriate tone, depending on the context.

6 Ensure informed consent is obtained.

Guidance:

Informed consent, which is an essential part of any contract, can only be given by a client who has had the opportunity to consider a range of reasonable treatment options (including euthanasia), with associated fee estimates, and had the significance and main risks explained to them.

7 Prepare accurate clinical and client records, and laboratory reports, when necessary, in a format satisfactory to colleagues and understandable by the public.

Guidance:

Patient records should be clear enough to be used by others for reference and (if written by hand) legible, avoiding idiosyncratic abbreviations, language, or jargon, so the case can be taken over by another professional for ongoing care if necessary.

8 Work effectively as a member of a multi-disciplinary team in the delivery of services.

Guidance:

The newly registered veterinary nurse should be familiar with and respect the roles and responsibilities of others in the team and be prepared to provide effective leadership when appropriate.

9 Understand the requirements of Schedule 3 of the Veterinary Surgeons Act 1966 with respect to delegation.

Guidance:

The newly registered nurse should be familiar with the key considerations when accepting delegated activities from veterinary surgeons or veterinary nurses.

10 Understand the economic and social context in which the veterinary nurse operates.

Guidance:

Newly registered veterinary nurses need to appreciate the varying economic status and socio-cultural background of clients.

11 Understand and demonstrate the ability to reflect on the emotional landscape of the veterinary nursing profession.

Guidance:

Newly registered veterinary nurses should be able to demonstrate an awareness of the psychological context of their work. They should have an understanding of how emotional factors may impact and on, and present in, themselves, their colleagues and clients. They should know how to recognise the signs of stress and how, and where, to seek support to mitigate psychological stress on themselves and others.

12 Be able to review and evaluate literature, current evidence-based research, and presentations critically.

Guidance:

Newly registered veterinary nurses must be able to appreciate the difference in value to be attached to different sorts of literature and evidence, for example, recognising commercial and other forms of bias, and ensuring that the literature that informs their decision making is current and reliable.

13 Understand and apply principles of clinical governance, and practise evidence-based veterinary nursing.

Guidance:

More guidance on clinical governance is included in the supporting guidance to the [Code of Professional Conduct](#).

It includes critically analysing the current evidence for procedures used, reflecting on performance and critical events, and learning from the outcome to make changes to one's practice. Veterinary nurses are encouraged, and should be empowered, to publish research findings.

14 Have developed the clinical judgement to cope with incomplete information, develop contingencies and adapt to change.

Guidance:

Newly registered veterinary nurses must be able to manage patient care and identify, and develop a dynamic clinical plan, where there is incomplete or unclear data. They need to be able to consult with the veterinary surgeons and veterinary professionals, be adaptable and dynamic, and adapt their care to fit changing circumstances. Newly registered veterinary nurses should use knowledge and understanding and reflect on evidence-based nursing and adapt to the unexpected and identify appropriate options for further care should a patient require it.

15 Demonstrate that they recognise, and work within, personal and professional limits, and know how to seek professional advice, assistance, and support when necessary.

Guidance:

Newly registered veterinary nurses must at all stages in their careers be competent in their performance or be under the close supervision of those more competent until such time as they can act alone under the direction of a veterinary surgeon.

- 16 Demonstrate a commitment to lifelong learning and professional development, both personal and as a member of a profession actively engaged in work-based learning. This includes recording and reflecting on professional experience, both in the academic and practice setting, and taking measures to improve performance and competence.**

Guidance:

It is a requirement of the RCVS Code of Professional Conduct that registered veterinary nurses must maintain and develop their knowledge and skills relevant to their professional practice and competence. This includes being able to reflect, learn, and share information gained with others.

- 17 Handle and restrain patients safely, effectively, and humanely, and instruct others in helping the veterinary team perform these techniques.**

Guidance:

Safety applies not only to the patient and handler, but also to others nearby. The new veterinary nurse should be able to make a rapid risk assessment of all procedures as duties are performed, as dangers may appear in situations that initially appear to be safe. They should be prepared to take a range of measures including adaptation, appropriate personal and patient protective equipment, seeking assistance or retreating from the task until safety measures can be put in place.

The new veterinary nurse should be able to handle and restrain a wide range of species, according to practice case load (for small animal – ideally, including exotics and wildlife).

18 Deliver holistic nursing care in accordance with best practice and due regard to animal welfare.

Guidance:

Complete nursing care is not always required or appropriate in practice. Whilst the newly registered veterinary nurse should be able to complete all care they should know when it is appropriate to adapt their care to the circumstances.

Administer nursing care in accordance with the RCVS Day One Skills for Veterinary Nurses.

The newly registered veterinary nurse should have the knowledge and understanding of developing a care plan and care bundles for a diverse range of patients according to the practice case load (small animal – ideally, including exotics and wildlife).

19 Plan and administer appropriate care in the interests of patient welfare and with regard to the resources available.

Guidance:

This includes being able to tailor patient specific care when there may be financial or other constraints whilst prioritising the welfare of the patient(s).

20 Administer emergency first aid and assist with the provision of emergency treatment to patients.

Guidance:

The newly registered veterinary nurse must be able to perform initial first aid and know when and how to call for assistance from others or where there are potential risks to health and safety. This involves being able to make a rapid risk assessment of the situation and taking appropriate action to protect the health and safety of themselves and those around them in accordance with practice policy.

- 21 Collect, preserve, and prepare samples for safe transportation, prepare appropriate diagnostic tests, understand the limitations of the test results and identify the significance of spurious results.**

Guidance:

Newly registered veterinary nurses are expected to have a working knowledge of relevant tests for the condition under investigation. They should seek assistance, where required, to interpret results prior to reporting to the veterinary surgeon.

- 22 Communicate clearly and concisely and collaborate with referral and diagnostic services, ensuring they receive an appropriate history from the veterinary surgeon.**

Guidance:

Newly registered veterinary nurses must ensure this is conducted in accordance with relevant data protection legislation.

- 23 Prepare and conduct diagnostic and other imaging techniques carrying out the procedure in accordance with health and safety and current regulations.**

Guidance:

This competence includes taking images of diagnostic- quality, as well as the safe use of the equipment (eg ionising radiation regulations) in accordance with best practice ('ALARA' principle – as low as reasonably achievable). 'Different modalities should include, for example, radiography, ultrasound and endoscopes, but a new veterinary nurse would not be expected to perform an MRI or CT scan.

- 24 Recognise signs of possible notifiable, reportable, and zoonotic diseases and take appropriate action, including observing the appropriate health and safety recommendations.**

Guidance:

This involves identifying the clinical signs, clinical course, transmission potential (including vectors) of pathogens associated with common zoonotic and food-borne diseases and transboundary animal diseases.

- 25 Access the appropriate and reliable sources of data on licensed medicines.**

Guidance:

This competence includes the appropriate use of NOAH Compendium of Data Sheets for Animal Medicines and the VMD website.

- 26 Dispense medicines correctly and responsibly in accordance with veterinary surgeon direction, legislation, and current guidance.**

Guidance:

Newly registered veterinary nurses must be aware of health and safety issues so that they are able to inform clients appropriately.

When using or dispensing antimicrobial agents, veterinary nurses must be aware of the risk of antimicrobial resistance.

The newly registered veterinary nurse must have some knowledge and understanding of the prescribing cascade.

- 27 Be aware of possible side effects and adverse reactions to medications and alert the veterinary surgeon.**

Guidance:

The newly registered veterinary nurse should be aware of the [Veterinary Medicines Directorate procedures](#) for reporting.

28 Be aware of common poisons and toxic substances.

Guidance:

The newly registered veterinary nurse should be aware of how to access the Veterinary Poisons Information Service and understand nursing care and management interventions.

29 Identify risk and apply principles of biosecurity correctly, including sterilisation and disinfection of equipment and clothing.

Guidance:

This applies to all areas of veterinary practice. All veterinary nurses must maintain high standards of biosecurity at all times in order to minimise the risk of contamination, cross-infection and accumulation of pathogens in the veterinary premises and in the wider environment.

30 Prepare the environment, equipment, and patient for surgery.

Guidance:

The newly registered veterinary nurse must appreciate the requirement for asepsis during procedures.

31 Assist the veterinary surgeon as a scrubbed nurse to perform surgical procedures on patients.

Guidance:

This includes providing assistance whilst in theatre and when scrubbed up and also the handling of equipment and materials in a sterile manner during surgical procedures.

32 Assist the veterinary surgeon by preparing patients, equipment, and materials for anaesthetic procedures.

Guidance:

None.

33 Assist in administering and maintaining anaesthetics to patients.

Guidance:

This includes the maintaining and monitoring of anaesthesia under supervision during veterinary procedures.

34 Identify, assess, and evaluate pain and alert the veterinary surgeon accordingly.

Guidance:

The newly registered veterinary nurse should be able to score and evaluate pain, in a manner relevant to the species.

35 Be cognisant of behavioural changes of patients.

Guidance:

The newly registered veterinary nurse should be able to recognise changes to patient behaviour and have an appreciation of contributory factors.

36 Understand the appropriate need for euthanasia; sensitively support the owner and others with due regard for health and safety of those present; sympathetically advise on the disposal of the patient.

Guidance:

None.

- 37 Advise clients on programmes of health and welfare, to include preventative medicine, appropriate to species and life stage and in accordance with legal requirements.**

Guidance:

Newly registered veterinary nurses will need to be able to assess clinical records and perform clinical examinations in order to provide appropriate advice.

FOR CONSULTATION

B. RCVS Day One Skills for Veterinary Nurses – small animal

Overview

Licence to practise qualifications leading to entry onto the Veterinary Nurse Register must articulate with the RCVS Day One Skills for veterinary nurses and be specified, recorded and assessed in a format that is readily auditable and accessible to learners.

The Day One Skills list is a regulatory benchmark of essential clinical skills, developed and reviewed by the RCVS, based on the RCVS Day One Competences for Veterinary Nursing. The skills list is embedded in an electronic nursing progress log (the NPL) which has been designed to support a process of clinical mentorship and learning in addition to recording competence achievement. Awarding institutions may use the NPL or develop their own recording systems.

There are Day One Skills for Veterinary Nursing in relation to the care of either horses (or other equidae) or small animals, which should include dogs, cats and exotic species, or a combination of the three.

The *RCVS Code of Professional Conduct* sets out veterinary nurses' professional responsibilities. Where applicable the RCVS Day One Skills for Veterinary Nursing has been referenced to the *Code of Professional Conduct for Veterinary Nurses* and the relevant supporting guidance which should be referred to, by student veterinary nurses, when completing the skills.

Day One Skills – small animal

Section 1 – Legislation affecting practice

1.1 Comply with Health and Safety requirements and local risk factors.

Guidance:

Comply with legislative requirements.

1.2 Follow Standard Operating Procedures and manufacturer guidelines when using equipment and materials.

Guidance:

None.

1.3 Take appropriate action and report injury involving self or others.

Guidance:

Complete the accident book/record in accordance with practice protocol.

1.4 Critically evaluate a risk assessment for one area of the practice and suggest appropriate action where necessary.

Guidance:

None.

Section 2 – Communication

2.1 Communicate effectively using a variety of different methods.

Guidance:

Communicate with clients, work colleagues, other veterinary professionals, and the public, considering their different needs and requirements.

Communication models should be followed.

Refer to and consider supporting guidance:

5. Communication between professional colleagues.

2.2 Create accurate and legible written communications/ documentation according to practice policy.

Guidance:

Records to include: patient records and reports, laboratory reports, admission and consent forms, client home care plans and instructions.

2.3 Access and store client and practice records according to practice policy and data protection laws.

Refer to and consider supporting guidance:

14 Client confidentiality.

2.4 Admit patients.

Guidance:

Obtain written and verbal informed consent; Respond appropriately to economic status of clients to include insurance and referrals; develop care plans as appropriate.

Refer to and consider supporting guidance:

1 Referrals and second opinions.

9 Practice information, fees and insurance.

11 Communication and consent.

2.5 Conduct effective nursing consultations.

Guidance:

History taking and appropriate examination; Identifying patients for referral to a veterinary surgeon or veterinary nurse; Application of treatments; Programmes of preventative medicine.

Refer to and consider supporting guidance:

18 Delegation to veterinary nurses

2.6 Implant a microchip.

Guidance:

This may be completed as part of a nursing consultation.

2.7 Provide discharge information and guidance to clients.

Guidance:

Advise clients on safe and correct routes of administration and potential side effects; Demonstrate to clients safe techniques for administering medication; Advise clients on the storage and disposal of medication; Wound care advice; Bandage advice; advise clients on out of hours services.

2.8 Complete appropriate documentation for referral and diagnostic services.

Guidance:

To include laboratory samples, clinical histories and hereditary tests for example elbow and hip scoring, genetic testing, and blood tests.

Refer to and consider supporting guidance:

13 Clinical and client records.

2.9 Review and discuss evidence-based nursing.

Guidance:

Identify an area of practise for discussion; Appraise literature; consider cases in accordance with reviewed literature; Discuss and disseminate findings with practice team.

2.10 Identify and collaborate on quality improvement within the practice setting.

Guidance:

Review definition of quality improvement and guidance provided by [RCVS Knowledge](#), discuss unexpected medical or surgical complications with the veterinary team, examples of which may include

serious complaint, accident or anaesthetic death; Consider circumstances; Ensure effective protocols are in place; Suggest proposed improvements to the practice team.

Refer to and consider supporting guidance:

5 Communication between professional colleagues.

17 Veterinary teams and leaders.

2.11 Demonstrate compliance with practice protocols in regard to health and wellbeing of personnel.

Guidance:

Discussion of health and wellbeing concerns which may be experienced by any member of the veterinary team, and the protocols in place to prevent and mitigate them. These should include reference to mental and emotional health concerns, as well as those relating to physical safety and health.

Refer to and consider supporting guidance:

15 Health Protocol.

2.12 Communicate effectively expressing appropriate empathy and sympathy.

Guidance:

Prepare the owner for loss; Support the owner through the euthanasia process; Provide follow-up support for a bereaved owner; Maintain and adapt professional approach to the circumstances.

Refer to and consider supporting guidance:

8 Euthanasia of animals.

Section 3 – Handling and restraint

3.1 Evaluate behavioural and environmental factors when approaching and handling animals.

Guidance:

Recognition of and minimizing, fear and distress, utilising approaches which reduce stress.

3.2 Select and use appropriate personal and patient protective equipment.

Guidance:

None.

3.3 Demonstrate techniques for approaching and handling patients.

Guidance:

None.

3.4 Lead and move animals using the most appropriate equipment for the species and approved manual handling and lifting procedures.

Guidance:

None.

3.5 Use appropriate restraint methods suitable for the patient and situation with due consideration for animal welfare.

Guidance:

Maintain patient's emotional homeostasis and wellbeing; Recognise signs of distress and act accordingly to minimise this; Restrain for clinical examination, sample collection, administration of medicines and restrain patient for the introduction of an appropriate airway management device.

Section 4 – Nursing care

4.1 Develop and use individualised care plans to deliver the nursing process for a range of disorders and diseases.

Guidance:

Interpret nursing care plans and carry out appropriate nursing interventions. Consider cross-referencing to Section 2.

4.2 Critically evaluate a care bundle.

Guidance:

This may be evidenced through research and a clinical discussion.

4.3 Carry out a nursing assessment ascertaining information about the patient's normal routine.

Guidance:

Food and fluid intake; Urination and defecation; Behaviour (response to pain, strangers, commands etc); Mobility; Sleep and rest. Consider cross-referencing to Section 2.

4.4 Perform a clinical examination and record findings.

Guidance:

To include temperature, pulse, respiration, weight and capillary refill times/mucous membranes, non-invasive blood pressure.

4.5 Provide husbandry to patients, considering accommodation, nutrition, and excretions.

Guidance:

Consider age, species, condition, demeanour and enrichment. Calculate food requirements based on disease and life stage/lifestyle,

manage assisted feeding to include hand feeding, oral hydration and managing and maintaining feeding tubes.

4.6 Maintain patients' hygiene according to their needs.

Guidance:

Consider cross-referencing to Section 2.

4.7 Assess, monitor, manage and report the status of wounds to the appropriate member of the veterinary team.

Guidance:

None.

4.8 Apply dressings appropriate to type of wound.

Guidance:

Consider evidence-based techniques and materials.

4.9 Apply bandages appropriate to species and condition.

Guidance:

None.

4.10 Administer medicines prescribed by the veterinary surgeon in accordance with instructions from the manufacturer.

Guidance:

To include oral, topical, subcutaneous, intramuscular, and intravenous.

4.11 Monitor for side effects and adverse medication reactions and alert veterinary surgeon.

Guidance:

None.

4.12 Provide fluid therapy to in-patients.

Guidance:

Select appropriate fluids according to veterinary surgeon instructions; Select and prepare administration equipment; Place intravenous catheters into appropriate veins; Intravenous catheter management; Calculate amount and rate of fluid to administer; Observe and monitor patients receiving fluid therapy, reporting any concerns to an appropriate member of the veterinary team.

4.13 Identify, assess, and evaluate pain and alert the veterinary surgeon.

Guidance:

Score and evaluate pain using a validated system; intensity of pain and associated anxiety and behaviour.

4.14 Perform basic physical therapy techniques to aid mobilisation.

Guidance:

To include passive movement and active exercise.

4.15 Administer first aid for a range of situations within the limits of the law and the expertise of the student.

Guidance:

First aid is defined as care that can be carried out by a lay person.

4.16 Assist with a range of emergency care techniques within the limits of the student's expertise.

Guidance:

Emergency care is defined as care delegated by the veterinary surgeon in an emergency scenario.

Section 5 – Laboratory techniques

5.1 Discuss with the veterinary surgeon and prepare for an appropriate sampling strategy.

Guidance:

Strategy to include: personal protective equipment (PPE), clipping and preparing sample site, preparation of patient and equipment; calibration of equipment. Strategies prepared for: blood, urine, faeces, skin/hair and tissue biopsies.

5.2 Safely and effectively take appropriate samples.

Guidance:

Samples to include blood, urine, faeces, skin, hair pluck, bacterial swabs.

5.3 Carry out haematological analysis.

Guidance:

To include biochemistry, haematology, packed cell volume, total solids (protein) and smear.

5.4 Carry out urinalysis.

Guidance:

To include urine reagent strips, specific gravity, sediment analysis.

5.5 Carry out faecal analysis.

Guidance:

May include; gross visual analysis; microscopic analysis; quantitative examination; commercial test kits.

5.6 Carry out skin and hair analysis.

Guidance:

May include: hair pluck, tape strips and coat brushings.

5.7 Use a microscope to examine laboratory samples.

Guidance:

*To include: low magnification, high magnification and oil immersion.
Record Vernier Scale readings.*

5.8 Prepare samples for external analysis.

Guidance:

To include: accurate completion of documentation, correct packaging and labelling, correct preservation and storage in line with current legislation.

5.9 Record laboratory test results and communicate accurately to the appropriate member of the veterinary team.

Guidance:

None.

Section 6 – Diagnostic imaging

6.1 Prepare and use a variety of diagnostic imaging modalities.

Guidance:

To include radiography.

6.2 Use appropriate personal protective equipment (PPE) and radiation monitoring equipment in accordance with practice local rules.

Guidance:

None.

6.3 Position a patient to obtain a diagnostic image of the area of interest.

Guidance:

A variety of species and positions would be expected.

6.4 Produce images according to practice procedure.

Guidance:

None.

6.5 Record exposures and results of images according to practice procedure.

Guidance:

Appraise the quality of the image.

6.6 Prepare and support animals during ultrasound investigation.

Guidance:

None.

Section 7 – Dispensing

7.1 Ensure safe handling and management of pharmaceuticals in accordance with legislation and manufacturer guidelines.

Guidance:

Store, handle and dispose of medicines in line with legislative guidelines and specific requirements found in the Summary of Product Characteristics (SPC) and with reference to their drug category.

To include: Controlled drugs and hormone based medicines which require special handling and disposal.

7.2 Interpret prescriptions and prepare medicines for dispensing.

Guidance:

Calculate drug dosages and confirm with an appropriately qualified member of the veterinary team; Package and label in accordance with legal requirements.

7.3 Maintain appropriate records.

Guidance:

To include medicines records, Controlled drugs (CDs), withdrawal periods and hospital charts.

Section 8 – Infection control

8.1 Recognise clinical signs of common zoonotic diseases and undertake strategies to prevent spread and infection.

Guidance:

None.

8.2 Formulate and implement an appropriate infection control strategy according to practice protocol.

Guidance:

Constitute appropriate cleaning and disinfectant solutions; Prepare, clean and maintain patient accommodation that maximises the welfare of hospitalised patients to include isolation accommodation; Prepare, clean and maintain examination rooms, preparation area and operating theatre to include periodic deep clean and after infected cases.

8.3 Dispose of hazardous and non-hazardous waste, safely and correctly according to current legislation.

Guidance:

To include medications.

8.4 Ensure appropriate hygiene skills are followed before and after handling animals and equipment.

Guidance:

Comply with the World Health Organisation hand washing method; Use and dispose of PPE.

8.5 Carry out effective barrier nursing.

Guidance:

Taking into account accommodation, PPE, equipment and patient condition to include reverse barrier nursing.

Section 9 – Theatre practice

9.1 Maintain common surgical instruments.

Guidance:

Identify, check, and clean common surgical instruments; Identify and report damage to equipment and instruments.

9.2 Prepare, package, and monitor the sterilisation of instruments and materials.

Guidance:

None.

9.3 Prepare the theatre for use based on patient, equipment, and procedure.

Guidance:

None.

9.4 Position patients appropriately on the operating table in accordance with the planned procedure considering patient condition.

Guidance:

None.

9.5 Prepare the surgical site appropriately for the procedure in accordance with practice protocol.

Guidance:

Consider cross-referencing to Section 2.

9.6 Assist as circulating nurse.

Guidance:

Open and pass sterile materials direct to scrubbed personnel; Prepare ancillary and powered equipment; complete surgical safety checklists.

9.7 Prepare hands and arms using appropriate method.

Guidance:

Consider cross referencing to Section 2.

To include pre-surgical scrub prior to donning gown and gloves.

9.8 Prepare for surgical assistance wearing appropriate attire in accordance with practice protocol.

Guidance:

To include Donning of gown and gloves, using open and closed gloving method in an aseptic manner.

9.9 Assist with sterile procedures.

Guidance:

Maintain sterility of self and others during procedures.

9.10 Assist with draping patients maintaining sterility according to practice protocol.

Guidance:

None.

9.11 Monitor and record materials during surgery.

Guidance:

None.

9.12 Handle and pass instruments and equipment aseptically during surgery.

Guidance:

None.

Section 10 – Anaesthesia

10.1 Assess the patient and identify the patient's anaesthetic risks.

Guidance:

To include ASA guidelines, behaviour and temperament, clinical assessment, and discussion with an appropriate member of the veterinary team.

10.2 Prepare equipment for anaesthesia.

Guidance:

Check and prepare the anaesthetic machine in accordance with practice protocol; Select, prepare and check an appropriate breathing system/circuit and pollution control system in accordance with practice protocol; Select and prepare monitoring equipment according to the patient's condition; Prepare materials and equipment required for induction of anaesthesia to include pharmaceutical agents (according to veterinary surgeon direction) and appropriate airway management device.

10.3 Prepare patients for anaesthesia.

Guidance:

Administer prescribed premedicants and assess the patient's response; Introduce airway management device (check position and secure airway management device).

10.4 Maintain and monitor the patient during the anaesthetic process.

Guidance:

Measure temperature, heart rate, central and peripheral pulse, respiratory rate; Evaluate depth of anaesthesia; Monitor equipment (systems/circuits and tube, gases and volatile agents, patient monitors); Interpret and report observations to the directing veterinary surgeon (Inconsistencies, patient monitors); Calculate the fresh gas flow and administer inhalation anaesthesia under veterinary direction (Change the depth or level of inhalation anaesthesia under veterinary direction), Disconnect patients from anaesthetic equipment and materials.

Refer to and consider supporting guidance:

18 delegation to veterinary nurses.

10.5 Complete anaesthetic monitoring records.

Guidance:

None.

10.6 Support and assess patient recovery from anesthesia and communicate concerns to an appropriate member of the veterinary team.

Guidance:

Position patients for recovery; Remove airway management device at appropriate stage of recovery; Maintain accurate recovery records; Communicate post operative and/or anaesthetic recovery progress to an appropriate member of the veterinary team.

C. RCVS Day One Skills for Veterinary Nurses – equine

Overview

Licence to practise qualifications leading to entry onto the Veterinary Nurse Register must articulate with the RCVS Day One Skills for veterinary nurses and be specified, recorded and assessed in a format that is readily auditable and accessible to learners.

The Day One Skills list is a regulatory benchmark of essential clinical skills, developed and reviewed by the RCVS, based on the RCVS Day One Competences for Veterinary Nursing. The skills list is embedded in an electronic nursing progress log (the NPL) which has been designed to support a process of clinical mentorship and learning in addition to recording competence achievement. Awarding institutions may use the NPL or develop their own recording systems.

There are Day One Skills for Veterinary Nursing in relation to the care of either horses (or other equidae) or small animals, which should include dogs, cats and exotic species, or a combination of the three.

The *RCVS Code of Professional Conduct* sets out veterinary nurses' professional responsibilities. Where applicable, the RCVS Day One Skills for Veterinary Nursing has been referenced to the *Code of Professional Conduct for Veterinary Nurses* and the relevant supporting guidance which should be referred to, by student veterinary nurses, when completing the skills.

Day One Skills – equine

Section 1 – Legislation affecting practice

1.1 Comply with Health and Safety requirements and local risk factors.

Guidance:

Comply with legislative requirements.

1.2 Follow Standard Operating Procedures and manufacturer guidelines when using equipment and materials.

Guidance:

None.

1.3 Take appropriate action and report injury involving self or others.

Guidance:

Complete the accident book/record in accordance with practice protocol.

1.4 Critically evaluate a risk assessment for one area of the practice and suggest appropriate action where necessary.

Additional guidance:

None.

Section 2 – Communication

2.1 Communicate effectively using a variety of different methods

Guidance:

Communicate with clients, work colleagues, other veterinary professionals, and the public, considering their different needs and requirements.

Communication models should be followed.

Refer to and consider supporting guidance:

5 Communication between professional colleagues.

2.2 Create accurate and legible written communications/ documentation according to practice policy.

Guidance:

Records to include: patient records and reports, laboratory reports, admission and consent forms, client home care plans and instructions.

2.3 Access and store client and practice records according to practice policy and data protection laws.

Refer to and consider supporting guidance:

14 Client confidentiality.

2.4 Admit patients.

Guidance:

Obtain written and verbal informed consent; Respond appropriately to economic status of clients to include insurance; develop care plans as appropriate.

Refer to and consider supporting guidance:

1 Referrals and second opinions.

9 Practice information, fees and insurance.

11 Communication and consent.

2.5 Conduct effective nursing consultations or assessments.

Guidance:

History taking and appropriate examination; Identifying patients for referral to a veterinary surgeon or veterinary nurse; Application of treatments; Programmes of preventative medicine.

This may be achieved through nursing assessments.

Advise on transportation.

Refer to and consider supporting guidance:

18 Delegation to veterinary nurses.

2.6 Provide discharge information and guidance to clients.

Guidance:

Advise clients on safe and correct routes of administration and potential side effects; Demonstrate to clients safe techniques for administering medication; Advise clients on the storage and disposal of medication; Wound care advice; Bandage advice; advise clients on out of hours services.

2.7 Complete appropriate documentation for referral and diagnostic services.

Guidance:

To include laboratory samples and clinical histories.

Refer to and consider supporting guidance:

13 Clinical and client records.

2.8 Review and discuss evidence-based nursing.

Guidance:

Identify an area of practise for discussion; Appraise literature; consider cases in accordance with reviewed literature; Discuss and disseminate findings with practice team.

2.9 Identify and collaborate on quality improvement within the practice setting.

Guidance:

Review definition of quality improvement and guidance provided by [RCVS Knowledge](#), discuss unexpected medical or surgical complications with the veterinary team, examples of which may include serious complaint, accident or anaesthetic death; Consider circumstances.

Ensure effective protocols are in place; Suggest proposed improvements to the practice team

Refer to and consider supporting guidance:

5 Communication between professional colleagues

17 Veterinary teams and leaders

2.10 Demonstrate compliance with practice protocols in regard to health and wellbeing of personnel.

Guidance:

Discussion of health and wellbeing concerns which may be experienced by any member of the veterinary team, and the protocols in place to prevent and mitigate them. These should include reference to mental and emotional health concerns, as well as those relating to physical safety and health.

Refer to and consider supporting guidance:

15 Health Protocol.

2.11 Communicate effectively expressing appropriate empathy and sympathy.

Guidance:

Prepare the owner for loss; Support the owner through the euthanasia process; Provide follow-up support for a bereaved owner; Maintain and adapt professional approach to the circumstances.

Refer to and consider supporting guidance:

8 Euthanasia of animals.

Section 3 – Handling and restraint

3.1 Evaluate behavioural and environmental factors when approaching and handling animals.

Guidance:

Recognition of and minimising fear and distress, utilising approaches which reduce stress. Handling techniques with reference to welfare for example, positive reinforcement.

3.2 Select and use appropriate personal and patient protective equipment.

Guidance:

None.

3.3 Demonstrate techniques for approaching and handling patients.

Guidance:

None.

3.4 Lead and move animals using the most appropriate equipment for the species using approved manual handling and lifting procedures.

Additional guidance:

None.

3.5 Use appropriate restraint methods suitable for the patient and situation with due consideration for animal welfare.

Guidance:

Maintain patient's emotional homeostasis and wellbeing; Recognise signs of distress and act accordingly to minimise this; Restrain for clinical examination, sample collection, administration of medicines.

Section 4 – Nursing care

4.1 Develop and use individualised care plans to deliver the nursing process for a range of disorders and diseases.

Guidance:

Interpret nursing care plans and carry out appropriate nursing interventions.

Consider cross-referencing to Section 2.

4.2 Critically evaluate a care bundle.

Guidance:

This may be evidenced through research and a clinical discussion.

4.3 Carry out a nursing assessment ascertaining information about the patient's normal routine.

Guidance:

Food and fluid intake; Urination and defecation; Behaviour (response to pain, strangers, commands etc); Mobility; Sleep and rest.

Consider cross-referencing to Section 2.

4.4 Perform a clinical examination and record findings.

Guidance:

To include temperature, pulse, respiration, weight and capillary refill times/mucous membranes, gut sounds and digital pulses.

4.5 Provide husbandry to patients, considering accommodation, nutrition, and excretions.

Guidance:

Consider age, species, condition, demeanour and enrichment. Calculate food requirements based on disease and life stage/lifestyle, manage assisted feeding to include hand feeding, oral hydration and managing and maintaining stomach tubes.

4.6 Maintain patients' hygiene according to their needs.

Guidance:

To include eyes, nostrils, hoof-picking and general grooming.

Consider cross-referencing to Section 2.

4.7 Assess, monitor, manage and report the status of wounds to the appropriate member of the veterinary team.

Guidance:

None.

4.8 Apply dressings appropriate to type of wound.

Guidance:

Consider evidence-based techniques and materials.

4.9 Apply bandages appropriate to condition.

Guidance:

None.

4.10 Administer medicines prescribed by the veterinary surgeon in accordance with instructions from the manufacturer.

Guidance:

To include oral, topical, subcutaneous, intramuscular, and intravenous.

4.11 Monitor for side effects and adverse medication reactions and alert veterinary surgeon.

Guidance:

None.

4.12 Provide fluid therapy to in-patients.

Guidance:

Select appropriate fluids according to veterinary surgeon instructions; Select and prepare administration equipment; Place intravenous catheters into appropriate veins; Intravenous catheter management; Calculate amount and rate of fluid to administer; Observe and monitor patients receiving fluid therapy, reporting any concerns to an appropriate member of the veterinary team.

4.13 Identify, assess, and evaluate pain and alert the veterinary surgeon.

Guidance:

Score and evaluate pain using a validated system; intensity of pain and associated anxiety and behaviour.

4.14 Perform basic physical therapy techniques to aid mobilisation.

Guidance:

To include passive movement and active exercise.

4.15 Administer first aid for a range of situations within the limits of the law and the expertise of the student.

Guidance:

Ideally for a range of situations.

First aid is defined as care that can be carried out by a lay person.

4.16 Assist with a range of emergency care techniques within the limits of the students expertise.

Guidance:

Emergency care is defined as care delegated by the veterinary surgeon in an emergency scenario.

Section 5 – Laboratory techniques

5.1 Discuss with the veterinary surgeon and prepare for an appropriate sampling strategy.

Guidance:

Strategy to include: personal protective equipment (PPE), clipping and preparing sample site, preparation of patient and equipment; calibration of equipment. Strategies prepared for: blood, urine, faeces, skin/hair and tissue biopsies; peritoneal tap, joint/tendon taps and sheath fluid.

5.2 Safely and effectively take appropriate samples.

Guidance:

Samples to include blood, urine, faeces, skin, hair pluck, bacterial swabs. Assist with the collection of peritoneal fluid; joint/tendon taps and sheath fluid.

5.3 Carry out haematological analysis.

Guidance:

To include biochemistry, haematology, packed cell volume, total solids (protein) and smear.

5.4 Carry out urinalysis.

Guidance:

To include urine reagent strips, specific gravity, sediment analysis.

5.5 Carry out faecal analysis.

Guidance:

***May** include gross visual analysis; microscopic analysis; quantitative examination.*

5.6 Carry out skin and hair analysis.

Guidance:

***May** include: hair pluck, tape strips and coat brushings.*

5.7 Use a microscope to examine laboratory samples.

Guidance:

To include low magnification, high magnification and oil immersion.

Record Vernier Scale readings.

5.8 Prepare samples for external analysis.

Guidance:

To include accurate completion of documentation, correct packaging and labelling, correct preservation and storage in line with current legislation.

5.9 Record laboratory test results and communicate accurately to the appropriate member of the veterinary team.

Guidance:

None.

Section 6 – Diagnostic imaging

6.1 Prepare and use a variety of diagnostic imaging modalities.

Guidance:

To include radiography.

6.2 Use appropriate personal protective equipment (PPE) and radiation monitoring equipment in accordance with practice local rules.

Guidance:

None.

6.3 Position a patient to obtain a diagnostic image of the area of interest.

Guidance:

A variety of positions would be expected. Positioning of equipment must also be referenced.

6.4 Produce images according to practice procedure.

Guidance:

None.

6.5 Record exposures and results of images according to practice procedure.

Guidance:

Appraise the quality of the image.

6.6 Prepare and support animals during endoscopy investigation.

Guidance:

None.

6.7 Prepare and support animals during ultrasound investigation.

Guidance:

None.

Section 7 – Dispensing

7.1 Ensure safe handling and management of pharmaceuticals in accordance with legislation and manufacturer guidelines.

Guidance:

Store, handle and dispose of medicines in line with legislative guidelines and specific requirements found in the Summary of Product Characteristics (SPC) and with reference to their drug category.

To include Controlled drugs and hormone based medicines which require special handling and disposal.

7.2 Interpret prescriptions and prepare medicines for dispensing.

Guidance:

Calculate drug dosages and confirm with an appropriately qualified member of the veterinary team; Package and label in accordance with legal requirements.

7.3 Maintain appropriate records.

Guidance:

To include medicines records and Controlled drugs (CDs), Withdrawal periods and hospital charts.

Section 8 – Infection control

8.1 Recognise clinical signs of common zoonotic diseases and undertake strategies to prevent spread and infection.

Guidance:

None.

8.2 Formulate and implement an appropriate infection control strategy according to practice protocol.

Guidance:

Constitute appropriate cleaning and disinfectant solutions; Prepare, clean and maintain patient accommodation that maximises the welfare of hospitalised patients to include isolation accommodation; Prepare, clean and maintain examination rooms, preparation area and operating theatre to include periodic deep clean and after infected cases.

8.3 Dispose of hazardous and non-hazardous waste safely and correctly according to current legislation.

Guidance:

To include medications.

8.4 Ensure appropriate hygiene skills are followed before and after handling animals and equipment.

Guidance:

Comply with the World Health Organisation hand washing method; Use and dispose of PPE.

8.5 Carry out effective barrier nursing.

Guidance:

Taking into account accommodation, PPE, equipment and patient condition, to include reverse barrier nursing.

Section 9 – Theatre practice

9.1 Maintain common surgical instruments.

Guidance:

Identify, check, and clean common surgical instruments; Identify and report damage to equipment and instruments.

9.2 Prepare, package, and monitor the sterilisation of instruments and materials.

Guidance:

None.

9.3 Prepare the theatre for use based on patient, equipment, and procedure.

Guidance:

None.

9.4 Position patients appropriately in accordance with the planned procedure considering patient condition.

Guidance:

Correct and safe use of the hoist. Consideration of lateral and dorsal recumbency and standing surgeries.

9.5 Prepare the surgical site appropriately for the procedure in accordance with practice protocol.

Guidance:

Consider cross reference to Section 2.

9.6 Assist as circulating nurse.

Guidance:

Open and pass sterile materials direct to scrubbed personnel; Prepare ancillary and powered equipment, complete surgical safety checklists.

9.7 Prepare hands and arms using appropriate method.

Guidance:

To include pre-surgical scrub prior to donning gown and gloves. Consider cross referencing to Section 2.

9.8 Prepare for surgical assistance wearing appropriate attire in accordance with practice protocol.

Guidance:

Don gown and gloves (closed gloving method) in an aseptic manner to assist with surgery.

9.9 Put on surgical gloves (open gloving method) in an aseptic manner to assist with sterile procedures.

Guidance:

Maintain sterility of self and others during procedures.

9.10 Assist with draping patients maintaining sterility in accordance with practice protocol.

Guidance:

None.

9.11 Monitor and record materials during surgery.

Guidance:

None.

9.12 Handle and pass instruments and equipment aseptically during surgery.

Guidance:

None.

Section 10 – Anaesthesia

10.1 Assess the patient and identify the patient's anaesthetic risks.

Guidance:

To include ASA guidelines, behaviour and temperament; clinical assessment, and discussion with an appropriate member of the veterinary team.

10.2 Prepare equipment for anaesthesia

Guidance:

Prepare the knockdown box. Check and prepare the anaesthetic machine in accordance with practice protocol; Select, check, and prepare breathing system/circuit and pollution control system in accordance with practice protocol; Select and prepare monitoring equipment according to the patient's condition; Prepare materials and equipment required for induction of anaesthesia to include pharmaceutical agents (according to veterinary surgeon direction) and appropriate airway management device.

10.3 Prepare patients for anaesthesia.

Guidance:

Starvation (if appropriate); determine patient weight; pre-operative clipping of the surgical site (if safe to do so); grooming, tail bandages, foot preparation including shoe removal; intravenous catheter placement and mouth washing, administer pre-medicants.

10.4 Assist with induction of anaesthesia.

Guidance:

Assist with physical stabilisation of the patient until recumbency and unconsciousness has been attained.

10.5 Maintain and monitor the patient during the anaesthetic process under continuous and direct supervision.

Guidance:

Measure temperature, heart rate, peripheral pulse, respiratory rate; Monitor equipment (systems/circuits and tube, gases and volatile agents, patient monitors); Interpret and report observations to the directing veterinary surgeon (Inconsistencies, patient monitors); complete anaesthetic monitoring records. Calculate and administer inhalation anaesthesia under veterinary direction (Change the depth or level of inhalation anaesthesia under veterinary direction) disconnecting patient from anaesthetic equipment and materials.

Refer to and consider supporting guidance:

18 Delegation to veterinary nurses.

10.6 Assist with recovery from anaesthesia under continuous and direct supervision.

Guidance:

Assist with: positioning patients for recovery; administration of 100% oxygen in the recovery room, if appropriate; removing airway management device at appropriate stage of recovery; assisted recovery if appropriate; assessing if the patient is ready to leave the recovery box and return to the stable. Maintain accurate recovery records; Communicate post-operative and/or anaesthetic recovery progress to the veterinary.

Surgeon and other appropriate members of the veterinary team.

D. Professional behaviours and attributes

Overview

The following professional behaviours and attributes are a form of etiquette in the workplace that is linked primarily to respectful, courteous and competent conduct. Consciousness of how veterinary nurses interact with colleagues and clients is an essential requisite for the veterinary led team, promoting a harmonious and effective working environment. The newly registered veterinary nurse is expected to reflect upon the development of their professional behaviours as they progress towards registration.

FOR CONSULTATION

D. Professional behaviours and attributes

Skills scale	Practice Level 1	Practice Level 2	Practice Level 3	Practice Level 4	Practice Level 5
	<p>Constant supervision</p> <p>This SVN may be new to practice with no experience and is therefore requiring help and support to progress. Alternatively, this category may indicate an SVN who is demonstrating fitness to practise concerns which must be followed up. SVNs in this category must be under constant supervision.</p>	<p>With assistance</p> <p>This SVN may have some, but limited experience of practice, but is still requiring almost constant reassurance and guidance. This SVN does not require constant supervision but will not have the confidence or experience to work autonomously.</p>	<p>Decreasing supervision</p> <p>This SVN has a basic level of practice experience and is starting to demonstrate autonomy with a sufficient understanding of the relevant theory to support their ongoing development. This SVN will be able to complete some tasks autonomously and confidently.</p>	<p>Independent</p> <p>This SVN is competent in all areas of practice. This SVN will be able to work with limited guidance or support but is aware of their own limitations and will seek support as required. This SVN will be able to work autonomously, confidently, and competently.</p>	<p>Proficient</p> <p>This SVN is competent in all areas of practice and is able to suggest improvements to practice protocol. This level of experience and ability will have developed over a period of time, with their reflective capabilities demonstrating an enhanced personal awareness. This SVN requires no supervision, except for that required within the relevant legislation.</p>
Professional behaviours and attributes					
Reliable and adaptable application of knowledge and skills	<p>Struggles with confidence or competence to complete simple nursing tasks. Doesn't adapt well to changing situations.</p>	<p>Able to carry out simple tasks but often lacks the knowledge and confidence to complete tasks competently. Slow to adapt to changing situations.</p>	<p>Often completes tasks competently but lacks the confidence to do this in a consistent way without guidance. Sometimes struggles with changing situations.</p>	<p>Is confident and competent to complete the required nursing tasks and has the ability to apply theory to practise. Adapts well to changing situations.</p>	<p>Comprehensive knowledge and skills often exceeding requirements for level of study. Adapts well to changing situations and often takes the lead.</p>

	Practice Level 1	Practice Level 2	Practice Level 3	Practice Level 4	Practice Level 5
Works within Legal and ethical limits	Does not understand or appreciate the requirement for supervision and does not take instruction well. Unaware of own limitations in work.	Sometimes has difficulty following instructions or working under supervision. Limited knowledge of the <i>RCVS Code of Professional Conduct</i> .	Usually follows procedures and works as instructed. Usually adheres to the <i>RCVS Code of Professional Conduct</i> .	Always conforms to approved procedures. Adheres to the <i>RCVS Code of Professional Conduct</i> and understands their professional responsibilities.	Uses and adapts approved procedures. Fully aware of the <i>RCVS Code of Professional Conduct</i> and promotes understanding within the veterinary team.
Demonstrates initiative and ability to self reflect	Needs constant prompting and guidance. Lacks confidence or ability to self-reflect.	Hesitant to do things on their own. Often needs encouragement to develop suitable improvement strategies.	Developing confidence to work without guidance and needs little prompting to reflect and consider required improvements.	Confident in their abilities but can recognise their own limitations and implement appropriate improvement strategies as required.	Promotes self-reflection within the veterinary team and encourages personal and professional development.
Ability to organise own time and work	Unable to plan or organise own work and often not adhering to scheduled shifts, or does not make themselves available when needed.	Limited ability to plan or organise own work but completes tasks as requested.	Able to plan and organise own work with assistance, but is not always mindful of wider team requirements.	Able to plan and organise their own time and work. A proactive and supportive member of the team who can be relied upon.	Promotes effective time management techniques to assist the smooth running of the practice.
Communication skills	Struggles to communicate effectively, both verbally and in writing, and tends to avoid communicating with clients and colleagues.	Attempts to communicate effectively but often requires prompting to ensure the correct message is conveyed.	Demonstrates adequate and timely communication which requires little prompting.	Communicates effectively and efficiently, both verbally and in writing, and actively contributes to discussions, acting as an advocate for their patients.	Promotes alternative and diverse communication strategies within the veterinary team.
Attitude to feedback and guidance	Struggles to accept and action constructive feedback in a meaningful way.	Accepts constructive feedback but is slow to show improvement.	Accepts constructive feedback and considers improvements, whilst not always addressing the matter.	Accepts and addresses constructive feedback in a meaningful way.	Always shows positive and proactive responses to guidance and feedback.

	Practice Level 1	Practice Level 2	Practice Level 3	Practice Level 4	Practice Level 5
Demonstrates professional accountability	Appears to be unable to take ownership for actions and does not understand the need to admit to mistakes.	Struggles to take ownership for actions and requires support and guidance to understand accountability.	Shows increasing ability to take responsibility. Recognises mistakes but does not always address these appropriately.	Takes responsibility and ownership for their actions. Recognises areas for improvement and addresses this accordingly.	Readily accepts responsibility and encourages promotion of accountability within the veterinary team.
Consideration of professional development	Seems unmotivated to learn or participate in clinical discussions and does not appear to reflect on their own practice.	Asks questions when prompted, but interest is generally focused on limited areas of practice, with little awareness of reflective requirements.	Actively questions areas of practice but struggles to reflect on their own capabilities in these areas.	Shows an intelligent interest in their personal and professional development. Asks good, relevant questions, and utilises the opportunity to reflect on their own practice.	Participates in all opportunities to improve practice. Reflects on their own work, implementing suggested outcomes where appropriate.
Maintains a professional and clinical appearance	Does not follow practice protocol with regards to appearance. Struggles with their personal hygiene or maintaining a professional image.	Occasionally untidy in appearance or professional image. Sometimes adheres to the practice protocol with regard to appearance.	Usually tidy in appearance in professional image. Mostly adheres to the practice protocol with regard to appearance.	Always adheres practice protocols with regards to appearance and consistently maintains a professional image.	Always presents a professional appearance acting as a professional role model.
Maintains responsibility for own wellbeing	No understanding of the impact of emotional factors on themselves and does not appear to recognise signs of mental and physical stressors.	Little understanding of the impact of emotional factors on themselves. Can recognise basic signs of mental and physical stressors, but is unsure of how to address these.	Some understanding of the impact of emotional factors on themselves. Can recognise common signs of mental and physical stressors, but requires guidance to be able to address these.	Understands how emotional factors may impact upon themselves. Can recognise signs of mental and physical stressors and be aware of how to mitigate these and where to seek further guidance.	Consideration of the impact of emotional factors on themselves and others and promotion of an inclusive environment with reference to support mechanisms for the veterinary team.
Ability to work as part of the veterinary team	Does not appreciate the roles and responsibilities of the veterinary team and does not understand the remit of the SVN or their own limitations.	Little appreciation of the roles and responsibilities of the veterinary team, but has some awareness of the remit of the SVN.	Some appreciation of the roles and responsibilities of the veterinary team, with a good awareness of the remit of the SVN and how they contribute to the veterinary team.	Appreciates the roles and responsibilities of the veterinary team and understands and values their contribution to it.	Promotes the roles and responsibilities of all members of the veterinary team, acting as an advocate for the veterinary nursing profession.

