

# RCVS VN Standards Handbook

October 2022



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# The basis for the accreditation of veterinary nursing licence to practise qualifications

## Introduction

As the professional regulatory authority for the veterinary professions, the RCVS maintains a register of veterinary nurses. Maintaining the register includes the approval of qualifications that can lead to professional registration; these are known as licence to practise qualifications. Qualifications that lead to registration can either be at Further Education (FE) or Higher Education (HE) level. The requirements for such qualifications are set out in the RCVS Standards Framework for Veterinary Nurse Education and Training.

The RCVS must accordingly accredit all Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) and Awarding Organisations (AOs), collectively referred to as Accredited Education Institutions (AEIs), and the veterinary nursing qualification(s) they award that lead to professional registration, ensuring that they address the regulatory standards and the current RCVS Day One Competences, Skills, and Professional Behaviours for veterinary nurses. The accreditation of such qualifications is undertaken by the Veterinary Nurse Education Committee (VNEC) on behalf of Veterinary Nurses Council.

An AEI accredited by the RCVS is permitted to award qualifications leading to entry onto the RCVS Register of Veterinary Nurses. AEIs must oversee the design, development, delivery, and assessment of the qualification. This includes ensuring that delivery sites and Training Practices that deliver the qualification also meet the relevant aspects of the RCVS Standards Framework for Veterinary Nurse Education and Training.

This document sets out the RCVS's standards, policies and procedures for the accreditation and quality monitoring of AEIs and their veterinary nursing licence to practise qualifications. It covers the procedures for the approval and quality monitoring of AEIs based in the UK and overseas.

The term 'accreditation' is used here to mean the process by which AEIs and their veterinary nursing licence to practise qualifications are approved by the RCVS.

## Veterinary nursing licence to practise qualifications

Any UK AEI that is considering offering a veterinary nursing licence to practise qualification must liaise with RCVS concerning its plans for the qualification at an early stage, ideally at least 18 months prior to proposed delivery. All AEIs are required to submit a Notification of Intent to the RCVS at least 12 months prior to the proposed qualification start date. The RCVS will make arrangements for meetings, to discuss the design, development, assessment and quality assurance of the qualification. For more information about the process for accrediting new qualifications, see pages 8–10.

Accreditation of veterinary nursing qualifications is officially awarded by Veterinary Nurses Council via the VNEC.

Veterinary nurses who wish to practise in the UK must be registered as a veterinary nurse with the RCVS. In accordance with the **Veterinary Nurse Registration Rules**, the required criteria for admission to the register are that a person must:

- hold an approved vocational qualification and have completed practical training as specified by RCVS; or
- hold an approved degree in veterinary nursing or other higher qualification in veterinary nursing and have completed practical training as specified below; or
- have passed the Part II veterinary nursing examination formerly administered by the College and have completed practical training as specified below; or
- hold the RCVS Certificate in Veterinary Nursing; or
- have undertaken training and obtained a qualification outside the United Kingdom and acquired skills and knowledge commensurate with the standards set by the Veterinary Nurses Council under article 14 of the Supplemental Charter for the training and education of persons wishing to be entered in the register of veterinary nurses.

Qualifications achieved in the UK which enable holders to apply to enter the RCVS register of veterinary nurses must be approved by the RCVS in its capacity as the veterinary professional regulator.

Legal dispensations relating to veterinary practical work are extended to student veterinary nurses under provisions of the Veterinary Surgeons Act 1966. For this reason, the RCVS maintains a database of AElS, their delivery sites, and affiliated Training Practices and of enrolled student veterinary nurses. **Students not enrolled with the RCVS must not be delegated Schedule 3 nursing activities.**

# RCVS Standards Framework for Veterinary Nurse Education and Training

## Introduction

The RCVS's principal aim in setting accreditation standards and evaluating AEIs against them is to ensure that the AEIs and their delivery sites:

- are well governed;
- are run sustainably, safely and effectively;
- have the appropriate resources (people, facilities and animals);
- provide a relevant curriculum;
- provide appropriate support to empower students in their learning;
- operate fair, valid and reliable assessment systems;
- operate robust quality assurance and quality enhancement mechanisms.

This is what lies behind the veterinary nursing licence to practise qualification accreditation standards. Compliance with all standards provides an assurance that the qualification meets the needs of the veterinary profession. It guarantees that holders of the qualification will have acquired the knowledge and skills needed for the efficient practice of veterinary nursing enabling them to apply to enter the register of veterinary nurses.

To be accredited by the RCVS, the AEI and its qualifications must meet all the standards including:

- ensuring that students meet the RCVS Day One Competences, Skills and Professional Behaviours for Veterinary Nurses;
- providing adequate access to placements or employment for all students in a veterinary TP/aTP for the purposes of clinical training and assessment;
- complying with other policies published by the RCVS from time to time relating to veterinary nurse education.

The AEI RCVS Standards Framework for Veterinary Nurse Education and Training and additional guidance is located [here](#).



# RCVS AEI accreditation process

## Notification of Intent

A new AEI considering offering a veterinary nursing qualification must contact RCVS to provide an initial proposed timeline at least 18 months prior to the proposed qualification start date. All AEIs, whether new or currently accredited, are required to submit a Notification of Intent to the RCVS at least 12 months prior to the proposed qualification start date. The Notification of Intent will detail draft plans for the following:

- market research, to include the perceived market, evidence of need, proposed intakes, and student numbers per year.
- programme design, i.e. length of provision and placement model if relevant. The proposed theory units are also required.
- proposed approach to the assessment of the RCVS Day One Competences, Skills, and Professional Behaviours, to include the practical assessment methodologies. This must identify the assessment during training as well as the summative practical examination. The assessment during training may be via any platform approved by the RCVS; the RCVS offers the Nursing Progress Log (NPL) to all AEIs, which is free to use, and covers all elements of the Day One Skills and Professional Behaviours.
- funding and sustainability, to include the funding options available to students, staffing availability and all relevant facilities and resources.

This document must detail the timeline for accreditation and identify key dates by which actions will be achieved. Most importantly there must be evidence of a willingness from employers to support the introduction of the new qualification by offering good quality clinical placements, which is expected to contribute to the market research. The Notification of Intent must be signed and submitted by the Principal or CEO of the AEI.

Once the RCVS has reviewed the Notification of Intent an initial consultation meeting will be arranged to discuss the viability of the proposed programme. During this meeting the AEI will be provided with guidance on the Standards and an opportunity to ask questions regarding compliance and evidencing

the requirements. Any obvious deficiencies will be identified, but it will be for the AEI to determine how such gaps might be rectified. The RCVS can provide advice on its standards, policies, and procedures, but the accreditation decision is made by VNEC only once a full accreditation event has taken place.

Providing that the application is accepted in principle, the RCVS will confirm that the timetable/timeline for accreditation is appropriate and that there is sufficient time for VNEC to consider the final report before the recruitment of the first cohort. VNEC normally meets six times per year.

Accreditation includes scrutiny of the organisation and its qualification(s) at one event which lasts for two days. In consultation with the AEI, two potential weeks for the event are identified, which assures the availability of the required RCVS and institutional personnel. The RCVS will then liaise with the accreditation panel members in order to convene a panel which adequately represents the academic level and programme type. Once the availability of the panel is confirmed, a panel is selected and a specific date identified. It is a requirement that all panel members sign a confidentiality agreement and conflict of interest form for every event and anyone with an existing conflict is not selected for an accreditation event. The date and panel constitution is then communicated to the provider, in order for them to confirm there is no conflict of interest with any of the proposed panel. Where a conflict is identified by the provider, this must be justified and evidenced to the RCVS.

## Application for accreditation

The AEI must submit its application for accreditation and all supporting evidence, and have paid the fee in full, no less than eight weeks prior to the arranged date for the accreditation. At this point an agenda is proposed by the RCVS; the AEI can request changes as required. The application and supporting evidence is thoroughly reviewed by the accreditation panel, who may request further evidence as necessary. Should the panel determine that the application is significantly non-compliant, the decision may be taken to postpone the accreditation event. In this situation, the AEI will be provided

with feedback in order to rectify the issues and pursue accreditation at a later date. The process the accreditation panel follow prior to the accreditation event is described on page 25.

Providing there is no significant cause for concern the accreditation event will take place as per the agreed agenda. The event will be Chaired by a member of the RCVS panel. This is likely to be an experienced external panel member, but occasionally it is necessary for an RCVS representative to act as Chair.

In the days and weeks prior to the accreditation event, RCVS representatives will contact delivery sites and affiliated TPs/aTPs as appropriate. This may be in the form of an in-person visit or a virtual meeting. There are a significant number of requirements which must be met by the delivery sites and TPs/aTPs, and it is imperative that these requirements are reflected within the discussion that takes place during the accreditation. The RCVS personnel will provide feedback to the RCVS accreditation panel for them to consider when determining the AEI compliance with the RCVS Standards Framework for Veterinary Nurse Education and Training.

During the accreditation event, the RCVS accreditation panel will ask questions pertinent to the AEI's ability to deliver a qualification in accordance with the Standards. Verbal feedback is provided at the end of the event by the Chair of the RCVS panel; this feedback will cover commendations and areas for improvement, as well as key actions which the AEI must consider. However, the Chair will make no announcement concerning accreditation, as this is a decision to be taken later by the RCVS Veterinary Nurse Education Committee.

Within three weeks of the event, a draft report is prepared by the RCVS panel. Each Standard will be evaluated in a section of the report. The report indicates ways in which the AEI complies, or does not comply, with the accreditation Standards. The draft report is provided to the AEI for factual accuracy confirmation; the report must be reviewed and returned to the RCVS within one week at which point any amendments are made as necessary. Once the content of the report has been confirmed, the AEI will

be provided with a final version which includes all actions and suggestions. Any lack of compliance will have an attributed action in order for compliance to be achieved, whereas suggestions are included where compliance has been achieved but the RCVS panel has identified an area for further development.

Upon receipt of the final report with the associated actions, the AEI is then required to provide an action plan to the RCVS within two weeks. The action plan must include how the action will be addressed, who is responsible for addressing the action and within what timeframe, as well as what evidence will be provided to evidence completion. The RCVS panel will review the proposed action plan to ensure the required actions will be fully addressed.

The final report and action plan is presented to VNEC for its consideration of the accreditation decision. It is advisable to commence recruitment onto the programme only once accreditation has been confirmed. Following the decision made by VNEC, the AEI is required to submit the relevant action completion evidence to the RCVS in accordance with its planned timetable. Feedback and guidance will be provided for all submissions until all actions have been satisfactorily addressed. Accreditation and RCVS enrolment of students will depend upon the satisfactory resolution of the actions.

The final report is published online once VNEC has made its decision and the AEI has been informed of the outcome.

A contract, i.e. a Memorandum of Understanding, will be drawn up between the RCVS and the AEI and between the RCVS and each delivery site approved by the AEI to deliver the qualification.

# Accreditation of qualifications delivered wholly or partially outside the United Kingdom

## Introduction

RCVS accepts registration applications from veterinary nurses who have trained outside the UK. There are a number of different routes which these nurses may have followed to demonstrate that their qualification is the same or similar to that undertaken in the UK. Veterinary nurses who have achieved a veterinary nursing qualification may apply to have their qualification assessed for equivalency. These nurses will usually apply for registration independently of their college or course provider. Application forms are available online.

Where a college outside the UK has a large number of students wishing to work in the UK it may be appropriate for the college to seek accreditation from the RCVS or one of its accredited AELs. There is also scope for training providers in the UK to allow their students to undertake work experience in a veterinary practice outside the UK and for nurses undertaking a programme of study outside the UK to undertake work experience in the UK. This chapter outlines the mechanisms in place to ensure that nurses in training wholly or partially outside the UK reach a standard of education and training to allow them to enter the RCVS Register of Veterinary Nurses.

## Accreditation of Educational Institutions and Qualifications outside the UK

RCVS will consider applications for accreditation from overseas organisations responsible for the accreditation/approval of qualifications. No veterinary nursing qualification will be approved by RCVS for registration purposes unless it has been through an accreditation process, including a visitation, undertaken by RCVS. Consideration will also be given to accreditation events being held in collaboration with other overseas accrediting bodies, through joint visitation and mutual recognition agreements. The first accreditation visit of an organisation not previously recognised by RCVS should normally be undertaken wholly by RCVS.

To be considered for accreditation by RCVS an overseas veterinary nursing qualification must satisfy the following:

- the qualification must be comparable to that required of UK veterinary nursing qualifications. Overseas qualifications must meet the same accreditation criteria as UK AElS, including the requirement for students to meet the RCVS Day One Competences, Skills, and Professional Behaviours for Veterinary Nurses. The criteria are contained within this Handbook;
- the qualification must be recognised by relevant authorities (government and/or veterinary licensing body) in its own region/country;
- RCVS will appoint a team of visitors to undertake a formal visitation of the accrediting body and the delivery sites for the qualification. Such visits will be at the expense of the organisation applying for accreditation. Before the accreditation visit the organisation applying for accreditation must pay the RCVS accreditation fee and loss of earnings allowance for all RCVS visitors, including business class air fares for flights of seven hours or more. Accreditation cannot be granted until RCVS's fees and costs have been reimbursed in full;
- overseas veterinary nursing qualifications accredited by the RCVS will be subject to the same audit requirements as UK accredited qualifications (outlined in this handbook). This will include annual quality monitoring activity based on a risk assessment. Costs for all quality monitoring activities undertaken outside the UK will be charged to the accredited organisation;
- the possibility of accreditation will only be considered following a formal application from the overseas organisation, on the basis of its acceptance of these criteria.

The accreditation fee charged by the RCVS will cover the standard two-day period of accreditation. An annual accreditation fee will also be charged. In addition, where routine quality monitoring involves visits to delivery sites and training practices outside the UK, travel, accommodation charges and loss of earnings will be charged as detailed above. For up-to-date information on the accreditation and annual quality monitoring fees please contact the RCVS.

Whilst RCVS will consider applications for accreditation from organisations within Europe, they will be advised to obtain ACOVENE accreditation instead,

because this offers additional opportunities to holders of veterinary nursing qualifications, including access to the RCVS register of veterinary nurses.

Student veterinary nurses working in a TP outside of the UK do not need to be enrolled with the RCVS. The RCVS will request a list of students who are registered for the qualification and a pass list containing the names of all successful candidates. Should the AEI require students who are not enrolled with the RCVS to have access to the RCVS Nursing Progress Log (NPL) a charge will be levied.

## **Accreditation and quality monitoring of organisations and qualifications delivered partially outside the UK**

Where a UK AEI offers its qualifications to students working outside the UK, but attending a delivery site in the UK, this must be subject to approval and quality monitoring by the AEI awarding the qualification. This process cannot be initiated without RCVS approval; full guidance will be given upon request.

Should the request for student veterinary nurse training in an overseas practice be granted, the training practice will need to meet the Standards and must receive the same level of quality monitoring as UK based TPs. These practices will not be published online.

RCVS quality monitoring activity will include visits to overseas training practices. RCVS normally visits a minimum of two TPs affiliated to each delivery during a five-year period. Where routine quality monitoring includes a visit to an overseas TP, these visits will incur additional costs including travel and accommodation costs of the RCVS visitors, together with the applicable loss-of-earnings allowance for the period of the visit including travel time (which may be up to two days for long-haul visits). Air fares for flights of 7 hours or more may be charged at 'business class' rate. RCVS will invoice the delivery site for the costs and all such invoices must be settled in full.

Where there are a number of TPs in one region RCVS will plan appointments to all TPs during the same visit to reduce the costs to the delivery site(s).

## Accreditation of UK qualifications delivered wholly outside the UK

An RCVS accredited AEI can approve a delivery site outside the UK to deliver an RCVS accredited qualification. Where this occurs, the delivery site will be required to meet the RCVS Standards and quality monitoring should be undertaken by the AEI.

Where a UK accredited AEI approves a delivery site delivering a UK accredited veterinary nursing qualification overseas they must inform the RCVS. Whilst students enrolled on the qualification outside the UK will not need to be enrolled with the RCVS, the delivery site(s) and TPs will be subject to the RCVS Standards. The delivery site(s) and TPs will be subject to normal RCVS quality monitoring criteria. Where more than one delivery site is approved in a region the RCVS will try and visit all sites during the same visit, thereby reducing costs to the AEI. RCVS quality monitoring activity undertaken outside of the UK will be subject to fees which will be payable by the AEI.

The AEI must pay travel and accommodation costs of the RCVS visitors, together with the applicable loss-of-earnings allowance for the period of the visit including travel time (which may be up to two days for long-haul visits). Air fares for flights of 7 hours or more may be charged at 'business class' rate. RCVS will invoice the AEI for the costs and all such invoices must be settled in full.

Student veterinary nurses working in a TP outside of the UK do not need to be enrolled with the RCVS. The RCVS will continue to request a list of students who are registered for the qualification and a pass list containing the names of all successful candidates. Should the AEI require students to have access to the RCVS Nursing Progress Log a charge will be levied.

Delivery sites placing their students in Training Practices outside the UK must ensure that the student can legally work as a student veterinary nurse in that country and undertake the procedures outlined in the RCVS Day One Skills for Veterinary Nurses.



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

RCVS qualifications incorporate the RCVS Day One Competences, Skills, and Professional Behaviours for Veterinary Nurses.

The RCVS Day One Competences, Skills and Professional Behaviours for Veterinary Nurses set 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 and competent to practise on day one, in whichever area of the profession they start to work.

A new veterinary nurse who has achieved the RCVS Day One Competences for Veterinary Nurses should be capable and confident enough to practise veterinary nursing at a primary care level on their own including simple (without calculator) calculations, under direction from a veterinary surgeon, while knowing when it is appropriate to refer the care to more experienced colleagues. A new veterinary nurse – sometimes working alone – must be able to read and prepare written reports, interpret and dispense prescriptions accurately and interpret written instructions on patient care. Scribes should only be permitted for a temporary disability. Whilst invigilators may assist with reading of individual ‘difficult’ words or phrases, question paper readers per se should not be provided. New veterinary nurses are likely to need more time to perform some functions. Support and direction from more senior colleagues should be available.

The RCVS Day One Skills for Veterinary Nurses is a regulatory benchmark of essential practical skills, developed and reviewed by the RCVS, based on the RCVS Day One Competences for Veterinary Nurses. The skills list is embedded into the qualification and should be recorded and assessed in a format that is readily auditable and accessible to students. Similarly, the Professional Behaviours detail the acceptable level which a student nurse must achieve by the time they are coming to Register, including aspects such as timekeeping, teamwork and attitude.

Core skills may be gained in relation to the care of either horses (or other equidae), or small animals, which should include dogs, cats, and exotic species, or both horses and small animals.

The AEI needs to provide Delivery Sites and students with a system designed to support a process of clinical supervision and learning in addition to recording competence achievement. The method must be approved by RCVS.

## Classification of accreditation

Options for decisions on accreditation of veterinary nursing qualifications (subject to annual quality monitoring.)

**Full accreditation for 5 years** is given to qualifications that meet, or exceed, all the accreditation standards.

**Full accreditation for a shorter period** is applied where significant deficiencies are identified in an existing programme; accreditation will be subject to the deficiencies being addressed within a set period. The RCVS will normally undertake a full programme review before the end of the agreed accreditation period.

**Provisional accreditation** is granted for AEIs with new qualifications that have made substantial progress towards meeting the accreditation standards. Once the first cohort of students completes the qualification, a provisionally accredited AEI may apply to the RCVS for full accreditation. Students undertaking provisionally accredited qualifications will be required to pass the RCVS pre-registration examination. Provisional accreditation will not normally exceed five years.

**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 will be required to pass the RCVS pre-

registration examination, 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.

## **Considerations of accreditation status**

Students registered for a qualification with provisional or terminal accreditation must be informed of the accreditation status. A letter must be sent to students detailing the situation and warning them that additional assessment in the form of the RCVS pre-registration examination may be required prior to them applying to enter the register. The contents of the letter must be approved by the RCVS. For provisional accreditation, the AEI must also clarify that the programme is subject to accreditation by the RCVS on all marketing materials.

RCVS will undertake regular quality monitoring activities. Initial accreditation reports are published on the RCVS website and copies provided to QAA or Ofqual. Where required, delivery sites will be given a copy of the site and/or TP/aTP reports to comment on the factual accuracy of the content.

Once the first cohort of students has completed the final summative practical assessment, the RCVS will consider an application for full accreditation. This will usually occur after all RCVS standards have been met, and final assessments and procedures have been audited and deemed satisfactory. The AEI must provide the RCVS with the schedule of assessment at the earliest possible time, as indicated within the Standards.

Where full accreditation is granted, holders of the qualification will be able to apply to enter the RCVS register of veterinary nurses without further assessment. If the programme is deficient and continues to be provisionally approved, or, in serious cases of non-compliance, terminally accredited, holders of the qualification must pass the RCVS pre-registration examination before applying to enter the RCVS register of veterinary nurses.

## RCVS Pre-registration examination

The RCVS Pre-registration examination has been designed to sample the RCVS Day One Skills and Competences. It has therefore been approved to use for all nurses wishing to enter the register who hold a qualification which does not hold Full Accreditation status. This includes graduates who have completed programmes which are provisionally or terminally accredited, and holders of qualifications achieved outside the UK. The examination consists of a practical and theory component. The practical component is in the form of an Objective Structured Clinical Examination (OSCE) and the theory component is in a Multiple-Choice Question (MCQ) format.

Graduands completing a provisionally accredited qualification will not be invited to apply to enter the register of veterinary nurses until they have passed the RCVS Pre-registration examination.

Students may enter the examination prior to completion of their qualification if they wish, but only once they have passed all modules referenced to the RCVS Day One Competences and RCVS Day One Skills, including the completion of 1,800 hours of clinical experience.

The RCVS will enter into early conversations with the AEI about the examination and will also contact students periodically to provide examination guidance. Examination entry forms are available from the RCVS.

AEIs applying for full accreditation will be expected to assist their students to decide the most appropriate point to sit the examination. This could include waiting until the outcome of the VNEC decision is known.

It should be noted that once the student achieves their qualification their student status will end. Graduands who have completed an RCVS provisionally accredited qualification will not be permitted to apply for temporary registration. However, they may continue to work in veterinary practice for the purposes of preparing for the examination but must apply to complete a Period of Supervised Adaptation (PSA) if they are required to deliver nursing care or undertake surgical procedures. Individuals registered for the PSA must be

supervised in the same way that they would have been when they were enrolled as student veterinary nurses.

For further information email [preregvn@rcvs.org.uk](mailto:preregvn@rcvs.org.uk)

## Recruitment of Accreditation Panel Members

For accreditation of both licence to practise programmes and post-registration programmes a panel of experts review the application, attend the event and contribute to the report. The visiting panel will consist of representation from the three areas of the industry specified below, as well as RCVS representatives, as required. Collectively, all representatives will offer a unique viewpoint in order to thoroughly review all aspects of the proposed programme against the RCVS Standards Framework for Veterinary Nurse Education and Training. The Chair of the RCVS accreditation panel is likely to be an experienced panel member, but occasionally it is necessary for an RCVS representative to act as Chair.

The external experts are sourced from three main categories:

- An education representative who is either currently involved in the development and delivery of the relevant programme type or has been involved within the last five years. The type of programme may be further education or higher education for licence to practise, or post-registration. They will need to have a qualification level equal to, or higher than, the proposed programme which they are reviewing.
- An employer representative who has relevant experience with veterinary nurse training or recruitment of registered veterinary nurses. They may work for a large employer group and oversee these activities across a large geographical area, or they may work in a training practice and support student veterinary nurses as part of their role. There is no requirement to ensure they have specific experience of the type of the programme as the recruitment of registered veterinary nurses or training of student veterinary nurses is similar across all programme types.
- A student representative who is within the period of the final year of their qualification and up to two years post-qualification. Where possible, the

student representative will be included with programme accreditations that will be delivered at the same academic level as the qualification they are currently completing or have completed.

Once an expert has expressed an interest in becoming a representative at accreditations, they are provided with the role description and the person specification. They are also provided with an evidence sheet matching the person specification which they are required to complete and return to the RCVS Qualifications Manager along with their CV and CPD record. The RCVS Qualifications Manager will then review the submission and determine whether they have the relevant experience and expertise to assist with accreditations. In the event of an industry representative submitting an application, this is provided to VN Education Committee for review in order for them to determine which types of programmes the expert may best be suited to.

## Training of Accreditation Panel Members

Upon acceptance as an expert, the individual is invited to attend a full day online training session. The morning session includes a background to accreditations and why they are required, how a typical accreditation is run and what the application process involves with a thorough review of the **Standards**. The afternoon session includes communication advice and guidance and the expectations of the panel members, including clarification and guidance on the conflict of interest and confidentiality policies which all panel members must sign for every event.

Following the training session, attendees are provided with independent learning. Having successfully completed the training, the attendees are then added to the list of panel members and will be contacted directly for their availability once accreditations are being planned.

Where an external expert expresses an interest in Chairing the accreditation panel, their suitability and experience will be reviewed and considered and they will be provided with further training and support as required. The RCVS will also encourage individuals who have excelled during previous accreditation panel reviews to put themselves forward for Chair positions.

# Quality Monitoring

Once the accreditation process has been completed, the AEI will move into the period of routine quality monitoring (QM). In order to determine the schedule of activity for each AEI, the risk matrix is completed, and a risk rating identified.

## Risk rating

Each AEI has a risk rating associated with it, generated by completion of the risk matrix. Each risk indicator is associated with a number of points, 1 for low risk, 3 for medium risk and 6 for high risk. Once each indicator has been given a score, the resulting number indicates the overall risk rating for the provider:

Low = 1-15 points

Medium = 16-35 points

High = 36-66 points

This risk rating will then identify the type and quantity of QM that each provider will be subject to from the RCVS VN team.

All new programmes, for both Awarding Organisations (AOs) and Higher Education Institutions (HEIs), are automatically deemed high risk until the first cohort has graduated. As well as generating a score, the provider will be identified with **NEW** next to its name. This will help to identify any ongoing concerns whilst the programme is newly accredited, as well as helping to form a picture of where the risks may lie once the first cohort has completed. AOs are attributed points in the same way as HEIs, which in turn feeds into the visit strategy for the delivery sites.

**Below are the risk indicators for AEl:**

High risk indicators	Medium risk indicators	Low risk indicators
External Examiner (EE) is inexperienced, limited feedback provided within reports	EE inexperienced but good feedback provided within reports, or experienced with poor feedback	EE experienced and good feedback provided within reports
Concerns raised by staff/ students – provider investigation completed and not resolved	Concerns raised by staff/ students – provider investigation completed and resolved	No concerns raised by staff or students
Major actions identified	Moderate actions identified and/or significant amount of minor actions	Minor actions identified
Cohort size of less than 8	Cohort size of 9–15	Cohort size of 16+
Poor compliance with RCVS Standards (identified at accreditation and/or during auditing)	Mostly compliant with RCVS Standards (identified at accreditation and/or during auditing)	Good compliance with RCVS Standards (identified at accreditation and/or during auditing)
Insufficient TPs to support student numbers and/or TPs not compliant with RCVS standards	Minimally sufficient TPs to support student numbers OR TPs not compliant with RCVS standards	Sufficient TPs to support student numbers and TPs fully compliant with RCVS standards
Insufficient staffing levels and/or inexperienced/poor quality staffing	Minimally sufficient staffing levels OR inexperienced/poor quality staffing	Sufficient staffing levels and experienced/good quality staffing
Major concerns over IQA of DOC/DOS	Minor concerns over IQA of DOC/DOS	No concerns over IQA of DOC/DOS
Insufficient review and support for development of the PBs	Limited review and/or support for development of the PBs	Thorough review and support for development of the PBs
Major concerns over assessment content AND moderation	Minor concerns over assessment content and/or moderation	No concerns over assessment content or moderation
Major concerns identified within SAR and/or SAR not submitted	Minor concerns identified within SAR	No concerns identified within SAR
Poor compliance with action plan and timescales	Good compliance with action plan and timescales but requiring intensive support and guidance	Good compliance with action plan and timescales
<b>6 points per item</b>	<b>3 points per item</b>	<b>1 point per item</b>
<b>40–72 points = high risk</b>	<b>16–39 points = medium risk</b>	<b>1–15 points = low risk</b>



Each AEI has a score for each indicator, which is reviewed after QM activities. For example, if the DOC/DOS has been reviewed, that one risk indicator may receive a different score, but all others may remain the same. This means that it is the reviewer’s responsibility to update the risk rating after every QM activity, in order to ensure it is current and up to date.

Once a level of risk has been identified, a QM plan can be put in place, using the following schedules.

Year One indicates the end of the first academic year, not one year since the accreditation event.

Year zero	Year one	Year two	Year three	Year four	Year five
<b>HE 3 year programme</b>					
Accreditation	Progress Review & Assessment audit	Mock OSCE & DOS audit	Final OSCE & Assessment audit	Stakeholder feedback	Accreditation
<b>HE 4 year programme</b>					
Accreditation	Progress Review & Assessment audit	DOS audit	Mock OSCE & Stakeholder feedback	Final OSCE & Assessment audit	Accreditation
<b>Awarding Organisation</b>					
Accreditation	Delivery site audits	Mock OSCE & Delivery site audits	Final OSCE & Delivery site audits	Delivery site audits	Accreditation

This schedule is utilised for high-risk providers. All new providers are deemed high risk until the first cohort has graduated/completed. However, there is also an additional requirement to visit TPs, as these would not have been visited during the accreditation for a new programme. For new or high-risk AEIs, all approved delivery sites will be subject to auditing across the five-year accreditation cycle.

AEIs identified as medium or low risk can expect reduced auditing. However, it is important to note that the schedule is a plan for the activities to be conducted and can be reduced, increased, or amended as directed

by VNEC. Additionally, planned activities may be moved to later in the schedule if there is a specific area of delivery that needs to be reviewed as a higher priority.

Further detail regarding the auditing activities can be found below.

## **Auditing for HE programmes:**

- Progress review visit – carried out by the Qualifications Assessor towards the end of the first year of delivery following accreditation. The purpose of this visit is to ensure that providers are remaining compliant with the standards and are implementing the actions identified during the accreditation process. Additionally, the annual self-assessment form will be discussed to help the provider to consider any issues that may arise. This is not a formal audit but will allow the provider an opportunity to discuss any concerns and areas for improvement. The provider will be invited to generate an action plan following this visit to implement suggestions made by the Qualifications Assessor.
- Delivery site visit – carried out by the Qualifications Assessors. These visits are required to ensure the delivery site is following AEI and regulatory requirements in the delivery of its programme. This may include review of conduct of assessments.
- Assessment audit – carried out by the Qualifications Assessor. These remote audits will cover various assessments, to include both assignments and examinations. The Examinations Coordinator may also complete invigilation audits if required or if the remote audit identifies concern.
- DOS audit – carried out by the Qualifications Assessor. These remote audits will cover student completion of the Day One Skills recording tool, in whatever format is utilised, ensuring the relevant policies are being followed and quality assurance personnel are following best practice.
- Stakeholder feedback – carried out by the Qualifications Assessor. These remote audits will focus on the student experience, ensuring provider policies and procedures are being followed and students are empowered to achieve competency in the DOC/DOS.

- Mock OSCE – carried out by the Qualifications Assessor. The purpose of this audit is to ensure the planned approach to the OSCE is fit-for-purpose and any necessary amendments can be made before students complete the summative practical assessments.
- Final OSCE – carried out by the Examinations Manager. The purpose of this audit is to ensure the OSCE is fit-for-purpose and students are being adequately assessed. Upon completion of this audit, the EM must be satisfied that students are eligible to join the Register.

With the exception of the support visit, all of the identified audits will be subject to the normal reporting and action plan process, as detailed below.

## **Auditing for Awarding Organisations:**

- Mock OSCE – carried out by the Qualifications Assessor. The purpose of this audit is to ensure the planned approach to the OSCE is fit-for-purpose and any necessary amendments can be made before students complete the summative practical assessments.
- Final OSCE – carried out by the Examinations Manager. The purpose of this audit is to ensure the OSCE is fit-for-purpose and students are being adequately assessed. Upon completion of this audit, the EM must be satisfied that students are eligible to join the Register.
- Delivery site audits – carried out by the Qualifications Assessors and include:
  - o Progress Review – carried out towards the end of the first year of delivery for sites new to delivery or having recently moved AO. The purpose of this visit is to ensure that providers are compliant with the standards and are implementing the actions identified during the delivery site approval process. Additionally, the annual self-assessment form will be discussed to help the provider to consider any issues that may arise. This is not a formal audit but will allow the provider an opportunity to discuss any concerns and areas for improvement. The key discussion points of the visit will be included in a feedback letter provided to the AO who will then be invited to generate an action plan following this visit to implement suggestions made by the Qualifications Assessor.

- o Delivery site visit – these visits are required to ensure the delivery site is following AO and regulatory requirements in the delivery of its programme. This may include review of conduct of assessments.
- o Assessment audit – these remote audits will cover various assessments, to include both assignments and examinations. The EO may also complete invigilation audits if required or if the remote audit identifies concern.
- o DOS audit – these remote audits will cover student completion of the Day One Skills recording tool, in whatever format is utilised, ensuring the relevant policies are being followed and quality assurance personnel are following best practice.
- o Stakeholder feedback – these remote audits will focus on the student experience, ensuring provider policies and procedures are being followed and students are empowered to achieve competency in the DOC/DOS. This type of audit primarily includes conversations with students and, where possible, their Clinical Supervisors.

All of the identified audits will be subject to the normal reporting and action plan process, as detailed below.

## Quality Monitoring Reports

Informal verbal feedback on the reviewer's key findings is given at the end of a delivery site audit, although all findings and actions will be provided in the formal report which will be sent to the AEI for follow up of the actions. For desk-based audits, the feedback is included within the report and is not provided prior to submission of the report.

The procedure for generating reports following a delivery site audit is as follows:

- The report is written by the relevant member of the VN Department within one week of the site visit being completed and is then proofread and quality assured within the following week.
- The report is provided, without actions, to the delivery site within two weeks of the visit taking place. This first review is the programme team's opportunity to confirm the factual accuracy of the contents. The factual accuracy comments must be returned by the provider within two weeks.

- Any amendments required by the provider are evaluated by the reviewer and the report amended as appropriate.
- The final report is then sent to the AEI, including the actions, for the action plan response to be generated. The final version will be provided to the AEI within two weeks.
- The completed action plan is submitted to the RCVS, detailing how the AEI and delivery site propose addressing the actions, by when, and who is responsible. The action plan must be returned to RCVS within four weeks.
- The action plan is evaluated by the reviewer to ensure all actions will be met by the AEI according to their proposal. Should there be queries regarding the planned approach for actions completion, RCVS will arrange a meeting with the AEI at its earliest convenience to agree a planned actions response.
- Following the agreement of the action plan, RCVS will review and respond to evidence submissions within four weeks. This time allowance is also afforded to the AEI, ensuring it has sufficient time to address any feedback provided.
- Upon agreement of the action plan, the final report and action response is presented to VN Education Committee for their information.

The procedure for generating reports following an OSCE audit is as follows:

- For OSCE audits specifically, post-assessment meeting(s) are essential to the audit process and are, therefore, also attended by the RCVS reviewer. The report is generated within one week following this meeting, ensuring all elements of the OCSE assessment are quality assured against the Standards. The report is then proof-read within the following week.
- The report is provided, without actions, to the delivery site within two weeks of the completed audit, including post-assessment meetings, taking place. This first review is the programme team's opportunity to confirm the factual accuracy of the contents. The factual accuracy comments must be returned by the provider within two weeks.
- Any amendments required by the AEI are evaluated by the reviewer and the report amended as appropriate.
- The final report is then sent to the AEI, including the actions, for the action plan response to be generated.

- The completed action plan is submitted to the RCVS, detailing how the AEI and delivery site propose addressing the actions, by when, and who is responsible. The action plan must be returned to RCVS within four weeks. Should there be queries regarding the planned approach for actions completion, RCVS will arrange a meeting with the AEI at its earliest convenience to agree a planned actions response.
- Following the agreement of the action plan, RCVS will review and respond to evidence submissions within four weeks. This time allowance is also afforded to the AEI, ensuring it has sufficient time to address any feedback provided.
- Upon agreement of the action plan, the final report and action response is presented to VN Education Committee for their information.

The procedure for generating reports following a desk-based audit is as follows:

- The report is written by the relevant member of the VN Department within one week of the audit being completed and is then proofread and quality assured within the following week.
- For desk-based audits, a meeting will be arranged between the RCVS and the AEI, allowing an opportunity to discuss the contents of the report prior to it being received by the AEI. This will be at the discretion of the relevant member of the VN Department and will delay the provision of the report.
- The final report, including actions, is then sent to the AEI for the action plan response to be generated.
- The completed action plan is submitted to the RCVS, detailing how the AEI and delivery site propose addressing the actions, by when, and who is responsible. The action plan must be returned to RCVS within four weeks. Should there be queries regarding the planned approach for actions completion, RCVS will arrange a meeting with the AEI at its earliest convenience to agree a planned actions response.
- Following the agreement of the action plan, RCVS will review and respond to evidence submissions within four weeks. This time allowance is also afforded to the AEI, ensuring it has sufficient time to address any feedback provided.
- Upon agreement of the action plan, the final report and action response is presented to VN Education Committee for their information.

Following receipt of the action plan, for any type of audit, it is the responsibility of the relevant member of the VN Department to monitor the completion of the actions, as follows:

- In the first instance, the AEI is required to demonstrate how the actions will be addressed, by when and who is the responsible person. The AEI is **not** required to demonstrate completion of actions at this initial stage – it is a plan for the completion of actions.
- The AEI is required to submit evidence in accordance with the timescales as indicated within the action plan. The AEI is not required to provide running commentary on the completion of actions, rather demonstrate within the documentation how the action has been addressed.
- The reviewer will then appraise the evidence and ensure it meets the criteria of the action. The reviewer will add the date, the status of the action and any relevant feedback into the action plan within the ‘RCVS Response’ section.
- Actions will be deemed ‘Status: Ongoing’ or ‘Status: Complete’ to clearly indicate if further amendments are required. Should further amendments be required in order to achieve compliance with the action, the Qualifications Assessors must make these requirements clear within the action plan response. Each action will also include the date reviewed by the RCVS and the member of the team responsible for reviewing it, e.g., EM for Examinations Manager or QA (FE) for Qualifications Assessor (FE).
- The action plan response is then returned to the AEI, within four weeks, with a new submission date for further evidence as necessary. It may be appropriate for the new submission date to be in line with the next date already identified by the AEI for the subsequent evidence submission, however, this will be at the discretion of the reviewer.

## Programme changes

As detailed within the Standards, AEIs are required to advise the RCVS of all programme changes prior to implementation. This covers changes within three categories:

1. Minor changes: this typically includes limited wording changes to module or unit names, or changes to the wording of learning outcomes that does

not change the implicit meaning. This level of programme change is verbally reported to VNEC.

2. Moderate changes: this typically includes changes to learning outcomes or whole modules or units which will change the overall outcome of the module or programme. This type of change generally includes assessment changes, due to the nature of the proposed amendments. This level of programme change requires a written report and a follow-up action plan generated as necessary. This, in turn, is formally reported to, and considered by, VNEC.
3. Significant changes: where the proposed programme changes are so significant it constitutes a requirement for re-accreditation of the provision, the AEI will be advised accordingly.

Appropriate and timely correspondence must be submitted to the RCVS in light of any proposed changes to programme delivery or assessment methods. AEIs are required to submit proposals for programme changes at least three months prior to the relevant Veterinary Nurse Education Committee meeting. The submission must include tracked changes versions of all documentation where the change would be referenced. Additionally, the rationale and any relevant supporting changes should also be evidenced. This is likely to include stakeholder feedback and comments from the External Examiner/Advisor for the programme(s).

Once the evidence submission has been reviewed by the Qualifications Manager the formal report is presented to the AEI, generally within one month of evidence submission, who is then required to consider the actions and submit an action plan response. The AEI is afforded one month to produce the resulting action plan and return to the RCVS. The AEI will be advised of the outcome following the relevant VNEC meeting.



## Self-assessment reports

Self-assessment reports (SARs) are sent to every AEI and delivery site in November, for completion and return by the end of January. The template provided must be completed by all veterinary nurse education providers, for all of the qualifications they deliver, in order to provide an overview of provision. The SAR is completed with respect to the previous academic year; this allows providers sufficient time to have collated and reviewed their data prior to submission.

The data submitted to the RCVS is analysed and incorporated into the risk matrix for each provider. This may impact the risk rating for the provider, which in turn may increase or reduce planned audits following consideration by VNEC.

Additionally, the data is used to identify trends, year-on-year, and helps to illustrate where individual programmes, geographical regions, or all providers may be struggling with an aspect of veterinary nurse education and training. This, in turn, may impact the audit strategy or provide an area of focus for the VN department for the coming year.

# Accreditation Committee of Veterinary Nurse Education (ACOVENE)

The Accreditation Committee for Veterinary Nurse Education (ACOVENE) is a voluntary organisation founded in 2007 to accredit veterinary nurse education programmes in the European Union. Veterinary nurses are significant members of the veterinary team in many European countries and whilst every country has its established systems for education and training, ACOVENE allows greater mobility of trained veterinary nurses within Europe.

In 2010, the RCVS formally affiliated with ACOVENE. Under the terms of the agreement, any establishment accredited by the RCVS to award veterinary nursing licence to practise qualifications and their delivery sites are considered an affiliate member of ACOVENE – which is a tribute to the high standards maintained by the RCVS and the AElS.

As part of the affiliation, ACOVENE will quality assure the RCVS in order to ensure that the RCVS Accreditation Standards Framework, RCVS Day One Skills for Veterinary Nurses, and RCVS Day One Competences for Veterinary Nurses continue to articulate with those of ACOVENE, and that RCVS quality assurance of licence to practise qualifications remains effective.

ACOVENE monitoring, in the main, will consist of a five yearly visit to the RCVS to review its quality assurance policies, procedures and activities. However, monitoring may also include quality assurance audits of accredited AElS their delivery sites and training practices. When auditing an AEl, delivery site or training practice, the ACOVENE visitor will normally accompany the RCVS Qualifications Manager and or Assessor to a routine audit visit and review the RCVS auditing process.

There will be no fee to the AEl, delivery site or Training Practice for these visits. The affiliation costs are met by the RCVS, however, as with RCVS visits, AElS or delivery sites that cancel at short notice will bear the cost of any re-visit.

ACOVENE will provide the RCVS with visit reports and will require us to address any arising quality issues with the AEl and delivery sites concerned.

# Enrolments

## Application for enrolment as a student veterinary nurse

Prospective students must enrol with the RCVS in order to be able to legally undertake certain veterinary nursing procedures (outlined in Schedule 3 of the Veterinary Surgeons Act 1966).

Once a cohort is ready to be enrolled the delivery site must ensure that the following documents have been completed:

- The RCVS Student Declaration form, signed by the Programme Lead stating it is a true likeness of the student.
- Training Practice Declaration form, signed by the Training Practice Principal (this form is only provided if the student is employed by the practice).

Please check the enrolment **fee** on the RCVS fees page to ascertain the correct amount to be paid. If an invoice is required, please fill in the Invoice Request form and send this to [vnenrol@rcvs.org.uk](mailto:vnenrol@rcvs.org.uk)

Student enrolment requests are submitted online by the Delivery Site. To enrol a student cohort, the delivery site must log in to their MyAccount page via <https://myaccount.rcvs.org.uk>. It is advisable that delivery site bookmark this page, as it will be needed whenever enrolments are submitted. Each delivery site must create a unique password when they first log in to their MyAccount page. Please ensure that one member of the team has access to these details.

Guidance and procedural information for the online process is available within the SVN Online Enrolments Handbook, available upon request from [vetnursing@rcvs.org.uk](mailto:vetnursing@rcvs.org.uk)

Enrolments will take 4-6 weeks to be processed. If the Nursing Progress Log is being utilised, log-ins will be provided to the Programme Lead via email.

**Please note that students must be enrolled with the RCVS, and in possession of an RCVS student enrolment number, in order that their training time may be counted towards their registration. Students who are not enrolled and in possession of a student enrolment number are not legally entitled to be delegated Schedule 3 activities within their clinical placement/employment.**

## **Temporary enrolment**

Student veterinary nurses who are on a programme of study outside the UK may apply for a short period of temporary enrolment in the UK to allow them to undertake a complementary period of work experience in a UK Training Practice. The student must be enrolled for a veterinary nursing qualification and have the full support of their training provider. It is not possible to undertake the whole of the clinical placement in the UK.

Where students are on an exchange visit as part of a trip organised between their training provider and a training provider in the UK, the UK training provider should contact the RCVS to discuss the enrolment process. This will include completing an application form with details of the student, training practice and support mechanisms. A fee will be levied depending on the length of placement.

Where a student veterinary nurse is travelling independently and will not be attending a delivery site in the UK the course tutor should contact the RCVS to make arrangements. RCVS will require information relating to the nature of the placement length and the support mechanisms in place both at the delivery site and the Training Practice. A fee will be levied in accordance with the RCVS fee structure.

The RCVS is unable to find Training Practices for student veterinary nurses. A list of training practices can be found online.

# Training Practices

## Approval of new Training Practices

The RCVS standards framework for Veterinary Nurse Education and Training sets out the requirements that training practices must meet and continue to meet throughout approval. This is regularly quality assured by the delivery site and the RCVS. The standards are relevant to all TPs, be they equine or small animal specific, or dual caseloads.

The veterinary practice which is looking to be approved as a TP must first contact the delivery site they wish to be affiliated to. An application form must then be completed, so that the delivery site can complete a visit to evaluate and discuss the resources available to support training.

When approving a Training Practice, delivery sites must assure themselves that the practice can provide:

- a suitable and safe clinical environment in which to provide training;
- sufficient and varied patient case load in order that students may achieve the RCVS Day One Competences for veterinary nurses and RCVS Day One Skills for veterinary nurses;
- suitable training, support and assessment;
- an allocated Training Practice Principal (MRCVS UK Practising or RVN) who can oversee student veterinary nurse training and sign relevant documentation.
- confirmation that the practice is not affiliated to another delivery site, or a transfer notification has been sent to the delivery site they are currently affiliated to;

Once the approval visit has taken place, the delivery site is required to notify the RCVS, using the Training Practice Approval Form, of all new TPs approved and when they are re-approved. The delivery site will then receive a confirmation letter from the RCVS which includes the Training Practice Number that has been allocated.

## Maintenance of Training Practice Status

TPs must be re-approved every five years by the delivery site to ensure they are continuing to meet the standards and provision of safe and effective training. Delivery sites must notify the RCVS of TPs when they are re-approved using the Training Practice Approval Form; the RCVS does not require notification of annual audits, however, it is important that delivery sites maintain this oversight of delivery and training for their own records.

If the TP no longer wants to train students or the delivery site wants to end their affiliation, the RCVS must be informed in writing.

**The list of approved TPs is published online.** The RCVS will forward a list of notified TP changes to all delivery sites weekly. A delivery site with students on placement or employed in a TP which has had approval status removed must make alternative arrangements for their students.

Where there is a change of Training Practice Principal (TPP) the RCVS and affiliated delivery site must receive confirmation of this in writing. This must:

- be on letter headed paper and include the full address/TP number (if the headed paper does not include this or it applies to more than one branch, please include this within the body of the letter)
- confirm the new Training Practice Principal's name and RCVS registration number
- confirm the date of employment as Practice Principal
- be signed by the new Practice Principal

## Dual approval

Practices wishing to train students on both the equine and small animal pathway must have the requisite facilities and must be approved as a dual TP by a provider which delivers both equine and small animal qualifications. If the practice is approved only for small animal, and they have equine facilities on site, they must not be used for equine training purposes and only the small animal facilities can be used, or vice versa.

## Approval of delivery sites

AEIs are responsible for the approval and quality monitoring of delivery sites offering their qualifications.

In order to deliver a RCVS Licence to Practise Veterinary Nursing Qualification, delivery sites must first obtain approval from an AEI. They will provide details of the delivery site approval process and the documentation required.

Delivery sites must be compliant with both the AEI and the RCVS Standards Framework for Veterinary Nursing Education and Training.

Once an approval visit from the AEI has taken place, the AEI must provide the RCVS with the following information:

- name of delivery site and/or satellite delivery site
- name of nominated Head of Centre – this is the person, at the delivery site, that the RCVS will correspond with
- name of Programme Lead – which must be an RVN and may be the same as the HoC
- email address and telephone number
- address of qualification delivery sites
- date of approval

The RCVS will contact the delivery site and provide them with their own unique number. The RCVS will also provide a copy of the RCVS Standards Framework for Veterinary Nursing Education and Training Handbook, information on how to enrol students (including details regarding the Nursing Progress Log, if applicable), how to notify us of training practice approvals and the registration of newly qualified nurses. For quality monitoring purposes, the RCVS may ask for the current/projected number of training practices affiliated to the delivery site.

Please note that until the RCVS has been informed about a new delivery site by an AEI, no students will be permitted to enrol with the RCVS.

# Registration

At the beginning of each year the RCVS will provide AEIs with guidance on the registration process for the coming year; relevant templates will also be provided as required. Arrangements will differ for AOs and HEIs.

AOs are required to provide a list of certificated candidates by email, at a frequency agreed by the RCVS. This is normally weekly or fortnightly but no longer, unless there are no new students certificated.

HEIs are required to provide, via email, the following:

- a list of students expecting to graduate that year (provided at the beginning of the year)
- details of graduation ceremonies (see 'Graduation and admission ceremonies')
- a pass list signed by a senior representative of the university, emailed from a secure email address, and including confirmation that there has been no compensation within or between modules
- individual summaries of hours spent in practice for each student
- registration fees (if agreed in advance with students). Upon receipt of the list of certificated students, or graduates, the RCVS Registration Department will contact students directly to invite them to Register.

## Graduations and ceremonies

All degree providers will host their own graduation. The RCVS must be informed of the dates of university graduation ceremonies well in advance, to allow registration applications to be checked and processed, and for the certificates and badges to be prepared in good time. The RCVS will endeavour to ensure a representative of the College, usually a member of the Veterinary Nurses Council, attends the graduation ceremony and leads the professional declaration. Where only a small number of graduands are due to attend or an RCVS representative is unable to attend, the AEI is encouraged to discuss this with the RCVS at the earliest opportunity in order to ensure a suitable representative can attend.



For those nurses who studied for a Diploma, the RCVS holds regular veterinary nurse ceremonies, to welcome newly qualified nurses to the profession. Details of dates are published periodically; should there be any queries regarding these ceremonial events, please contact the Veterinary Nursing Department via [vetnursing@rcvs.org.uk](mailto:vetnursing@rcvs.org.uk). We will also consider attending ceremonies run by AOs or its delivery sites. Please contact the RCVS VN Department at least six months prior to the planned event in order to ensure availability of the required personnel.

# Glossary

AEI – Accredited Education Institution

AO – Awarding Organisation

Centre – delivery site of the programme

Clinical Supervisor – The RVN or MRCVS designated as the person in the training practice responsible for determining the student's competency in the performance of Day One Skills. May also be known as the Clinical Coach or Clinical Assessor.

Delivery site – the location for the delivery of the programme, otherwise known as Centre.

EE – External Examiner

HEI – Higher Education Institution

IQA – Internal Quality Assurer

Stakeholders – should include students, educators and assessors and training practices.

# RCVS Personnel

The quality monitoring (QM) of all programmes accredited to deliver veterinary nurse training is a shared responsibility across various members of the Veterinary Nursing Department:

**Director of Veterinary Nursing** – manages the Veterinary Nursing Department and has ultimate responsibility for all veterinary nursing related matters. Also manages and co-ordinates all regulatory functions relating to the Register of Veterinary Nurses and post-qualification veterinary nursing awards, as well contributing to the day-to-day running of the RCVS as a member of the Senior Team.

**Examinations Manager** – oversees all of the examination and assessment-based QM within licence to practise programmes, as well as delivering the pre-registration examination. Attends accreditations and reaccreditations for licence to practise programmes in order to review examination related standards and completes QM of the examinations and assessments within those programmes.

**Qualifications Manager** – oversees all of the licence to practise and post-registration programmes within the UK. Primarily responsible for undertaking accreditations and reaccreditations of programmes and completing QM for post-registration programmes.

**Qualifications Assessors (HE & FE)** – complete QM for higher and further education programmes respectively and assist with accreditations and reaccreditations as necessary, across both licence to practise and post-registration programmes.

**Qualifications Co-ordinator** – facilitates accreditations and QM through liaison with all relevant personnel, providing and receiving the required documentation and arranging all meetings.

**Examinations Co-ordinator** – facilitates and manages the pre-registration examination and provides the secretariat for ACOVENE.

**Enrolment Officer** – enrolls all student veterinary nurses, liaising with AElS to ensure the correct details are held and updated as necessary.

**Administration Manager** – secretariat to VNEC and VNC and responsible for maintaining the veterinary nursing sections of the RCVS website.

