



New RVN declaration



**First ever RVNs make
declaration at
Belgravia House**

In this issue: New Code and declaration, exam results, Trust grant, locum warning, online CPD record, Vice-President elected, enrolments up, new centres, apprenticeship news, Awarding Body update, uniform advice, Trustee sought, VECTAR progress, NPL clarification, voting time, exam dates.

Anything to declare?

New declaration for RVNs

The 21 newly-registered VNs who attended a ceremony at Belgravia House on 27 March made history, as they were the first to make a declaration on joining the Register.

The declaration (see cover) was introduced as part of the Code of Professional Conduct for Veterinary Nurses, which was approved at the 1 March RCVS Council meeting. The same declaration also appears in the new Code for vets.

The new Codes are principles-based, easily accessible and much more concise than the old *Guide*, bringing them into line with the codes of conduct of other regulatory bodies and helping to describe those professional responsibilities that are fundamental to veterinary nurses' and veterinary surgeons' practice. They will be supported by comprehensive guidance, which expands and clarifies these professional responsibilities, and is a consolidation and update of all existing RCVS guidance for vets and RVNs.

Both Codes include five principles of practice: professional competence; honest and integrity; independence and impartiality; client confidentiality and trust; and, professional accountability. Amongst the professional responsibilities introduced in the Codes are mandatory reporting of continuing professional

development (CPD), a Performance Protocol and notification to the RCVS of any matter that may affect fitness to practise, including convictions (although this will require further consideration by the College).

A hard copy of the new Code will be posted to RVNs and vets shortly. It will also be available on the RCVS website.

Although only RVNs have agreed to abide by the VN Code of Professional Conduct, we hope that all veterinary nurses will consider it a useful benchmark of professional standards.

More detail about the new Codes will be published in a special edition of *RCVS News Extra* soon.



Top of the class

Credit where it's due...

Congratulations to the staff and students at Bottle Green Training (BGT), for consistent outstanding results in the RCVS Level 3 Diploma examinations held in 2011. A total of 116 theory (MCQ) examinations were entered with an overall pass-rate of 95% in paper 1, 70% in paper 2 and 81% in paper 3. This is an excellent achievement, especially when, nationally, large numbers of students have struggled with paper 2. In the practical assessment (OSCE), a total of 83% of students passed the examination, compared to the national average of 66%.

The directors of BGT attribute their success to having a close relationship with their students and associated training practices. They found the transition from NVQ to Level 3 Diploma relatively painless. The students are assigned to keen and motivated clinical coaches, who



actively support their students' clinical skills training. Class sizes are manageable, enabling tutors to notice students' weaker areas and provide additional support.

Excellent results were also achieved by Duchy College, Plumpton College and Myerscough College, with a very high proportion of their students passing, including several sittings with 100% passes. A special mention also goes to Myerscough College, in relation to their equine pathway students. Thirteen of them travelled to the equine exam centre at Hartpury College in Gloucester to take their OSCE, and 93% passed.

The secret of success for all these colleges is the close relationship and teamwork that exists between them and their training practices, so that students really do receive a 'joined up' education and practical training.

Trusty dog purchased

We hear from a Spencer Hill Equipment Grant holder

The RCVS Charitable Trust is currently reviewing applications received during the 2012 round for the Spencer Hill Equipment Grant, which offers five grants of up to £5,000 to veterinary nurse training establishments for important kit.

Meanwhile, we have had some positive feedback from Christine Fish, Senior Lecturer at Harper Adams University College, who received £2,350 to buy an 'Emily' canine positioning mannequin under the 2010 grant.

"Our aim is to train veterinary nurses who will be able to accurately position patients for radiology, reducing the training time with clinical cases."

"Resources for the clinical training elements of our courses are not included in the statutory funding we receive, and so funds for the animal models we use for radiotherapy training have to be found elsewhere," says Christine. "We were delighted to get support from the RCVS Charitable Trust to allow us to buy a canine mannequin that replicates the real movements of a live animal – ours is a radiography model.

"The mannequin has fully-functional joints with a realistic range of movement. This allows the student nurses to gain greater confidence and skill in positioning animals before they are working with live patients. Our aim is to train veterinary nurses who will be able to accurately position patients for radiology, reducing the training time with clinical cases and, ultimately, increasing the accuracy of the exposures taken. With care, we hope that 'Emily' will last for up to ten years – so she will be well used!" she adds.



Lucy Booth (left) and Shelley Ottewill, final year FdSc VN students at Harper Adams, with Emily

Student VN locum warning

Advise students of boundaries when acting as locums

We have recently heard worrying reports of student veterinary nurses acting as locums and expecting, or being expected, to carry out Schedule 3 activities.

Legally speaking, student veterinary nurses can only carry out Schedule 3 tasks, even under close personal supervision, when working in their own training practice, or in a placement under the supervision of their centre (college or university), in the course of their veterinary nursing qualification. This is because the dispensation under Schedule 3 of the Veterinary Surgeons Act 1966 is meant to assist students in the course of their structured studies.

So, if a student acts as a locum, even if they are properly enrolled with the RCVS as a student veterinary

nurse, they can only carry out the same tasks as a lay member of staff, no matter how experienced they are. This is true even if the practice in which they are acting as a locum is a training practice in its own right, training other veterinary nurse students.

A veterinary surgeon or veterinary nurse who delegates medical treatment or minor surgery to student or lapsed student veterinary nurses acting as locums would be committing an offence.

We recognise that some locum agencies do not seem to understand this point and may therefore be sending student VNs to practices as qualified nurses, or as 'experienced students', which can be misleading in terms of the work they are entitled to carry out. We plan to remind them of this.

VN Council Vice-Chairman elected VP

Neil Smith to take seat in July

Colonel Neil Smith, current Vice-Chairman of VN Council and Chairman of RCVS Awards, was elected Vice-President of the RCVS at the March meeting of RCVS Council. He was uncontested and is due to take up office at RCVS Day on 6 July 2012.

Neil Smith graduated from the Royal Veterinary College (RVC) in 1989, and was commissioned into the Royal Army Veterinary Corps with the intention of staying for four years. Twenty-two years later, he is now the Director Army Veterinary and Remount Services, effectively the CVO for the Army and head of the RAVC, which currently has over 35 Veterinary Officers.

He has held a mixture of clinical, staff and command positions, and has worked in the UK, US and Germany. He has Masters'

Degrees in Food Science, Defence Administration and Defence Studies. He has also worked part-time in small animal practice (including the Blue Cross, of which he is now a Trustee), and was heavily involved in the Foot and Mouth Disease outbreak in 2001.

First elected to Council in 2004, Neil was re-elected in 2010 after a short break. In addition to VN Council, he has served on Education, Advisory, Preliminary Investigation and Planning and Resources Committees.

Also at the meeting, Jacqui Molyneux was confirmed as President, and Jerry Davies as Vice-President, effective July 2012, and Bradley Viner will continue as Treasurer.



Third more student VNs

Enrolments up

Last year saw the highest ever number of VN students to enrol, with a total of 1,439, compared with 1,083 in 2010, an increase of a third.

Of these, 1,041 registered on vocational VN qualifications, and the remainder on degree courses.

"The overall increase could partially be explained by degree students seeking to avoid increased university tuition fees," says Libby Earle, Head of the VN Department. "However, although there is a noticeable increase in enrolments linked to higher educational courses, this does not explain the increase in further education students.

"A more significant factor is likely to be the inception of the Level 3 Diploma, as this can be undertaken as a full-time programme," Libby continued. "As Colleges running such programmes arrange the practical training placements for their students, this opens up opportunities for the considerable number of people who want to become VNs but who are not employed by a training practice. When we introduced the qualification in 2010, we hoped that this would help to increase the number of VN students – so it's great to see this is happening already and with such a marked increase."

All aboard!

New centre approvals in the pipeline

We are very pleased to see the amount of new interest in delivering veterinary nurse training this year. We have, to date, received two 'applications in principle,' from Reaseheath College, Cheshire, and Dart Ltd, Derbyshire. Salford City College, Worsley, has also enquired, and intends to commence delivery in September 2013.

Two new colleges, Coleg Llandrillo Cymru, Gwynedd, and Northumberland College, Kirkley Hall Campus, Northumberland, will be undergoing centre and qualification approval visits this spring.

RCVS Awards has in place a requirement for any new centre seeking approval to demonstrate evidence of a clear market for their intended provision that will not compromise established colleges, ie a new centre should lead to an overall increase in the number of employers willing to support training, and not subdivide existing provision, especially where this might lead to the failure of one or more centres through low learner numbers.

Meanwhile, City & Islington College, London, was approved towards the end of last year. The College worked hard to address its conditions of approval and began enrolling learners in January 2012.

Good news for employers

Grants available for apprentices



If you have a veterinary practice and are considering whether to train a veterinary nurse, there has never been a better time. From April, employers of 16–24-year-olds will be able to apply for the Apprenticeship Grant, a national incentive designed to help business owners discover (or re-discover) the benefits of having a young apprentice in their workplace. Those employing their first ‘apprentice’ veterinary nurse will be able to apply for a £1,500 grant.

“This is a great opportunity to experience the benefits of investing in an apprentice.”

The incentive is run by the National Apprenticeship Service and will be available to 40,000 employers in England, until March 2013. This funding will be in addition to the usual funded training costs, which are fully met for 16–18-year-olds and half-funded for apprentices aged 19–24. Unlike normal funding, the apprenticeship grant is paid directly to employers.

Jo-Anne Bryan, Lantra’s Apprenticeship Manager, said: “This is a great opportunity to experience the benefits of investing in an apprentice.”

To be eligible, a practice must not have employed a student veterinary nurse in the last three years and must commit to supporting the apprentice for the duration of his or her training programme.

For more information on this incentive, visit the National Apprenticeship Service at www.apprenticeships.org.uk. Find out more about the many benefits for employers taking on apprentices by visiting www.lantra.co.uk/love-apprentices.

Record stuck? Go online!

New CPD Record available soon

CPD Record Cards for clinical staff are checked within training practices and also within colleges, as part of External Verifier visits. It’s also now a professional obligation not only to meet CPD targets (45 hours over three years for RVNs, 105 hours for vets) but also to record what has been done. Hard copy CPD Record Cards were sent to all RVNs and vets during March, but, to make life easier, a new online CPD record is also due to be launched shortly.

The main CPD screen of the new online Professional Development Record (PDR) – and the only part of your CPD record that the RCVS can see without asking you personally – is similar to the paper CPD Record Card, where you fill in individual entries for each CPD activity. At the top of this screen is a progress bar, showing how many hours of CPD you have completed across a rolling three-year period, turning from red to green once the RCVS quota has been met.

For each CPD entry you can add notes and upload other documents (which the RCVS or employer cannot access without your permission). There’s a section for users to plan future CPD, set objectives, define criteria for success and note actions for the future, as well as a diary feature.

The VN version of the online record will sit alongside the Nursing Progress Log.

Meanwhile, for veterinary surgeons, the PDR will also include an updated Professional Development Phase interface, plus a module to be used by veterinary undergraduates to record their clinical and practical experience on rotations and EMS placements.

Using the new online system is free, but not compulsory. If you are attending the British Small Animal Veterinary Association World Congress, visit our stand (F1 in the ICC) for a demo.



Dressed to kill?

Advice to students about wearing uniform

OK, so it's an extreme heading to grab your attention. But, quite seriously, some student VNs don't appear to appreciate the importance of dressing safely for work, if their appearance at practical examinations is anything to go by. Not only does this not bode well for what happens in practice, but in some cases, the way they dress can adversely affect examination performance, as the table below should illustrate.

Uniform is more than just clothing, it needs to be worn properly to ensure the individual's safety and that of animals, colleagues and clients. Properly-worn uniform also instils client confidence and presents a professional image for the practice, and of veterinary nurses in general.

Many uniforms have the practice logo embroidered on them. If they are ill-fitting, or torn and stained with hems trodden down, this doesn't provide a very good impression of the practice. The look is often completed by a pair of scruffy trainers or other inappropriate footwear.

Here are some things to remember:



Correct way to wear uniform

What?	Why?
Tie and/or pin long hair back securely.	Hair falling forward obscures clear vision and can get caught in equipment or contaminate clean materials.
Have clean, short, natural and unvarnished nails.	Long nails are difficult to keep clean. Varnish, false nails and nail art can flake off onto clean equipment or materials. Sharp nails can injure animals and puncture gloves.
Have arms uncovered below the elbow for clinical work.	It's difficult to wash hands effectively with wrist-length sleeves. Long sleeves readily become wet and contaminated and present a cross-infection risk.
Wear a fob watch, not a wrist watch.	See above regarding hand-washing and contamination.
Don't wear jewellery.	Earrings, studs and necklaces can fall off and either contaminate clean materials or get lost inside equipment or, worse, a surgical wound. Wristwatches and rings impede proper hand hygiene and can get caught in equipment, risking injury.
Wear only essential badges and ensure they are secure.	See above; sharp badges can also injure animals.
Wear clean uniform that's in good repair.	The reasons should be obvious – but some students attend examinations in dirty or torn clothes and/or shoes.

Going – but not yet...

An update on life after RCVS Awards

In November 2011, RCVS Council agreed to the closure of the RCVS awarding body (RCVS Awards). In making this decision, Council was mindful of the very important need to provide continued support for students registered for RCVS qualifications, and to assure a suitable, robust and sustainable provision of VN vocational qualifications in the future.

Council stipulated criteria for the selection of a suitable awarding organisation, which would be in a position (and with a desire) to develop a successor qualification to the RCVS Level 3 Diploma in Veterinary Nursing. During the autumn of 2011, discussions took place with City & Guilds. The organisation had long expressed an interest in veterinary nursing qualifications and was in a position to meet the criteria set by the Council.

An outline agreement, concerning the transfer of intellectual property associated with the Level 3 Diploma qualification, was established with City & Guilds in April 2012. Ofqual was informed that the RCVS intended to surrender its recognition as an awarding organisation, but not until arrangements were in place to protect the interests of students already in training.

Next steps

The plan is currently:

- That RCVS will support the development by City & Guilds of a successor diploma qualification in veterinary nursing at Level 3, which will articulate very closely with the current RCVS qualification and its assessment structures
- Once the College is satisfied that a suitable new qualification is available, the RCVS will make a formal application to Ofqual to surrender its recognition as an awarding organisation, and will enter a phase of managed withdrawal
- The RCVS will continue to award NVQs and VRQs (now in their run-out phase) until the final certification end-date in July 2013

City & Guilds plans to have its new qualification ready for delivery in the autumn term. In the meantime, they have been visiting many RCVS centres in order to discuss their proposed veterinary nursing provision, and implications for centres. City & Guilds is also working very closely with the RCVS to ensure that its assessment strategy and operation of assessments, especially the external MCQ papers and the OSCE, meet the VN regulatory Bye-law requirements.

As university-based readers will be aware, the RCVS approval process for a new veterinary or VN

qualification comprises two phases. Provisional approval permits a new awarding institution to register students and deliver their qualification. Full approval is not given until a complete delivery of the qualification, including suitable and robust assessments, has been demonstrated. Close liaison between the RCVS and City & Guilds at this early stage will avoid the potential need for any additional examination by the RCVS (in its professional regulatory capacity) to enable City & Guilds Diploma holders to enter the VN Register.

Surrender of Recognition

Once the RCVS is satisfied that there is adequate alternative provision of VN vocational qualifications, we will formally notify Ofqual that we intend to relinquish our status as a regulated awarding organisation (this is called Surrender of Recognition). This step is, to all intents and purposes, an irrevocable one, and we will not take it until we are certain that vocational veterinary nurse training can be sustained by other means. Once we reach this stage, we will work with centres and the two alternative awarding organisations (City & Guilds and Central Qualifications) to ensure that students already in training may complete without any disadvantage. We will be communicating regularly with centres to keep them abreast of progress and are happy, at any time, to address specific queries that may arise on a case-by-case basis with you.

Schedule 3

The RCVS will still maintain a 'roll' of student veterinary nurses entitled to Schedule 3 dispensations, and will continue to approve and monitor professional qualifications leading to the Register. Whilst the processes for enrolling students in the future are still under discussion, it is likely that this will be a more streamlined procedure, still conducted via centres. Enrolment with the RCVS will continue to provide access to the Nursing Progress Log, now funded independently of RCVS Awards, along with the forthcoming online VN CPD Record.

Lastly, we continue to reassure students that in the future, as now, regardless of how a veterinary nurse qualifies to enter the RCVS Register, they will still receive an RCVS Certificate in Veterinary Nursing and a badge. These are awarded under the RCVS Royal Charter to any person who has achieved a qualification that meets the conditions set out in the Veterinary Nursing Bye-laws. So, regardless of whether a nurse has a degree or a vocational qualification, they will still have these important symbols of their professional achievement and status.

Cheer them on!

DipAVNs to be awarded at RCVS Day

This publication is written for those involved with pre-registration VN training, but if your college or practice also supports qualified VNs through the Diploma in Advanced Veterinary Nursing (DipAVN), then put 6 July in your diary. That's the date of RCVS Day, the College's annual general meeting and awards ceremony, when those successfully completing their DipAVNs will be presented with their scrolls by the President.

Personal invitations will be sent to those due to receive awards, but all veterinary nurses and veterinary surgeons are welcome to join the celebrations. It's a free event, with presentations, an address from the President and a guest speaker – not forgetting a very tasty lunch. This year, the event will be held at the Royal College of Physicians, on Regent's Park, in London.

More information will be available on www.rcvs.org.uk in due course, or email Fiona Harcourt on f.harcourt@rcvs.org.uk: come and support your hard-working VNs!



Join us in Cookstown

Regional Question Time heads to NI



Those of you who are within travelling distance of Cookstown, County Tyrone, in Northern Ireland, will have received an invitation to our 17 May Regional Question Time meeting.

The meeting will take place at the Glenavon House Hotel, Cookstown, and all members of the practice team, together with VN college staff, are welcome. The format is an evening Question Time-style forum, giving guests the opportunity to pose their questions to members of the Officer team and Veterinary Nurses Council. A buffet supper will be served from 6.30pm, and the meeting proper starts at 7.15pm.

For more information, or to book a place, please contact Fiona Harcourt on f.harcourt@rcvs.org.uk or 020 7202 0773.

Also on 17 May, the College will also be holding Practice Standards Scheme Workshops from 1–5pm in the same venue, to answer questions about the Scheme. So, if your practice is thinking of joining the Scheme, or is facing a re-inspection, please contact Fiona to book your free 45-minute session with the Chairman of the Practice Standards Group, Peter Jinman.

Do you measure up?

Find us at BSAVA Congress

If you are heading to the BSAVA World Congress (12–15 April) in Birmingham, please do come and visit the RCVS team on our stand (F1 in the ICC).

We will be launching the new Code of Professional Conduct with a quiz to test your general knowledge of codes, giving you the chance to win a Kindle. Anyone who enters the competition will receive an RCVS-branded 'Do you measure up?' tape measure to remind people where to find the new Code online.

You can also play with a demo of our new online CPD recording system (see page 5).

The RCVS Awards team will be on hand (F1 in the ICC) to answer any questions you may have about VN training, and RCVS staff will be happy to help on other issues.



Italian job

Put the Vetnnet date in your diaries

Vetnnet is the European Network for everyone involved in veterinary nurse training, and each year it holds an excellent annual conference. This year's event will be held in Cremona, Italy, 20–21 September. More information will be available on www.vetnnet.com/conference, in due course.



Feeling charitable?

VN Trustee sought

The RCVS Charitable Trust is seeking a VN Trustee to replace Tracy Mayne, who has filled the role for seven years.

The position will take effect from the Trust AGM in June, and will be for three years in the first instance. Trustees attend a minimum of three meetings per year, and additional time would be needed to support VN projects and develop collaborations with relevant individuals and organisations.

"At a time when the Trust wishes to develop more active support for veterinary nurses, this is an important appointment," says Trust Director Cherry Bushell. "We hope to recruit someone who has a strong vision and new ideas about how this ambition can be realised."

The post is for a registered veterinary nurse. Past or current experience of being a Trustee is desirable but not necessary. Trustees are unpaid roles but the Trust will pay reasonable expenses, such as travel.

To find out more, please contact the Trust Director Cherry Bushell, on 0207 202 0714 or at c.bushell@rcvstrust.org.uk.

To apply, please send a CV and covering letter, by email, to Cherry Bushell at c.bushell@rcvstrust.org.uk, by Friday 27 April.

Meet the team

Gabriel Diaz



What's your role?

Examinations Officer

What's your background?

I'm Australian and I have been in the UK for the past 12 months. Thanks to my Spanish parents, I have an EU passport, therefore I'm happy that I am able to keep my place in British society for the next few years. Prior to making my way to London, I was part of a start-up brand in Australia and I had a taste of the corporate world in the USA. I also attended university in America on a football scholarship – though my knees aren't what they used to be.

What do you do?

As my job title would suggest, I focus on the whole examinations process for veterinary nursing within the RCVS. That's from enrolling candidates for their examinations to notifying them of their results, and everything in between.

What's been your biggest challenge?

It's always quite nerve-racking starting a new job, mix that in with having the pressure of enrolling over 400 candidates for their examinations in the first weeks of being in the role. Luckily, I came through unscathed.

Surprise us...

I'm an identical twin!

Sunshine and snow

VECTAR goes abroad

Last autumn, we made a successful bid for EU funding to develop our Nursing Progress Log into Europe. Julie Dugmore, VN Quality Assurance Manager, offers an update on project VECTAR's progress.

Following the successful opening conference of the VECTAR project in London last November, intrepid VN Department staff spent January and February visiting Holland, Belgium, Portugal, Finland and Norway, to provide clinical coach training to our European partners. They are currently piloting the Clinical Training and Assessment Record (CTAR) – known to us native folk as the Nursing Progress Log (NPL).

Temperatures varied from 11 degrees, with palm trees, to -17 degrees, with snow, woolly hats and gloves. However, the warmth of our reception, and the participation and interaction of delegates in all the countries involved, was very encouraging and much appreciated.



reinvigorated them after lunch! All delegates worked extremely hard over the two days, getting stuck into group discussions, even though English is not their first language. Having been introduced to the training environment for the CTAR, both clinical coaches and schools were 'chomping at the bit' to get started.

Numbers piloting the CTAR tool at this initial stage vary from country to country, with a minimum of three to a maximum of 10 clinical coaches, across both higher and further education students. Following this initial pilot phase, the VECTAR partners will meet at Groenhorst College, Holland, in June, to evaluate the current skills list, software and clinical coach training package, with a view to adaptation for the European market. The adapted CTAR and coaching programmes will then be piloted by our partner schools across a wider selection of students and coaches until June 2013.



For more information, visit www.vectar.org.

“All delegates worked extremely hard over the two days, getting stuck into group discussions.”

Discussions highlighted that veterinary nurse training is relatively new in some of the countries, with some schools having only been training for six years, compared with the UK, where VN training has just celebrated its 50th anniversary.

Interesting topics discussed ranged from legislation issues to placement locations (with some training practices being over five hours away from the school), and it became apparent that we all had similar issues, for example:

- Student monitoring and progression
- Time allocation
- Student motivation

Training included two activities centred on the teaching of a practical skill. While delegates were happy to demonstrate the technique of drawing up an injection, they found breaking the skill into manageable steps more challenging, and couldn't agree on how many individual steps this skill actually involved. To make things more fun, using the Peyton (1998) 'four-stage approach' to teaching a practical skill, delegates were taught to dance the Macarena. While understandably somewhat bemused at first, they found it helped to reinforce a methodical sequence to their teaching – and

Clearing up confusion

We address some ongoing confusion with the NPL

It appears that, within the Nursing Progress Log (NPL) there remains some confusion regarding Unit SAVN17 Practical veterinary nursing support of small animals – Skill 1 Plan, deliver and evaluate care for animals with a range of conditions.

Students MUST address a minimum of four medical conditions. Of these four, the student MUST include a range of species, a range of patient ages and medical conditions; however, students may address some or all of the other medical conditions listed.

Where the student does not address specific medical conditions, the clinical coach will record 'Student chooses not to undertake skill', which will automatically limit the four stars.

Reading the guidance notes

It is apparent that some clinical coaches and students don't always refer to the guidance notes. These include the scope to be covered for the relevant skills.

During audit the following omissions have been identified:

- Unit VN4 *Applied animal welfare, health and husbandry for veterinary nurses* Skill 1 *Demonstrating correct techniques for handling and restraining animals for examination*: Exotics – students MUST handle rabbits, birds, rodents and reptiles.
- Unit VN9 *Veterinary nursing support of diagnostic imaging* Skill 11 *Position patients for the following small animal views* – a range of species MUST be included.
- Unit VN11 *Supporting veterinary operating theatre practice* Skill 10 *Scrub up to assist with a surgical procedure* – gloves; it has not always been clear that both open and closed gloving have been demonstrated by the clinical coach or both techniques practised by the student

Some students are still simply describing tasks in the reflective comments box; this misses the point of the box, which is to record reflection on performance (what was learned, what went well, what didn't, etc). Centres and clinical coaches must encourage students to reflect on their performance, which will help them to develop both their clinical performance and their learning skills.

Tutorials

Practical training often lacks structure. Tutorial records need to demonstrate that the clinical coach and the student are planning training with clear and achievable targets being set and reviewed.



Two's company?

Only one examiner per station

We continue our series of myth-busting those examination tall stories. If you have heard something that needs putting straight, please do let us know.

Myth: there are always two examiners marking the OSCE (practical) examination.

Fact: up until 2011, there were always two examination stations and two examiners in each room. Each examiner only had access to the marking criteria for

one OSCE station. While one examiner was marking a student's performance, the other examiner would be resetting their station and providing assistance to the student. They did not provide an opinion on an individual student's performance. Since September 2011, we have been running OSCE assessments based on the model used by many of the leading OSCE experts in the medical field. This means that there is now one OSCE station and one examiner in each room or booth. As before, only one examiner marks the student.

Don't forget to vote!

VN Council elections close soon



The VN Council elections close on Friday 27 April at 5pm, so you still have time to vote! This year there are three candidates standing for two places, one of whom is a current VN Council member standing for re-election.

Details of all three candidates can be found in the *RCVS News Extra* that all those

eligible to vote would have received in March.

Please do read the manifestos and candidate statements carefully – and drop the candidates an email if you have questions for them.

There are three options when it comes to voting – by post (using the freepost envelope provided in the March mailing), by text or online. Information is also available on www.rcvs.org.uk/vncouncil12, but you will need your ballot papers to vote.

If you are a listed or registered veterinary nurse and did not receive a ballot paper, please email Annette Amato on a.amato@rcvs.org.uk.

Who does what...

Libby Earle:	<i>Head of Veterinary Nursing</i>
Annette Amato:	<i>Deputy Head of Department, Awarding Body Board Secretary, Secretary to VN Council</i>
Julie Dugmore:	<i>Quality assurance and EV liaison</i>
Vicky Hedges:	<i>Examinations and higher education quality assurance</i>
Helen Cook:	<i>Centre approvals and monitoring, ACOVENE support</i>
Gabe Diaz:	<i>Examinations, overseas registration applications</i>
Juliet Whitley:	<i>Lead External Verifier</i>
Alison Rengert:	<i>External Verifier</i>
Liz Troman:	<i>External Verifier</i>

NB EVs are home-based and may be contacted direct or via the VN Department on the details below.

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Practical examinations

Spring 2012

Results published	3 May
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Summer 2012

Closing date for entries	8 June
Exam weekend	6–8 July
Results published	9 August

Autumn 2012

Closing date for entries	8 June
Exam weekend	14–16 September
Results published	18 October

Winter 2012

Closing date for entries	2 November
Exam weekend	30 November–2 December
Results published	TBC

Theory examinations (e-assessment)

Spring 2012

Results published	19 April
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Summer 2012

Closing date for entries	27 April
Appointment booking window	21 May–15 June
Exam weeks	18 June–1 July
Results published	2 August

Winter 2012

Closing date for entries	7 September
Appointment booking window	1–26 October
Exam weeks	29 October–11 November
Results published	13 December

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RCVS SETTING VETERINARY STANDARDS