



Ringling the changes

*RCVS Awards to close;
intellectual property of
Level 3 Diploma to be
transferred*

In this issue: amended Bye-Laws, Trustee sought, fee changes, Acovene spot-checks, VECTAR update, enrolment advice, NPL guidance, RCVS Awards closure, election nominations open, exam dates.

Regulating VN qualifications

Changes to the Veterinary Nursing Bye-Laws

The RCVS, under its Royal Charter, awards the **Certificate in Veterinary Nursing. This is the qualification that constitutes a 'licence to practise' for veterinary nurses, enabling them to enter the List or Register.**

Historically, the Certificate was awarded to students who enrolled with the RCVS and who passed the exams held by the College. Over time, the College's role in relation to veterinary nurses has changed into that of a regulator as opposed to that, primarily, of a qualification provider. This evolution has changed the nature of the Certificate and the circumstances in which it is awarded. The RCVS now approves a growing number of awarding institutions, including the College's own awarding organisation (RCVS Awards), and recognises qualifications gained by veterinary nurses via equivalent programmes overseas.

Following a recommendation from VN Council, in November, RCVS Council approved some amendments to the Bye-Laws that clarify the RCVS role in relation to maintaining standards of education and qualification for veterinary nurses working towards a licence to practise on the Register. A summary of the main changes can be found below, and the full Bye-Laws can be found at www.rcvs.org.uk.

“The RCVS now approves a growing number of awarding institutions.”



VN Council
Chairman
Liz Branscombe

Standards for training

Until now, the National Occupational Standards have been the only documented benchmark for the content of all veterinary nursing qualifications. An amendment allows the VN Council to adopt other, or additional, standards – such as higher education benchmarks – in the future, as appropriate.

Mandatory practical training time

The requirement for 60 weeks has not changed, however, the wording of the relevant Bye-Law has been simplified, and some historical text removed, so this is much clearer and easier to interpret.

Setting and regulating educational standards – awarding institutions

The relevant Bye-Law has been expanded to describe the remit of the VN Council in relation to setting standards for, approving and quality monitoring all veterinary nursing qualifications that lead to registration. The new text reflects that of the Veterinary Surgeons Act, which sets out the College's remit in relation to veterinary education and the supervision of universities offering veterinary degrees. This is to ensure that the remit of the VN Council through the Bye-Laws is consistent with the role of RCVS Council as set out in the Act.

The College's remit to approve and monitor qualifications has been set out in more detail. As with veterinary degrees, approval encompasses quality of delivery and assessment (examination) in addition to qualification design.

The term 'awarding institution' has been adopted throughout in order to encompass all organisations that offer qualifications and to avoid confusion with the terms 'awarding body' and 'awarding organisation', which are terms used by the national regulatory authorities (Ofqual and other national regulators), and which have specific meanings in that context.

Standards for the assessment of qualifications

Standards for the examination of students registered with newly-approved awarding institutions have been set out, reflecting the RCVS's established practice with new HE qualifications. However, the Bye-Laws now allow the VN Council to delegate examination to other appropriate institutions as an alternative to external examinations held by the RCVS. In other words, this allows a degree of flexibility and could, for example, allow a new institution to contract with an appropriate examination provider that is geographically closer.

Suspension of enrolments

This Bye-Law iterates the College's power to suspend further candidate enrolments or, in the most serious cases, to remove approval in the event of poor quality. This reflects current practice, also carried out in accordance with ACOVENE policy.

Influencers and change-makers welcome



Trust seeks new Trustee

The Trust's VN Trustee, Tracy Mayne, steps down in 2012, after seven years on the Board. The Trust will be looking to recruit her replacement and is keen to find a veterinary nurse who fits the bill.

The Trust is the charity associated with the RCVS, and offers a veterinary library and veterinary grants and projects programme. It has given over £2.7million in grants since 2005, and in 2010 it had 2,000 Library Members. Some of its 11 Trustees have been appointed by RCVS Council and others have relevant expertise, such as marketing and library management.

"We believe that vets and VNs play a pivotal role in the high quality of health and welfare of all animals, and that animal and human health is inextricably linked to a better world for us all," says Trust Director, Cherry Bushell (pictured).

"We are keen to hear from veterinary nurses who are likely to have substantial credibility and influence within the veterinary nursing profession already, and will certainly have demonstrable ability to make things happen. We need someone who has energy, ideas and enthusiasm, and who can work in the collegiate style of the Board," she adds.

"We believe that vets and VNs play a pivotal role in the high quality of health and welfare of all animals."

Trustees serve a three-year term and spend around six days a year at meetings in central London and attending conferences. Reasonable expenses are reimbursed and training is available.

Further information about the Trust can be found on www.rcvstrust.org.uk. Potential applicants should contact Cherry on 020 7202 0714 or email c.bushell@rcvstrust.org.uk, for an informal chat, or to register their interest.

Too much at once?

Planning examination entry

The first Level 3 Diploma students took their examinations this summer, providing us with statistical feedback on candidate performance. The results showed that candidates who attempted more than one paper in the same examination window showed progressively poorer results the more papers they took. In other words, candidates who sat all three papers within the window achieved a markedly poorer result than those who took just one.

The paper most likely to be failed in this situation was paper 2 (animal health, husbandry, form and function). Results for this paper were generally poor, with an overall pass rate of 57%. However, the scores ranged from 33% to 93%, with over a quarter of candidates sitting this paper scoring 80% or higher. When analysed by centre, it was very clear that the overall exam results were polarised between excellent and very poor, with some centres achieving over 90% pass rates and some under 35%. It was clear that a number of colleges had failed to deliver the new curriculum adequately to small animal pathway students. However, the equine pathway students achieved 100% passes, despite the need for them to answer small animal questions.

We are in the process of following up teaching and learning issues with the colleges concerned. We will also be ceasing to offer a discount for examination papers taken together in one window; the poor results of students who sat multiple papers suggest we should not encourage them to bite off more than they can chew, through the exam fee structure.



IN BRIEF

Petition time!

As part of the push for statutory recognition for registered veterinary nurses, and protection of the title, the BVNA has mounted a petition on the Government's e-petitions website, with the backing of the College and the BVA.

At the time of going to press, it had 657 supporting signatures. Add yours, by visiting <http://epetitions.direct.gov.uk/petitions/18700>.

Final call for VN fees

VN retention fees were due by the 1 November, but we won't remove anyone who pays before 31 December... so you have a couple of weeks left. It can now be done online, so you can even do it on Christmas Day, if the James Bond film doesn't take your fancy.

All listed/registered VNs have been sent a fee notice, which included a log-in number for the payment area on the website. If you have lost your log-in, please email membership@rcvs.org.uk, with your full name (including any middle names), badge number, current Register/List address and date of birth, and the number will be sent to you.

Please bear in mind that the RCVS is closed over Christmas and New Year.

Locum status

Although most centres and employers will be aware, it may be timely to give a reminder that student VNs are not covered by Schedule 3 dispensations while working as locums, ie when not under the supervision of their centre and gaining experience in their designated training practice.

Students have only the status of a nursing assistant, ie a lay person, when working as a locum. This means that they must not undertake medical treatment of animals, regardless of how experienced they might be, even if directly supervised by a vet or VN.

Unfortunately, we still regularly encounter locum agencies marketing 'experienced student veterinary nurses', and practices that have employed them in good faith, not realising the implications.

European spot-checks

ACOVENE visits two UK centres



The RCVS affiliated with the Accreditation Committee for Veterinary Nurse Education (ACOVENE) in November 2010. Under the terms of the agreement, the ACOVENE Board will visit a small number of centres annually in order to ensure that the RCVS regulatory standards for veterinary nurse training continue to articulate with those of ACOVENE, and that quality assurance of centres is effective.

The ACOVENE visitation panel chose to audit two RCVS centres during 2011; a private training provider and an agricultural college delivering both further and higher educational qualifications. Feedback from the visitation panel, in the main, was very positive. They were extremely impressed with the quality of education, commitment and enthusiasm of the teaching team of the private training provider.

Specific feedback indicated that one of the centres did not appear to take the visitation seriously; senior staff present at the start of the visit did not make themselves available for feedback and the school presented an amended agenda to the visitors without prior discussion or notification. In addition, during a tour of the library, it became apparent that teaching staff were unaware of a recent re-organisation and, consequently, the location of relevant resources that would provide an evidence-base for teaching and learning.

ACOVENE functions in much the same way as Ofqual in auditing the RCVS's quality-assurance procedures, although its remit is the whole of UK VN education, not only RCVS awards. We welcome the 'spot-check' audits of RCVS-approved programme provision, and both the reassurances and opportunities to improve that the feedback provides.

VECTAR off to flying start

New project to share expertise in Europe

Education colleagues from six European schools of veterinary nursing met in London in November for the inaugural conference of the VECTAR project (pictured). They were joined by colleagues from UK centres, who were able to share their experiences of supporting the clinical training of students and of using the Nursing Progress Log (NPL) recording tool.

The VECTAR (Veterinary European Clinical Training and Assessment Record) project gained Leonardo da Vinci EU funding in the autumn and will share the RCVS's innovative approach to supporting practical training through clinical coaching and the NPL system of recording mentoring, clinical experience and competence.

“VECTAR schools encompass a wide spectrum, from veterinary school to private training provider.”

Clinical training for VN students is a key element of training and brings challenges to schools of veterinary nursing internationally and at every level of training, whether vocational or undergraduate. Our partner VECTAR schools encompass a wide spectrum, from veterinary school to private training provider, and from Scandinavia to Southern Europe. The overall aim of the project is to share the RCVS's innovations and to adapt both clinical coaching and the NPL for use in Europe.

Adaptation will, as our UK colleagues discovered during the inaugural conference, pose some interesting challenges. The clinical experience of EU students during training varies widely, from as much as 37 weeks down to 14. The location and basis (employment or placement) of training varies, and the engagement of practices with the training process is also wide-ranging. However, one of the major issues faced by all EU schools is that of maintaining contact with learners, who may often be placed hundreds of miles from their school. It was this common problem that engaged the initial interest of all of the partner schools.

Now that the first conference is over, piloting of the current NPL and clinical coach training will commence early in the New Year. The RCVS has developed a clinical coach training package and will be delivering training to staff and affiliated practitioners in the partner schools. Yes, this does mean us visiting foreign parts;



however, in January, we almost certainly won't be enjoying the sunshine – even if the packed training schedule allowed! The partner schools will then carry out the pilot phase of the project with a sample of students and placement clinics.

Throughout the project, we aim to encourage much wider veterinary and veterinary nursing interest in systems of support for clinical learning, which we feel have the potential for application and use within the veterinary professions, all of which rely heavily on acquiring essential skills through work-based learning.

The VECTAR project will be overseen by the Federation of European Companion Animal Veterinary Associations (FECAVA), which means that European veterinary employers will have a direct link throughout.

If you'd like to follow the progress of VECTAR, please visit www.vectar.org, and see us on Facebook.



Enrolled yet?

Don't forget to enrol your students

This is the time of year when all colleges and universities should ensure that their new student veterinary nurses are enrolled with the RCVS and registered for an approved 'licence to practise' qualification.

Enrolment with the RCVS has been around for many years, however, a reminder about its purpose may be worthwhile. As all veterinary employers know, Schedule 3 to the Veterinary Surgeons Act 1966 gives dispensations to student veterinary nurses so that they may learn to provide treatments to animals. The Schedule sets out the definition of a student veterinary nurse and the Veterinary Nursing Bye-Laws stipulate the requirements for enrolment and training to achieve the RCVS Certificate in Veterinary Nursing. The RCVS Certificate must be achieved by every individual in order to enter the Register.

All student veterinary nurses must enrol with the RCVS regardless of the qualification that they are undertaking, be this an RCVS award, an approved HE qualification or another approved vocational qualification. Until a student is enrolled, he or she is not covered by Schedule 3 and may not count time towards the mandatory 60 weeks of practical training. Centres that have not yet enrolled their students are urged to do so expediently, so that these learners are not disadvantaged.

The enrolment fee covers the costs of the quality assurance the RCVS must undertake for all veterinary nursing qualifications, and the availability of the Nursing Progress Log (NPL) tool to all students, regardless of their qualification route.

Enrolment, up until now, has also covered the process of qualification registration for those students undertaking RCVS qualifications (currently the Level 3 Diploma). This has been possible because the majority of data needed to register a candidate is also collected and processed in order to enrol them. The costs of quality-assuring qualifications

are similar, whether RCVS or external awards, and this one-step process was simple for both centres and learners. However, from 2012 onwards, we have introduced a slightly lower flat-rate enrolment fee for all students, and an additional qualification registration fee (£15) for those students undertaking the RCVS Level 3 Diploma. From 2013 onwards, the cost of the NPL tool and maintaining the 'day-one skills list' will be met from veterinary nurse retention fee income and the cost of enrolment will reduce accordingly.

“The term ‘enrolment’ will apply to all individuals enrolling with the RCVS in accordance with professional regulatory requirements.”

The term 'enrolment' will apply to all individuals enrolling with the RCVS in accordance with professional regulatory requirements. Qualification registration is a different process and will take place with the relevant awarding institution (university or awarding organisation). New documentation, reflecting the separation of these processes, will be sent to centres shortly.

Please note that, from 1 January 2012, centres will be asked to verify the identity of all students to be enrolled with the RCVS from an official form of identification, ie a current passport or national identity card, and to provide the RCVS with a good quality photocopy of the document seen. Should a student not have such

official ID, centres may verify identity via birth and official change of name documents, and provide copies of these, as currently. However, the student(s) concerned must be made aware that they will be required to show official ID in order to enter an examination, and to produce this for the RCVS before they will be permitted to enter the Register.



87 skills in three weeks?

There's busy... and then there's block-signing

The RCVS Level 3 Diploma is now in its second year of delivery and the Nursing Progress Log (NPL) is proving to be a dynamic training tool, enabling students to record their practice-based experience and competence. Approximately 2,900 students are now working their way through the 'day-one skills list' and most are using the tool well.

However, the recent OSCE examination eligibility checks have highlighted a number of students being signed off as competent in a large proportion of skills in the three weeks leading up to their examination entry submission, ie last-minute 'block signing' of the kind that used to feature with the old 'Green Book' in order to be able to enter an examination.

In one case, a student completed 31% of the NPL, which equates to 87 skills being signed off, in three weeks. Many of these skills were signed off on 24 October, seemingly a very busy day for clinical coaches up and down the country!

Some of the skills had been undertaken at a late stage for genuine reasons, for example, undertaking a secondment to gain an essential skill, but the majority were nursing skills to which students should be exposed on a regular basis in a training practice. For example, in one case 'Assist the surgeon to don sterile gown and gloves' was demonstrated in April, the student logged their first experience in October, and was signed

off as competent the following day. Did the student not practise this at all between April and October? If not, was s/he really competent following one logged experience some six months later? No explanation was recorded by the clinical coach.

Various reasons for the last-minute recording have been given, including:

- Centres being unaware that block-signing is inappropriate
- Students having a period of time without a clinical coach
- Learning style of students

None of the above is encouraging. The NPL is designed so that students can log their practical training, experience and competence continually, and, with their clinical coach, reflect on their progress while planning further training and experience as they progress through their qualification. It isn't something to be rushed through at the last minute, with little thought or planning, in order to sit examinations. A parallel is the production of clinical notes, which are produced contemporaneously as the patient is treated – not all at once, in retrospect, when the patient is about to be discharged. We will monitor the progress of these students in the OSCE and consider withdrawing students in future who appear to have undertaken mass sign-off of skills in such a short space of time.

Moving request

Please tell us when students move

Every now and again, we need to remind centres to keep track of all their students and to tell us if they move to another practice or centre, or leave training. At present, we appear to have 280 more Level 2 NVQ candidates than are registered for the Level 2 Certificate in Veterinary Nursing Theory. Either these candidates are making extremely slow progress, or they have discontinued training. Any NVQ candidate must now, by definition, have been registered with the RCVS for well over a year, and should have commenced a college course, ie. also be registered for a VRQ.

The issue of discontinued students is an important one;

if the RCVS is not informed, the students remain a centre's responsibility and retain Schedule 3 dispensations. Clearly there are implications for centres, employers and, most importantly, animal welfare, in this situation. It is not acceptable for individuals who are not actively being trained and supervised towards a qualification to be undertaking acts of veterinary surgery. Such individuals should be formally discontinued from training and the RCVS notified, regardless of whether they were working towards RCVS vocational qualifications or an alternative licence to practise award. Similar considerations apply to students who intermit their training; their enrolment with the RCVS should be suspended, pending a return to active training.

RCVS Awards to close

Code presentation online

The College has decided that it should cease being an awarding organisation next year, which means it will no longer offer the vocational Level 3 Diploma in Veterinary Nursing. The recommendation was made by VN Council in October, and approved by RCVS Council on 3 November.

The College will ensure that the Diploma continues to be available by transferring the intellectual property associated with the qualification, such as the question banks and systems, to another awarding institution, in a move which is likely to take effect for the beginning of the 2012 academic year.

The decision reflects recent changes in the regulatory Conditions of Approval for awarding bodies, which it would have been hard for the College to meet while continuing to offer the Level 3 Diploma cost-effectively. The changes mainly relate to potential conflicts of interest between the College's primary role, as professional regulator that safeguards standards within the veterinary professions, and its role as an awarding organisation. The standards-setting role includes the regulation of education and training leading to the veterinary and VN Registers, and it was felt that the College could no longer exercise this duty effectively if it was also an awarding organisation, as it might be suspected of treating its internal qualifications more favourably, or of obstructing competitors.

Although this has not been a problem in the past, due to careful management of activities, the rules are now more stringent, and the costs of setting up a fully independent awarding organisation would be prohibitive.

The market for the Diploma is also likely to fragment in the future, with two other awarding institutions

expressing an interest in offering a Level 3 Diploma, and another already provisionally approved. Any reduction in the number of students taking the RCVS Level 3 Diploma would further push up the costs, potentially making the RCVS awarding organisation, RCVS Awards, unviable. A larger organisation can take advantage of economies of scale across a range of awards in a way that the RCVS cannot.

"The RCVS has been offering vocational qualifications since 1998 and the decision to cease being an awarding institution has not been taken lightly," says Colonel Neil Smith, Chairman of the RCVS Awarding Body Board.

"We have taken this decision in order to focus on our core responsibilities of professional regulation and standard setting. However, we remain committed to maintaining the Diploma, which has been carefully developed by the RCVS and the profession. This move ensures that it will stay in safe hands," he adds.

The name of the awarding institution to which the qualification will be transferred has not yet been announced because the process is not complete. However, centres may be assured that this is a well-established and regarded organisation with many years' experience of awarding in the veterinary-related and land-based sector. More information, and the change-over plan, will be released in due course.

As the professional regulator, the College will continue to issue RCVS certificates and badges to those who have successfully completed a registerable qualification – such as an approved vocational qualification run by another awarding institution, or an RCVS-recognised veterinary nursing degree.

Your questions answered

What is happening to ownership of RCVS Awards?

The RCVS owns its awarding institution. Accreditation as an awarding organisation cannot be transferred or sold. The RCVS is electing to cease to be an awarding organisation and to work with a major external organisation to place the current Level 3 Diploma in Veterinary Nursing in alternative safe hands

What is the time-frame for completion?

Ideally, the transfer should take place in time for the new academic year in 2012, and an alternative awarding organisation will be approved to register

students from that time. However, the RCVS is likely to continue to run examinations for a time after this, in order to effect a smooth transfer.

Will there be consultation among course providers and the profession?

This is a decision about an RCVS business and therefore, whilst the interests of the profession and our centres are major concerns and drivers, this is not an issue about which we can consult. The VN qualification itself will remain the same, and will only be awarded by organisations that fully meet RCVS approval criteria.

What will happen to students currently studying for NVQs?

The NVQ, and related VRQ, qualifications are due to 'run out' in 2012 and 13. The RCVS will continue to service these students and there will be no change for them.

What will happen to students currently studying for the Level 3 Diploma?

At some point (yet to be determined), these students will transfer to an alternative awarding institution. This transfer will not cost anything and, as far as students are concerned, should not have any major practical impact. They will still gain a Level 3 Diploma in Veterinary Nursing and will still be able to enter the Register.

Will the awards change format/content?

The RCVS will work with its successor organisation to keep the format and structure of the qualification, and of the examinations, the same. Much of this is predetermined within the accredited qualification units and cannot be changed, in any case.

Will the RCVS continue to run the exams?

In the medium term, yes. We will continue to run NVQ exams until the Level 3 qualifications run out in 2013. We will also run Level 3 Diploma exams until the alternative awarding organisation has established and tested its systems. From then on, we will continue to monitor the delivery of examinations by all approved awarding institutions in our capacity as the professional regulator. We also plan to continue our very successful examiner training programme so that all awarding institutions will have access to suitably-trained practical examiners.

How will quality control be maintained for these awards?

We already quality-assure all qualifications leading to the Register and will continue to do so. This will entail rigorous approval processes and ongoing quality monitoring visits, as now.

Will veterinary practices have a say in the future of these qualifications?

Yes, it is a condition of accreditation that qualifications have a valid market. This means consulting with employers and ensuring that qualifications meet their needs, as well as those of the professional regulator (the RCVS). Growth in the number of available VN qualifications means that employers will have more choice in the future.

Will the RCVS have any control over the future of these awards?

Yes, we regulate all qualifications leading to registration. The RCVS is likely to alter the remit of its VN Continuing Education Subcommittee to embrace all veterinary

nursing education, and to co-opt expertise from the awarding institutions and centres, as it does now within the Awarding Body Board.

Will the costs to students go up?

They should remain about the same. Students will probably have to pay more at the point of entry, because they will pay an award registration fee (to their awarding organisation) and a regulatory enrolment fee (to the RCVS). The enrolment fee pays for the quality assurance of their qualification, ie RCVS visits, exam monitoring etc. However, a large awarding organisation will be able to deliver multiple choice question (MCQ) exams more cheaply than we do, so there is likely to be a balancing, meaning costs should be the same.

Will the costs to colleges go up?

It is not possible to say at this stage. However, it is likely that many of our centres will already be approved by the awarding organisation currently in negotiation with the RCVS.

Will the costs to practices go up?

No, there is no reason why they should.

Will the RCVS cease to give certificates?

The College will cease to provide vocational qualification certificates. However, we will still issue Certificates in Veterinary Nursing (and badges) to all nurses entering the Register.

Will this affect VN Council and the regulation of VNs?

No.

What will happen to staff employed by RCVS Awards?

The RCVS VN Department will still have a significant role to play. Our regulatory role, in setting and maintaining standards of education within the growing numbers of awarding institutions (universities and other organisations offering qualifications that lead to the Register), is increasing, and will need to be serviced. This includes the monitoring of examinations and assessment within these qualifications, which will remain a major part of our work in the future.

Will this affect the Advanced Diploma in Veterinary Nursing?

No, this will be unaffected, as the qualification is awarded by the College under its Royal Charter powers.

Heads of Centres will be able to find out more about the proposed changes at the annual meeting on 12 January 2012. Please contact Julie Dugmore on j.dugmore@rcvs.org.uk for more information.

What's the RCVS all about?

Your opportunities to find out more

Our *Guide to Professional Conduct for Veterinary Nurses* quiz results found that students and RVNs are still stumped about the finer points of the role of the College. Are you passing on the right information to your students? Come and find out, by attending one of our Meet the RCVS Days (small-group open days at the College) or Regional Question Times (where our Officer team goes out on the road), or visiting us at BSAVA Congress.

Meet the RCVS Days

Meet the RCVS Days gives visitors the chance to meet members of the Officer team and staff, visit departments and find out exactly who we are and what we do. Led by one of the Officer team, the day usually starts at 10.30am, finishes at approximately 4pm, and includes plenty of time to ask your burning questions. Lunch is provided and reasonable travelling expenses paid. Email Fiona Harcourt at f.harcourt@rcvs.org.uk to be added to the invitation list for the next available event.

Regional Question Time

Regional Question Time meetings are evening events which start with a buffet supper and time to network with local colleagues, and move on to a question and answer format, where everyone has the opportunity to

pose their questions to the College team. Usually around 20% of the delegates are veterinary nurses, and all members of the practice team are welcome.

Topics covered at the last meeting, in South Wales, included VN training, the role of paraprofessionals and the benefits of lay members on RCVS Council.

Members of the Officer team will be visiting **Leeds on 8 March** and **Northern Ireland on 17 May 2012**. Invitations will be sent to all within reasonable travelling distance. Look out for yours, and do join us!

BSAVA Congress

The team will also be on hand to answer your questions at the BSAVA World Congress at the NEC in Birmingham, from 12-15 April. This year's Congress is set to be the largest international veterinary event ever held in the UK, and the RCVS and RCVS Awards will be there, offering information and advice.



BSAVA Congress this year

There will be no missing us, as our stand will be conveniently located in the Foyer of Hall 1 in the ICC, so you can visit us before or after the lectures.

Watt a good idea

Student nurses turning ideas into action

The RCVS Charitable Trust recently encouraged practising veterinary nurses to enter its competition 'Have a light-bulb moment at work? Turn your idea into action'. It is now looking to extend the idea to VN students.

The objective of the original competition was to encourage nurses established in their careers to share their learning and best practice, and even conduct clinical practice research. The competition entries are currently being considered, and all feasible ideas will be progressed by the Trust, either working in conjunction with the veterinary nurse and his or her practice team, or with suitable external experts. Regular progress reports will be published on the Trust website, and the competition is likely to be run again in 2012.

The Trust Director, Cherry Bushell, said: "We wanted to inspire and encourage veterinary nurses to make real

changes that affect quality and care in practice. We believe that veterinary nurses are in a unique position to do this, but often have no obvious way to progress their ideas, so we hope the competition will help to turn these ideas into action."

As a next step, the Trust is now considering how best to extend this competition to VN students – to engage them in thinking about the changes that they can make, from the very start of their careers. The Trust would like to encourage tutors to submit their suggestions and ideas on the best way of achieving this. This may lead to a similar programme as that for VNs, whereby the Trust offers some small grants and other forms of support, plus access to expertise. Contact grants@rcvstrust.org.uk or call 020 7202 0714 for more information.

Further information about all of the Trust's activities is available from www.rcvstrust.org.uk.

Bag your badge

Don't miss the reduced rate

As announced in the August issue, the new RVN badge is now available, and at a reduced price of £15 until the end of January 2012, after which it goes up to the usual 'badge replacement' rate of £43.



There is no compulsion to obtain the new badge, but we hope that many RVNs will jump at the chance of some greater recognition of their role.

The badge order form can be found on the RCVS website (put 'RVN badge' into the search engine and follow the link). Why not treat yourself for Christmas...?

There is currently around four to six weeks' wait between forms being received by the RCVS and the badges being delivered, as each one needs to be engraved with your unique number.

Cracked it yet?

Code presentation online



Missed the London Vet Show? Then you missed President Jerry Davies deliver a presentation about the new Codes of Professional Conduct for veterinary nurses and vets, which will replace the Guides next April.

Jerry outlined the rationale for the change, the new structure and the new principles that need to be followed.

Make sure you are giving your students the right information about this important change by downloading Jerry's presentation, available at www.rcvs.org.uk/lvs.

Fees: new for 2012

The table below outlines RCVS and RCVS Awards fees effective 1 January 2012.

RCVS regulatory fees – payable for all student VNs

Enrolment fee	£	
Enrolment	199	For a maximum of six years
Enrolment extension	68	For one additional year
Temporary enrolment	26	Temporary or visiting students

RCVS Awards fees – payable in relation to RCVS qualifications

Registration fee	£	
Level 3 Diploma	15	
Qualification unit	15	Per unit

Examination fees

VRQ Level 2 2006 (100/6213/0)		
Level 2 MCQ	160	Both papers in one sitting 'window'
Level 2 MCQ	140	One paper only

VRQ Level 3 2006 (100/6215/4)

Level 3 MCQ	98	Both papers in one sitting 'window'
Level 3 MCQ	78	One paper only

NVQ Level 3 2006 (100/6216/6)

Level 3 OSCE	202	Eight OSCE stations
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Level 3 Diploma in Veterinary Nursing 2010 (501/0487/1)

MCQ	94	Each paper
Transitional Pathway Students MCQ	94	Paper 3 only
OSCE	208	Twelve OSCE stations

Other candidate fees

Unit certificate	44	
Replacement certificate	37	
Exam enquiry fee	30	

Centre fees

Centre accreditation/re-accreditation	2,250	
Course approval (requiring a site visit)	810	Approval up to five years
Course approval (no site visit)	450	Approval up to five years
Annual fee	578	
Advisory consultancy per day or additional site visits	360	

Time for the hot seat?

Election nominations now open

Nominations have now opened for candidates who wish to stand in the 2012 elections for the RCVS Veterinary Nurses Council. Is it time you thought about taking up the hot seat?

Two seats are due to be filled, with posts being taken up at RCVS Day in July. Any registered or listed veterinary nurse is eligible to stand.

Council members will be expected to spend at least six to eight days a year attending Council meetings, working parties and subcommittees (a loss-of-earnings allowance is available).

Nominations must be made in writing on the prescribed form and received by the Registrar on or before 31 January 2012. For full details, see www.rcvs.org.uk/vncouncil12, or contact Mrs Annette Amato (020 7202 0713 or a.amato@rcvs.org.uk).



Who does what...

- Libby Earle: *Head of Veterinary Nursing*
 Annette Amato: *Deputy Head of Department, Awarding Body Board Secretary, Secretary to VN Council*
 Julie Dugmore: *Quality assurance and EV liaison*
 Vicky Hedges: *Examinations and higher education quality assurance*
 Helen Cook: *Centre approvals and monitoring*
 Ben Myring: *Examinations*

For careers advice, student enrolments/award registrations, issue of certificates or registration of newly-qualified nurses, please call or email the Veterinary Nursing Department on the details below.

CONTACTING US | E vetnursing@rcvs.org.uk
 T 020 7202 0788 | F 020 7222 2004

Theory examinations (e-assessment)

Winter 2011

Results published	10 January
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Spring 2012

Closing date for entries	20 January
Appointment booking window	13 February – 9 March
Exam week	12 – 25 March
Results published	19 April

Summer 2012

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

Winter 2012

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

Practical examinations

Winter 2011

Results published	19 January
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Spring 2012

Closing date for entries	2 March
Exam weekend	30 March – 1 April
Results published	3 May

Summer 2012

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

Winter 2012

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

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