



RCVS

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in veterinary care

Pre-registration Candidate Theory Examination Guide for Small Animal Candidates

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Contents

Introduction	1
Entry requirements – Educated outside the UK	1
Entry requirements – UK students	1
Format of the Examination	2
First sitting	3
Re-sitting the examination	3
Example questions.....	3
Preparation courses.....	3
Notification of examination results	3
Number of examination attempts	3
Entering the examination.....	4
Online examination	4
Preparing your room for the examination	5
Prohibited items	5
Conducting a room scan	6
Candidate examination conduct	6
Timings for online examinations	7
Face to face examination	7
Preparing yourself for the examination.....	7
Fit to sit the examination.....	7
Emergency evacuation procedures.....	7
Applying to sit the examination.....	8
Examination Dates for 2026 /2027	9
Examination Fees for 2026.....	9
Payment, withdrawal and refunds.....	9
Reasonable Adjustment.....	10
Mitigating Circumstances.....	10
Examination results enquiry and appeals	11
Confidentiality and test security	11
Resource list	12
Assessment outcomes	12
Distribution of examination questions.....	13

Introduction

This examination guide provides information to individuals who are required to pass the RCVS Pre-registration theory examination, this includes;

- Student Veterinary Nurses enrolled with the RCVS completing a qualification which holds RCVS provisional accreditation or terminal accreditation.
- Holders of veterinary nursing qualifications issued outside the UK who have had their qualification and experience assessed as suitable for entering the Pre-registration examination.

The Pre-registration theory examination contains 200 Multiple-Choice Questions (MCQs). This guidance provides details about entering the examination, the examination day, and the results process.

You are advised to read this guidance carefully and to refer to it as necessary.

The examination is designed to assess your skills, competences and knowledge detailed in the [RCVS Day One Competences for Veterinary Nurses](#) along with [the RCVS Code of Professional Conduct for Veterinary Nurses](#).

The examination is held up to three times a year. The examination dates and entry dates are detailed in this guidance.

If after reading the guidance, you have questions or require further information, please contact the RCVS Veterinary Nursing Examination Team on 020 7202 0788 or prereg.vn@rcvs.org.uk

Entry requirements – Educated outside the UK

To be eligible to enter the Pre-registration theory examination you must first have achieved a qualification, which has been accepted by the RCVS, and been informed that you need to pass the examination.

Entry requirements – UK students

UK Students studying on a course with provisional accreditation may enter the examination prior to completion of their qualification, but only once they have passed all modules referenced to the RCVS Day One Skills and RCVS Day One Competences, including the completion of 1,800 hours of clinical experience.

It should be noted that once you achieve your qualification your student status will end. You may continue to work in veterinary practice for the purposes of preparing for the examination but must enroll for a Period of Supervised Adaptation (PSA) if your role requires you 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 a student veterinary nurse.

For further information email prereg.vn@rcvs.org.uk

Format of the Examination

The RCVS Pre-registration Theory (MCQ) examination is set to standards outlined in the [RCVS Day One Competences for Veterinary Nurses](#). These are the minimum essential competences that the RCVS expects all UK educated veterinary nursing students to have met when they qualify.

The pre-registration examination consists of two parts: a theory exam and an OSCE. You can complete the theory exam either before or after the OSCE. However, if you pass the OSCE first, you must pass the theory exam within 18 months, and if you pass the theory exam first, you have 18 months to pass the OSCE. If you fail to pass either exam within the 18-month window once the clock has started, the 18-month window will reset.

The Pre-registration theory (MCQ) examination will normally be held three times a year. The examination consists of three subject areas.

- Preparing to deliver patient care.
- Application of patient care.
- Being an accountable professional within veterinary practice.

Each MCQ will typically consist of a stem (question) with four answer options. Candidates are required to select the single best answer.

The content of the examination is outlined in the assessment outcomes which are provided in this examination guide. There will be three examination papers. Paper 1 consists of 100 questions covering knowledge associated with preparing to deliver patient care. Paper 2 consists of 65 questions covering knowledge associated with application of patient care. Paper 3 consists of 35 questions and covers knowledge associated with being an accountable professional within veterinary practice. Paper 3 is an open book examination. Many of the questions relate to the RCVS Code of Professional Conduct for Veterinary Nurses and you will have access to an electronic searchable PDF copy of this document on your computer screen. You are advised to make yourself familiar with the document during your preparation.

The structure is illustrated in the chart below.

Paper number	Paper name	Number of questions	Length of examination
Paper 1	Preparing to deliver patient care.	100	2 hours 15 minutes
Paper 2	Application of patient care	65	1 hours 25 minutes
Paper 3	Being an accountable professional within veterinary practice.	35	60 minutes

The written examination will take place over two dates within a 7-day period. Papers 2 and 3 will normally take place on the same day with a break in-between. Normally all candidates will take the exam at the same time using the UK time zone. This may mean that some candidates overseas may sit the examination at unsociable hours.

First sitting

All examination papers must be taken in the same examination period or session.

Re-sitting the examination

If you are unsuccessful in the examination, you may re-sit the paper(s) that you failed. For example, if you passed paper 2 but failed paper 1 and 3 you only need to re-sit papers 1 and 3.

Example questions

Following the closing date, we will provide a small sample of MCQ questions which you will be able to access via the TestReach examination platform. This contains 35 MCQs in the same format and standard as the final examination. This will provide you with an opportunity to experience the style of questions contained within the actual examination and ensure you are familiar with how to access the RCVS code of professional conduct via the test reach platform which is made available for paper 3.

Preparation courses

There are currently no courses specifically designed to prepare candidates for the examination. If we receive information of a course aimed at examination preparation, we will pass the details on to candidates. The RCVS does not offer or endorse any course of this type, and it would be up to you to decide whether it would be useful to you to attend, or not. Please direct any enquiries to the provider of the course you are interested in.

Notification of examination results

Examination results will be sent via email no longer than 4 weeks after the final part of the examination. We normally provide you with 24 hours' notice that results are being published.

The pass mark for each examination paper is determined using a recognised standard setting methodology. This evidence-based approach considers the relative difficulty of each of the questions in the exam to determine a fair pass mark in line with the standard expected. Candidates will be notified whether they have achieved the pass mark or not – pass marks will not be published. We will provide you with details of how far above/below the pass mark you scored in each paper. No other feedback will be provided.

Number of examination attempts

You are permitted to re-sit the examination as often as you like. You will be required to pay the full fee for each examination attempt regardless of how many examination papers you are sitting. You will, however, be required to provide evidence that you are taking remedial action before entering your fourth and subsequent examinations.

Entering the examination

You have the option to complete your examination online from a location of your choosing in the UK or overseas or at the RCVS examination centre in London.

Online examination

Only choose this option if you have good reliable internet connection and a computer system which can download examination information.

You do not need any special equipment for the examination, a standard desktop or laptop computer with a webcam, microphone and good quality internet connectivity will be fine. Please see the minimum set up requirements below.

Minimum computer system requirements	
Device	Laptop / computer with 4GB of available memory. The app will not work on phones, chrome books, or iPads/tablets. We cannot guarantee service on touchscreen devices as some devices might be incompatible with the app. We recommend that candidates source a non-touchscreen device for their exams.
	A Windows v7.0+ or Mac10.10+ operating system, and MacOS BigSur users need to upgrade to 11.3+.
	Intel Core i3 (or equivalent).
	A working webcam that can be used to scan the room, microphone and speakers.
	Minimum candidate internet speed of 2 Mbps.
	Recommended screen size of at least 13" and a resolution of 1024 x 768.
Internet Connection	Minimum internet speed of 2 Mbps.

It is your responsibility to ensure that you have the necessary hardware to run the examination software (including equipment, good internet, a webcam and microphone) and it is in full working order. There will be no opportunity to appeal any components of the examination due to hardware failure. Appeals will only be considered for a verifiable fault with the examination software which was outside of your control.

Before the examination you will be guided through a procedure to download and install the TestReach desktop application software. This will ensure that your computer is set up for the examination. You will be able to complete a practice test to ensure that your computer can access the examination. The software will lock your computer for the duration of the examination session: you will not be able to navigate away and access the internet or other files/programs stored on your machine.

You will be provided with a username and password for each examination session. At your allotted time you will be able to log on and sit the examination from a location of your choosing. Once you have logged on you select the examination that you are taking and follow the instructions on the screen. These will guide you through the process to begin.

Before you start the examination, you will be required to provide evidence of your identity, and the supervisor will request that you use your camera to carry out a scan of your room. At the start of each exam, you will be asked to show your in-date passport or British residence Permit (BRP) as ID. If you do not have either of these forms of ID, please contact us to discuss alternative forms of ID. Your ID must be signed and contain your photograph. Please also be aware at any point during the exam, you may be asked to present this again to the live invigilators.

Once you start the examination the invigilator will observe you via your computer camera and watch your computer screen. You will be able to communicate with the invigilator if you have an issue with your computer. They will also be able to communicate with you. The examination session will be recorded. The invigilator will detect suspicious behaviour such as eye movements suggesting that a candidate is reading a study aid or noises in the room which could suggest that the candidate is being supported. Any suspicious behaviour indicative of cheating may result in your exam being paused or stopped, while an investigation is completed. If malpractice is detected, this will be brought to the attention of the Examination Board and Registrar who will review all reports of the alleged misconduct and consider if there is sufficient evidence for the allegation to be pursued.

It should be noted that the examination is designed and delivered by the RCVS and therefore all correspondence should be directed to us. Candidates must not contact the exam software company (TestReach) directly (unless instructed to do so by us) as they may be unable to offer assistance.

Preparing your room for the examination

The examination must be conducted in an environment similar to that of an invigilated test centre or exam room. Please ensure you take the exam within a room you are comfortable to show the invigilator. Take the exam in a room with a door that closes, so you are not disturbed. Warn anyone in the building that you are sitting an examination and must not be disturbed. It is useful to put a notice on the outside of the door with specific times that the examination will be taking place.

Where possible remove posters, and pictures from the walls in the room. If these cannot be removed, you may be asked to present these areas to the invigilator.

Prohibited items

The following items must not be present in the room whilst the examination is in session:

- Any educational, test preparation or study materials.
- Electronic devices other than the computer on which you will be taking the examination. These include mobile phones, tablets, hand-held computers, pagers, voice-controlled devices (such as an Alexa for example) and smartwatches. If a device is seen, your exam may be stopped, or you may be asked to show this to the invigilator who will observe you turning this off and placing it where they can view it.

- Bracelets or jewellery which bang or scratch on the table should be removed to prevent any unnecessary noise which could trigger the invigilation software.
- Stationery, paper and calculators are not needed and not allowed to be with you at the time of the exam. Calculators and an electronic notepad are included within the examination software where required.

Conducting a room scan

A room scan will be completed prior to the examination. You will be asked to show the walls of the entire room along with the ceiling and floor. Please complete your exam sat at a table or desk (not sat on a sofa for example). You will be asked to complete a 360-degree scan of the desk/table and chair you are using when sitting the exam. The invigilator will be checking that

- There is no second monitor/computer visible in the room
- There are no notes / wall boards with information on them
- There is no recording devices in the room or no one else is in the room

You will also be asked to scan your desk (including any shelves under the desk) – this is to make sure that there are no phones, books, post-its etc. nearby. If the supervisor observes any unauthorised items, they will request that the candidate removes them from the testing area.

You will be asked to use the selfie mode on your mobile phone camera or a small mirror in order to show no sticky notes or pages have been stuck to the screen of your device. Once this check is complete you will be asked to switch your phone off and put it out of reach.

Candidate examination conduct

You will be expected to behave as if you were sitting the exam in a physical examination centre. The exam will be live proctored by a member of the TestReach invigilation team. Invigilators are trained to detect suspicious items and detect untoward behaviour that may be considered as an exam security threat. All forms of eyewear (glasses) and ear plugs will need to be presented to the invigilator for exam security checking. Items of clothing with pockets, buttons and broaches, as well as jewellery, will also be inspected, long sleeves will be asked to be rolled up.

Consider carefully what you will wear each day for the exam, as this checking process can take time to complete. It will not be possible to take toilet or rest breaks whilst the examination is in session. Please ensure that you are comfortable and prepared before the session begins. No other person is permitted to be in the room with you whilst the examination is in progress. You must not leave the room for any reason other than an emergency whilst the examination is in session. Communication of any kind with anyone else during the examination is strictly forbidden and if this takes place an exam invigilator will intervene.

You will have the option to finish the examination early if you desire. You will not be permitted to re-visit your answers once you have completed and submitted your examination. If you experience any problems with the computer during the examination, alert the live invigilators so that they can support you, and after the exam contact the RCVS VN Examinations Team prereg.vn@rcvs.org.uk

immediately. You may be asked to complete a mitigating circumstances form to allow us to investigate and respond.

Timings for online examinations

The MCQ examination will be conducted and planned around the UK time, this means if you are not in the UK, your exam may take place early in the morning or late in the evening. For example, if an exam starts at 9am UK time, this will start in Tokyo at 6pm (local time), in Auckland at 10pm (local time) and in St. John's, Canada 5:30am (local time).

Face to face examination

The RCVS appreciates that some applicants may not have access to the equipment or suitable test environment for them to be able to complete the examination online. In this case we will provide access to an RCVS test centre in the UK. This is likely to be in London. The examination will be completed using the TestReach software or a paper test. Invigilation will be carried out by a member of the RCVS Examinations Team. The examination rules are the same as described in the section for online examinations.

Preparing yourself for the examination

You are responsible for preparing yourself to sit the examination. We provide the following support:

- Assessment outcomes documents outlining the contents of the examination.
- An online examination preparation course, on the RCVS Academy <https://academy.rcvs.org.uk/>.
- There will be an opportunity for you to determine whether your computer hardware is compatible.
- There will be an occasion for you to familiarise yourself with navigating through an example exam using the TestReach software.
- Access to an example MCQ examination paper. This contains 35 MCQs in the same format and standard as the final examination.

In addition, if you would like a meeting with the examinations team to discuss the examination, please send us an email prereg.vn@rcvs.org.uk.

Fit to sit the examination

By presenting yourself at the examination centre (which in the case of the online examination shall be interpreted as logging onto the software), you are indicating that you are fit to sit the examination. If you become unwell at any point during the examination, you should inform one of the test administrators or examiners immediately. If you are not fit to sit the exam for any reason, a mitigating circumstances form needs to be completed and submitted to the RCVS. The form is available by emailing prereg.vn@rcvs.org.uk.

Emergency evacuation procedures

If you are required to evacuate the building where you are completing your examination, then do so immediately and according to the instructions set out by the building's owner. You must notify the invigilator and RCVS VN Examinations Team about your need to evacuate as soon as it is safe to do so.

Applying to sit the examination

To enter the examination in November 2026 please use this link [Pre-Reg Exam Application Form – Fill in form](#). Once you have completed the form, we will add the fee to your MyRCVS account.

We will send out another link for the 2027 examinations once the fee has been confirmed.

Please note that your entry will not be accepted until the payment is received. If your payment is late, then you may not be able to enter the examination.

We will email you to confirm your application has been received. Once all applications have been processed, we will confirm the time of your examination along with the password you will need to open your examination results.

Please note the focus of the examination is normally small companion animals kept as pets in the UK. If you have a specific equine qualification, please discuss this with us at least 4 months before the examination. You will be provided with a different examination guide detailing the content of the Equine MCQ examination.

Examination Dates for 2026 /2027

Paper	Examination Date	Start time*	Closing Date
Paper 1	Monday 23 November 2026	09.30am UK time	Friday 2 October 2026
Paper 2	Thursday 26 November 2026	09.30am UK time	Friday 2 October 2026
Paper 3	Thursday 26 November 2026	13.30pm UK time	Friday 2 October 2026
Paper 1	Monday 15 February 2027	10.00am UK time	Wednesday 30 December 2026
Paper 2	Thursday 18 February 2027	10.00am UK time	Wednesday 30 December 2026
Paper 3	Thursday 18 February 2027	13.00pm UK time	Wednesday 30 December 2026
Paper 1	Tuesday 8 June 2027	11.00am UK time	Friday 23 April 2027
Paper 2	Thursday 10 June 2027	10.30am UK time	Friday 23 April 2027
Paper 3	Thursday 10 June 2027	14.00pm UK time	Friday 23 April 2027
Paper 1	Monday 18 October 2027	11.00am UK time	Friday 3 September 2027
Paper 2	Thursday 21 October 2027	11.00am UK time	Friday 3 September 2027
Paper 3	Thursday 21 October 2027	14.00pm UK time	Friday 3 September 2027

Please note that start times may change.

Examination Fees for 2026

The cost of the examination is **£286** per sitting. This fee reflects the true cost of delivering the examination. The RCVS does not seek to make a profit, but to cover the costs incurred in delivering the examination.

The examination fees are reviewed on an annual basis. Each fee allows one attempt at the examination. If you are not successful and decide to sit the examination again a separate application must be completed, and another fee paid.

Payment, withdrawal and refunds

Receipt of your payment does not indicate your entry has been accepted. In some instances, there may be follow-up action required:

- a) If notice of withdrawal is received in writing at the RCVS **on or before** the closing date for the receipt of entries, a full refund of the fee, subject to a deduction of 10% for administrative costs, will be made.
- b) If notice of withdrawal is received in writing at the RCVS **after the closing date for entries but no less than 10 working days** before the date on which your theoretical examination is due to be held, a 50% refund will be made.
- c) If you withdraw **less than ten days before the examination or fail to appear** at the examination, you will not be entitled to a refund of any portion of the fee paid (except as provided below).

In special circumstances, consideration will be given to a full refund if there are medical or compassionate reasons for withdrawal or failure to appear for the examination. Any such refunds will be subject to a deduction of 10% for administrative costs or cost incurred by our examination provider.

Please note that we are unable to provide full refunds if you require a visa and the visa is not issued before the examination. In these cases, our normal refund policy applies. You are strongly advised to check if you will be eligible for a visa before applying to sit the examination.

Reasonable Adjustment

If you have any special educational or other needs/disability which may require special provision to be made in the examinations, you can apply for adjustments to be made in your examination.

Applications must be received at least two months before your examination. You will receive a letter confirming the adjustments we will make. If adjustments have been permitted, you should indicate this on the examination entry form. Assessments for special educational needs made before you were sixteen must have been made within two years of the application for entry to the examinations or an updated report will be required. If the report was made after your sixteenth birthday, then no updated report will be necessary, even if it is more than two years old.

A current medical letter must accompany applications made for medical reasons.

Mitigating Circumstances

If you wish to notify the RCVS of circumstances, which may have unduly affected your examination performance, you must do so within 5 days of sitting the examination. You must use the appropriate form, which can be obtained on request from the RCVS Examinations Team prereg.vn@rcvs.org.uk.

The RCVS will give consideration to personal circumstances (such as illness or serious personal problems) which occurred unexpectedly and immediately prior to, or during, the examination. We will also take into consideration events occurring during the examination itself (such as undue disturbance). If we consider that such circumstances have unduly affected your performance, your mark may be adjusted, or the examination attempt may be nullified. You should note that adjustment of marks applies only in the case of borderline failure.

Illness cannot be used as a reason for mitigating circumstances – if you are unwell, you should withdraw from the examination and re-apply when you are fit to sit.

Examination results enquiry and appeals

If you have an enquiry concerning the accuracy of your examination results you must submit the Examination Enquiry form within 14 days of the results being published. The form can be obtained from the RCVS prereg.vn@rcvs.org.uk. There is a fee for the enquiry, which will be refunded if the investigation identifies an irregularity in your examination.

If you are not satisfied with the result of the enquiry or you feel that an enquiry is not necessary, you may submit an examination appeal. Examination appeals may be made only against the **conduct and conditions** of the examination **and not against the marks awarded**. An appeal must be made, in writing and using the RCVS Appeal Form available from the RCVS prereg.vn@rcvs.org.uk, within 28 days of the date of the letter advising of your examination result or 14 days after the letter informing you of the result of your enquiry.

Candidates awaiting the outcome of an appeal or investigation are advised to enter future examinations. If the appeal is successful, the RCVS will refund examination fees and all out of pocket expenses.

Confidentiality and test security

The results of the examination must be an accurate reflection of the candidate's knowledge and skills as a veterinary nurse. Any cheating or misconduct before, during or after the examination may raise doubts about your fitness to practise.

All examination material remains the property of the RCVS and you are not permitted to reproduce or attempt to reproduce examination materials through memorisation or other means. You must not share information about the questions used in the examination. You must not provide information relating to the examination content that may give unfair advantage to individuals who may be taking the examination, including, without limitation, posting information regarding the examination content on the internet, on social media or providing it to anyone involved in the preparation of candidates. If you become aware of or witness any attempt to compromise the examination, please report it to the RCVS.

If you engage in unacceptable or improper behaviour before, during or after the examination to attain success then your results will be annulled, and you may be barred from entry to future examinations. Misconduct includes, but is not limited to:

- Failure to comply with reasonable instruction of an examination official.
- Refusal to complete scans of the room or comply with the requests of the invigilator during exam security checks.
- Verbal or physical abuse of the invigilator or a member of the examinations team is made to feel intimidated or unsafe.
- Disruptive behaviour during the examination.
- Copying or attempting to copy the work of another candidate.

- Disclosing content from an examination to a third party, either in person or via email or social media.
- Removing examination materials from the examination that you have not previously been authorised to remove. This includes removing materials by using recording devices and taking photographs.
- Bringing items into the examination other than those you have been permitted to use.
- Communication either verbally or via signals with other candidates whilst under examination conditions.
- Impersonation of a candidate or allowing yourself to be impersonated.
- Bribery, or attempted bribery of any personnel involved in the design, development or delivery of the examination.
- Being part of in person or virtual groups, who share information that may breach exams and not reporting this.

Allegations of misconduct will be referred to the Examination Board and the Registrar, who will review all reports of the alleged misconduct and consider if there is sufficient evidence for the allegation to be pursued. Candidates accused of misconduct will have the opportunity to provide a defence. We may withhold candidate results while we investigate an allegation of misconduct.

Resource list

We are not able to recommend textbooks, but you might find the information in these resources helpful to prepare you for working in a UK practice.

- Anaesthesia for Veterinary Nurses (L Walsh)
- BSAVA Textbook of Veterinary Nursing
- Handbook of Veterinary Communication Skills (C Gray and J Moffett)
- RCVS Code of Professional Conduct <https://www.rcvs.org.uk/setting-standards/advice-and-guidance/code-of-professional-conduct-for-veterinary-nurses/>
- RCVS Day One Skills for Veterinary Nurses <https://www.rcvs.org.uk/document-library/rcvs-day-one-skills-for-veterinary-nurses/>
- The Complete Textbook of Veterinary Nursing, Victoria Aspinall

Assessment outcomes

The RCVS Pre-registration Theory (MCQ) Examination tests the candidate to ascertain to what extent an applicant has attained the knowledge, understanding and skills detailed in the [RCVS Day One Competences for Veterinary Nurses](#) along with [the RCVS Code of Professional Conduct for Veterinary Nurses](#). In order to support candidates to prepare for the examination a series of assessment outcomes has been provided. There are seven units each one focusses on a different aspect of veterinary nursing.

Each assessment outcome is referenced to the [RCVS Day One Competences for Veterinary Nurses](#)

and there is also information provided about the examination paper that the assessment outcome will be sampled in. Candidates are advised to use this information to help them prepare for the examination.

Distribution of examination questions

		Total number of questions		
Unit	Assessment Outcome	Paper 1	Paper 2	Paper 3
Unit 1:	Professional Veterinary Nursing responsibilities and Communication	13	4	24
Unit 2:	Animal Husbandry and Basic Nursing Care	16	5	0
Unit 3:	Diagnostic Principles	25	5	4
Unit 4:	Pharmacy and Dispensary	10	7	5
Unit 5:	Complex Veterinary Nursing Care	11	24	2
Unit 6:	Surgical Nursing and Theatre Assistance	9	5	0
Unit 7:	Anaesthesia and Recovery	16	15	0
Total number of questions		100	65	35

Unit 1

Professional Veterinary Nursing Responsibilities and Communication

Introduction

Individuals working towards RCVS Registration are expected to work within the legal and ethical framework for veterinary nurses in the UK. This includes understanding the scope of the Code of Professional Conduct which all veterinary nurses abide by. This unit also facilitates an understanding of the dynamics of communication within a veterinary setting, including inter-professional relationships and relationships with veterinary clients.

Examination information

Paper 1 Preparing to deliver patient care – 13 Questions.

Paper 2 Application of patient care – 4 Questions.

Paper 3 Being an accountable professional within veterinary practice – 24 Questions.

At the point of registration, the veterinary nurse will be able to:		Day One Competences	Exam
1.1 Understand the legal framework for veterinary nursing in practice			
1.1.1	Summarise the UK legal system, in relation to the veterinary nurse working in UK practice This could include: - the differences between criminal and civil law, - sources of law mentioning key differences in Scotland.	2	Paper 3
1.1.2	Summarise and explain the legal requirements for informed consent for a range of reasonable treatment options to include: - fee estimate, - explanation, - signature.	6	Paper 3
1.2 Understand the ethical and legal responsibilities of the veterinary nurse in practice			
1.2.1	Summarise ethical schools of thought, to include utilitarianism, deontology, and virtue ethics. Including: - morals versus ethics, - personal values and beliefs-limitations and conflict in practice, - recognising the basis of arguments.	2	Paper 3

1.2.2	Describe ethical problems arising in veterinary practice including potential conflicts and addressing poor practice.	2	Paper 3
1.2.3	Understand patient care issues using ethical principles to include: • resolving dilemmas, • where to go for help.	2	Paper 3
1.2.4	Explain the principle of Duty of Care in relation to clients, colleagues, and animals, to include: • Animal Welfare Act, • negligence, • maintaining professional competence, • personal scope of competence.	2	Paper 3
1.2.5	Explain ethical issues surrounding the support of colleagues and clients, to include: • whistleblowing, • recognition and addressing of problems, • breaching confidentiality in the public interest, • protocols for whistleblowing and where to seek help/advice.	2	Paper 3
1.2.6	Explain factors that influence the human/animal relationship, to include culture and religion, and the interaction of social and economic factors	10	Paper 2
1.3 Understand the RCVS Code of Professional Conduct, working effectively as part of a multi-disciplinary team			
1.3.1	Compare and contrast the roles of a veterinary surgeon and a veterinary nurse to include: • defining acts of veterinary surgery, • The veterinary Surgeons Act 1966, • protection of animals' interests.	9	Paper 3
1.3.2	Explain the role and functions of non-registered staff within a veterinary practice to include: • their limitations.	8	Paper 3

1.3.3	Analyse the features of professional status to include: • education, • accountability, • public regard.	1	Paper 3
1.3.4	Explain the purpose and principles of professional regulation, to include: • adhere to the Code of Professional Conduct.	1	Paper 3
1.3.5	Explain the functions of a professional regulatory body, to include: • public protection, • codes of conduct, • investigation of complaints, • standard setting, • Continued Professional Development (CPD), • maintaining a register.	1	Paper 3
1.3.6	Explain the importance of personal hygiene and dress in relation to contaminated materials, to include: • blood, • urine, • faeces, • tissue, • cadavers.	1	Paper 3
1.3.7	Interpret the RCVS Code of Professional Conduct for veterinary nurses and Veterinary Surgeons, to include: • understanding the purpose of the five principles of practice obtaining help and advice, • application to practical situations, • Delegation of duties.	1	Paper 3
1.3.8	Describe influences on relationships between members of an inter-professional team, to include: • perceptions, • roles, • expertise and responsibilities.	8	Paper 3

1.3.9	Outline the significance of the veterinary Surgeons Act 1966 and interpret the provisions of the Act in relation to veterinary nurses, to include: • meaning of Schedule 3, • scope of veterinary nursing practice, • purpose of The Veterinary Surgeons Act, • treatment by non-veterinary surgeons under Schedule 3 (registered veterinary nurses, student veterinary nurses and non-registered staff.	9	Paper 3
1.3.10	Summarise the legislation and codes of practice in place to protect animal interests, mentioning the Animal Welfare Act 2006, DEFRA, Dangerous Dogs Act 1991, and animal welfare codes.	3	Paper 3
1.4 Demonstrate knowledge of the organisation and legislation related to a veterinary business			
1.4.1	Summarise the value of clients to a veterinary practice to include: • critical to business growth, • loyalty and word of mouth recommendations.	3	Paper 3
1.4.2	Explain important customer service factors for veterinary clients, to include: • information, • courtesy, • responsiveness, • presentation of the practice, • staff attitude.	3	Paper 3
1.4.3	Summarise the principles of handling a complaint to include: • courtesy and objectivity, • keeping a record; the complaint, the responses given, and actions taken, • addressing the nature of the complaint, • dealing with aggression/rudeness/abuse and know when to refer, • reflection and review of complaint procedure and further development of practice.	3	Paper 3

1.4.4	Explain the aims of health and safety practice to include: • reduction of risks, • quality improvement and clinical audit, making improvements. • identification of animals, clients, and staff at special risk, • consequences of poor H&S, • individual and employer accountability, • key legislations such as Health and Safety at Work Act 1974, Control of Substances Hazardous to Health (COSHH) 2002, Ionising Radiation Regulations (IRR) 2019, Manual Handling Operations and the Role of the Health and Safety Executive (HSE).	4	Paper 3
1.4.5	Explain the principal risks in a veterinary practice to include: • the environment and procedures put into place to avoid adverse incidents, • working hours, wellbeing and work life balance, • chemical and biological hazards, • the difference between a risk and a hazard and examples of each, • Following safe practice relating to dangers in the workplace.	4	Paper 3
1.4.6	Explain the principles of handling and disposal of hazardous substances, to include: • sharps, biological and chemical materials.	4	Paper 2
1.4.7	Describe the use of veterinary practice equipment, to include: • clinical furniture, • powered and manual instrumentation, • diagnostic imaging, • laboratory equipment, • anaesthetic equipment, • maintenance protocols and manufacturer's instructions, • reporting and managing unsafe equipment.	4	Paper 2

1.4.8	Explain protocols for routine checking and maintenance of equipment by both internal practice staff and external agencies, to include: • frequency, • Identification of equipment faults and the action that should be taken in the event of malfunction.	4	Paper 1
1.4.9	Identify the range of material needed to support a veterinary practice, to include: • consumables, • sterile supplies, • pharmaceuticals, • food.	8	Paper 1
1.4.10	Explain how to dispose of surplus and outdated materials, mentioning relevant legal requirements.	4	Paper 3
1.5 Communication and record keeping			
1.5.1	Identify modes and models of communication encountered in veterinary practice to include: • telephone, • face to face, • social media, • internet, • video conference, • models such as questioning and listening.	5	Paper 1
1.5.2	Explore factors that may affect communication, to include: • culture, • age, • grief, • use of language, • sensory impairment.	5	Paper 1
1.5.3	Differentiate between communication styles, to include recognition of own style of communication to include: • verbal and non-verbal, • two-way compared to authoritative statement and methods of adapting own communication with others.	5	Paper 1

1.5.4	Explain the dynamics of effective face-to-face interaction, mentioning social and environmental factors, body language and feedback mechanisms.	5	Paper 1
1.5.5	Explain the specific demands and adaptations required in telephone communication, social media and video.	5	Paper 1
1.5.6	Take a patient history to include actively eliciting relevant information, correct interpretation of given facts, concise transmission of relevant information to a veterinary colleague.	5, 7	Paper 1
1.5.7	Use veterinary record-keeping systems to include: • confidentiality and provisions of the Data Protection Act 2018, • data storage and disclosure, • keeping accurate and professional records.	5, 7	Paper 3
1.5.8	Advise clients on the process of seeking second opinions or referrals to include: • considering supersession and procedures, • the RCVS Guide to professional Conduct, • veterinary specialists and para-veterinary professionals.	22	Paper 3
1.5.9	Explain the features of informed consent and identify potential barriers to informed consent in practice to include: • information versus understanding, • time, training of staff, language, emergency situations, • unethical practices.	6	Paper 3
1.5.10	Explain the information to be obtained from the animal's owner, to include: • starvation, • normal routine, • contact details, • Reason for admission, • any changes since last consultation, • animals' normal routine.	6	Paper 1

1.5.11	Explain the principles of veterinary record-keeping to include: • mentioning client and patient records, • confidentiality, • GDPR, • accuracy and clarity, • RCVS Codes of Professional Conduct.	7	Paper 3
1.6 Veterinary nursing consultations			
1.6.1	Explain the value of nursing follow-up clinics in support of chronic animal health problems to include: • role of the veterinary team in long term care, • requirements for an effective nursing clinic, • role and remit of the veterinary nurse in consultations, • improving client concordance, • providing support and improving quality of life, • clinic aims, • costing and budget, • consulting protocols, • guidance for referral, • preventative medicine.	37	Paper 2
1.6.2	Identify suitable patients for a nursing clinic in consultation with the veterinary surgeon.	15	Paper 1
1.6.3	Explain the importance of key factors in maintaining animal health to include: • housing, • feeding, • exercise, • grooming and nail/hoof care, • dental hygiene (including scaling/polishing and oral care), • vaccination, • parasite control.	18	Paper 1
1.6.4	Describe the breeding cycles of a range of species to include dogs, cats, exotic species to include: • mentioning natural mating, • artificial insemination, • pseudopregnancy, • the physiological needs of pregnant animals, • regulation of breeding cycles and drugs.	37	Paper 1

1.6.5	Explain reproductive physiology in the male and female; describe comparative reproductive tracts to include: hormones controlling and produced by male and female gonad.	37	Paper 1
1.6.6	Explain the essentials of intra-partum care to include: - preparations, - normal labour and parturition, - identification of complications and post-partum care, - stages of foetal development, hormonal controls, - stages of labour, complications of labour and delivery, - supporting owners to prepare for parturition.	37	Paper 1
1.6.7	Explain methods of identifying a range of species, to include dogs, cats, exotic species, to include: - breed, - markings, colourings, and distinguishing features, - owner registration (tattooing, microchips, tags), - passports, - blood typing, - DNA testing.	37	Paper 1
1.6.8	Explain the principles of introducing new stock to an existing animal group to include: quarantine and behaviour dynamics.	35	Paper 1
1.7 Euthanasia and client support			
1.7.1	Evaluate the nurse's role in breaking bad news to clients to include: time, sensitivity, empathic approach, and support.	36	Paper 3
1.7.2	Explain how sensitive euthanasia can be accomplished within a busy veterinary practice to include: - preparing clients, - timing of appointment, - special entrance/exit for clients and layout of the consulting room, - handling of the animal, - support of clients, - home visits.	36	Paper 2

1.7.3	Explain the psychological processes of loss and grieving and summarise how these may impact on communication with a client to include: - the grieving process, - stages of grieving.	36	Paper 1
1.7.4	Evaluate services available to assist clients to cope with loss to include: - pet bereavement counselling, - pet crematoria, - condolence cards and pet memorial keepsakes.	36	Paper 2

Unit 2

Animal Husbandry and Basic Nursing Care

Introduction

Individuals working towards RCVS Registration are required to understand and apply Animal Husbandry and Nursing Care. In particular the examination will test your knowledge of handling of small companion animals including the consideration of biosecurity and infection control in a clinical environment. In addition, you will be expected to have knowledge of nursing care including medical models of nursing and the nursing process. Anatomy and physiology of the digestive system and integument are also required.

Examination information

Paper 1 Preparing to deliver patient care - 16 Questions.

Paper 2 Application of patient care – 5 Questions.

Paper 3 Being an accountable professional within veterinary practice – 0 Questions.

At the point of registration, the veterinary nurse will be able to:		Day One Competences	Exam
2.1 Understand and apply biosecurity and infection control			
2.1.1	Explain the risks of zoonoses, including animal to human transmission and vice versa to include: - risk to human health and precautions, - the importance of appropriate personal protective equipment (PPE).	24	Paper 1
2.1.2	Identify the major groups of disease-producing infectious agents in relation to animal health, to include: - viruses, - bacteria, - fungi, - protozoa, - parasites, - prions, - nature of parasites-common endo- and ecto-parasites.	29	Paper 1

2.1.3	Describe how microorganisms are transmitted, to include: • direct and indirect spread, • inhalation, inoculation, and ingestion, • reservoirs, fomites, and carriers, • incubation period.	29	Paper 1
2.1.4	Analyse the role of the veterinary nurse in maintaining high standards of biosecurity, to include: • staff training and mentorship, • providing a role model.	29	Paper 2
2.1.5	Explain the importance of infection monitoring in clinical audit.	13	Paper 1
2.1.6	Distinguish between the processes of disinfection and sterilisation, to include: • antisepsis and asepsis.	29	Paper 1
2.1.7	Explain the use of clinical antiseptics and disinfectants, to include: • susceptibility of different classes of organisms and how this affects choice, • safe and effective use.	29	Paper 1
2.1.8	Apply principles of effective clinical cleaning to include: • consulting rooms, • hospital accommodation, • laboratory, • operating theatre.	29	Paper 1
2.1.9	Apply safe principles of waste handling and disposal in relation to contaminated materials, to include: • blood, • urine, • faeces, • tissue and cadavers. • disposal systems, • storage, • legal waste requirements.	29	Paper 2

2.1.10	Explain reasons for isolation nursing, to include: • infection, • compromised immunity, • quarantine, • barrier nursing, • reverse barrier nursing.	29	Paper 1
2.1.11	Explain the requirement for isolation accommodation to include: • preparation for an admission.	29	Paper 1
2.1.12	Summarise required conduct of staff in relation to isolated cases, to include: • protective clothing and hand hygiene, • fomites, • access to isolation accommodation.	29	Paper 1
2.2 Explain and demonstrate safe animal handling and restraint			
2.2.1	Explain how to safely transport a range of species safely, to include dogs, cats, exotic species to include: • methods and equipment used, • restraint, • handling difficult animals, • basic animal training.	17	Paper 2
2.2.2	Explain how to recognise and deal with aggressive behaviour to include: • signs of aggression and changes in behaviour, • methods of handling, • use of muzzles/catchers, • crush cages.	35	Paper 2
2.3 Knowledge of basic veterinary care and support			
2.3.1	Summarise safety considerations in relation to the use of accommodation and associated equipment, to include: • design, • state of repair, • reporting and managing unsafe equipment, • fitness for purpose.	18	Paper 1

2.3.2	Differentiate between the “medical” model of nursing and the nursing-focussed model to include: • medical model-diagnosis and treatment of disease, • nursing model-supportive care based on individual needs.	18	Paper 1
2.3.3	Explain the “Nursing Process”, mentioning a logical cycle of planning, implementation, and evaluation.	18	Paper 1
2.3.4	Compare and evaluate models of nursing, to include: • The Orpet & Jeffrey Ability Model, • Orem's Model of Self Care, • Roper, Logan and Tierney's Model of Nursing, • compare in relation to nursing situations and suitability for veterinary nursing.	18	Paper 1
2.3.5	Explain and address the special needs of isolated patients, to include reduction of stress, company.	19	Paper 2
2.3.6	Explain the roles of essential nutrients, minerals and vitamins in dogs, cats, exotic species to include: • altered requirements during illness and convalescence.	19	Paper 2
2.3.7	Describe the differing nutritional requirements of very young, very old, breeding and performance animals to include: • calculate nutritional and basic needs.	19	Paper 2
2.3.8	Explain the effects of illness and injury on nutritional requirements.	19	Paper 2
2.3.9	Compare and contrast mammalian digestive tracts and modes of digestion to include: • location, structure, and function of the alimentary tract from lips to anus, • dentition and anatomy of the generic tooth, • function and location of glands associated with digestion, • role and function of the liver.	19	Paper 1

2.3.10	Assess and record temperature, pulse and respiration and mucous membranes. Explain how to carry these observations out to include: • blood pressure, • normal parameters of the vital signs (dog/cat), • techniques for measuring vital signs, collection, and recording, • location of pulse points.	19	Paper 2
2.3.11	Describe the structure of the skin, hair, and associated glands.	18	Paper 1
2.3.12	Explain the process for wound healing, to include: • healing by first intention, • delayed healing.	19	Paper 1
2.3.13	Summarise factors that may impede healing, to include: • poor perfusion, • poor nutrition, • infection, • patient or client interference.	19	Paper 1
2.3.14	Explain the principles of management for chronic wounds, to include: • moist healing, • factors that delay healing, • indications for antibiotic therapy, • including swabs for culture and sensitivity. • recognising infection.	19	Paper 2
2.3.15	Appraise the use of different dressing materials in the veterinary situation, to include: • traditional materials, • interactive dressings, • casting materials.	19	Paper 2

Unit 3

Diagnostic Principles

Introduction

Individuals working towards RCVS Registration are expected to have knowledge to enable them to collect, preserve and process samples to assist with the diagnosis of disease in small companion animals. In addition, knowledge and understanding of the application of diagnostic imaging techniques within a veterinary environment. Questions will also be asked in relation to the structure and function of the musculoskeletal system.

Examination information

Paper 1 Preparing to deliver patient care – 25 Questions.

Paper 2 Application of patient care – 5 Questions.

Paper 3 Being an accountable professional within veterinary practice – 4 Questions.

At the point of registration, the veterinary nurse will be able to:		Day One Competences	Exam
3.1 Prepare equipment and animals for sampling analysis			
3.1.1	Describe the requirements for the safe and effective use of laboratory equipment, to include: state health and safety practises in the laboratory,	4	Paper 3
3.1.2	Describe equipment and materials required for sample collection, processing, preservation, and transport, to include: - blood, - urine, - faeces, - secretions, - skin, hair, and tissue. - Operation and maintenance - Calibration and quality control of analysers, centrifuges and refractometers. - Components and use of microscopes	21	Paper 1

3.1.3	Explain how to prepare animals (with safe handling, moving, restraint and patient checks) for the collection of samples, to include: • urine, • faeces, • blood, • secretions, • skin and hair.	21	Paper 2
3.2 Understand and demonstrate the collection and analysis of samples			
3.2.1	Explain basic cell structure, physiology, and division.	21	Paper 1
3.2.2	Identify common ectoparasites and endoparasites.	21	Paper 2
3.2.3	Explain the importance of how to use commercial test kits effectively and the implications that may arise from inaccuracy, to include: • timing, • expiry date, • storage according to manufacturer's instructions.	21	Paper 1
3.2.4	Identify abnormal results, recognise spurious results and the need to rerun tests. Recognise normal biochemical and haematological parameters.	21	Paper 2
3.3 Understand how to store and transport specimens			
3.3.1	Describe how to store specimens safely and effectively prior to despatch. To include: • refrigeration, • segregation of pathological samples and deterioration.	21	Paper 2
3.3.2	Explain the requirements for the safe transport of specimens, to include: • packaging and labelling, • infection control, • temperature control, • fixing/preservation of samples, • labelling of samples in appropriate containers, • completion of forms, • effective handling, packaging and dispatch by post and courier to external laboratories, considering regulations.	21	Paper 1

3.3.3	Describe how to dispose of surplus pathological material and reagents safely.	21	Paper 1
3.4 Understanding diagnostic imaging, health and safety, current regulations and care of equipment			
3.4.1	Describe the legal requirements for radiography in veterinary practice to include: - authorised personnel, - health & safety, - Ionising Radiation Regulations 2017.	23	Paper 3
3.4.2	Explain the requirements for exposure risk assessment and monitoring including: - effective use of dosimeters, - implications to personnel and patients of inaccurate or incorrect exposures.	23	Paper 3
3.4.3	Summarise requirements for the use of personal protective equipment, when dealing with radiation and the care and storage required.	23	Paper 3
3.4.4	Describe the properties and effects of radiation, to include: - function of equipment, to include tube head, light beam diaphragm, - primary beam and scatter, - absorption by different materials/tissues, - effects of kV and mA.	23	Paper 1
3.4.5	Understand the uses, types, and implications of contrast imaging for: - myelography, - arthrography, - alimentary tract studies, - urinary tract studies.	23	Paper 1
3.4.6	Summarise types of images that can be produced using radiation, to include: - X-rays, - Scintigraphy, - Coaxial Tomography (CT), - MRI.	23	Paper 1

3.4.7	Explain the features and use of cassettes and grids, such as structure and use of a grid, labelling methods and protocols.	23	Paper 1
3.4.8	Explain how to calculate exposure factors.	23	Paper 1
3.4.9	Explain the principles of digital imaging to include: - compare the advantages and limitations of digital imaging, - reasons for poor digital image quality.	23	Paper 1
3.4.10	Explain the principles of endoscopy to include: - care, maintenance, and storage of equipment, - the implications and indications of use, - methods of patient positioning and restraint.	23	Paper 1
3.4.11	Summarise how images are produced using ultrasound to include: - indications for use, - image quality, - range of probes and their maintenance.	23	Paper 1
3.4.12	Describe the care and maintenance of ultrasound equipment to include: - scanners, probes, and transducers, - patient care and positioning, - use of conductive fluids.	23	Paper 1
3.4.13	Summarise how images are produced by magnetic resonance to include: - the principles of magnetic resonance imaging, - role and application, - patient management and monitoring.	23	Paper 1
3.4.14	Describe requirements for supporting imaging using radioactive isotopes (scintigraphy) to include: - explain the use of radioactive isotopes, - licensing of premises, - patient care and safe handling, - administration and disposal of isotopes and excreta.	23	Paper 1
3.5 Preparation of animals for radiography imaging and processing the image			

3.5.1	Explain the structure and function of the musculoskeletal system to include: • function and classification of bones, muscles, and joints, • major clinically relevant bony landmarks, • muscle terminology and, • distinction of tendons and ligaments.	23	Paper 1
3.5.2	Describe the key anatomical structures of birds and reptiles and explain the keyways in which the physiology of birds and reptiles differs from that of mammals.	19	Paper 1
3.5.3	Explain the use of directional terms, prefixes and suffixes, modes of body section and joint movement and the anatomical boundaries of body cavities.	23	Paper 1
3.5.4	Summarise methods of patient restraint for radiographic examination, to include: • chemical and manual positioning aids, • appropriate use of manual restraint, • clinical considerations when imaging debilitated patients.	23	Paper 2
3.5.5	Evaluate the diagnostic quality of a processed radiograph, to include: • reasons for poor image quality, • terms associated with radiographic quality such as density, contrast, sharpness and causes for under/over exposure.	23	Paper 2

Unit 4

Pharmacy and Dispensary

Introduction

Individuals working towards RCVS Registration are expected to have an understanding of veterinary pharmacology and the supply of medicines within a veterinary environment including the administration of medication.

Examination information

Paper 1 Preparing to deliver patient care – 10 Questions.

Paper 2 Application of patient care – 7 Questions.

Paper 3 Being an accountable professional within veterinary practice – 5 Questions.

At the point of registration, the veterinary nurse will be able to:		Day One Competences	Exam
4.1 Understand pharmacy legislation and legal requirements within practice			
4.1.1	Explain the law in relation to veterinary medicines, to include: • The Veterinary Medicines Regulations (Amendment etc.) Regulations 2024, • registration of premises, • legal categories of medicines, • veterinary prescribing cascade (food and non-food animals, withdrawal periods), • storage and disposal requirements, • record-keeping (including broached vials, out of date stock, returned medication), • The Misuse of Drugs Act 1971, • The Misuse of Drugs Act Regulations 2001, to include schedules of controlled drugs, requirements for ordering and delivery, recording in controlled drugs register, storage and use, destruction.	26	Paper 3
4.1.2	Explain the role, remit and professional responsibilities of a Suitably Qualified Person (SQP) to include: • VMD Code of Practice, • registration and regulatory bodies (AMTRA, Vetpol, Vetskill), • CPD obligations, • limitations on SQP “diagnosis”.	26	Paper 3

4.1.3	Explain the requirements for a legal veterinary prescription to include: - the principles, practice, and legal requirements for a valid prescription, considering duration of prescription, - online pharmacies and prescription charges.	26	Paper 3
4.1.4	Summarise information that should be obtained from a client to enable an appropriate choice of medication for supply by an SQP to include: - disease or condition of the patient requiring treatment, - previous supply of medication, - last veterinary examination.	26	Paper 3
4.1.5	Summarise requirements for the packaging and labelling of veterinary medicines to include: - principles of safe dispensing (recommended containers for veterinary medicines, precautions when handling medicines, product labelling to include legally required information, signatures and checks prior to dispensing), - understand categories use in governing sale and supply of veterinary medicines, - Prescription Only Medicine-Veterinarian (POM-V), - Prescription Only Medicine-Veterinarian, pharmacist, suitably qualified person (POM-VPS), - Non-Food Animal-Veterinarian, pharmacist, suitably qualified person (NFA-VPS), - Authorised Veterinary Medicine-General Sales List (AVM-GSL).	26	Paper 3

4.1.6 Describe requirements for the safe disposal of used equipment and surplus medication.	25 and 26	Paper 2
4.2 Understand and dispense medicines correctly and responsibly in accordance with veterinary surgeon direction, legislation and current guidance		
4.2.1 Summarise the principles of stock control, mentioning record-keeping, storage conditions, stock rotation to include: - the legal requirements for record keeping of pharmacy stock, - principles of pharmacy stock management, - maintenance of effective records-sale supply, use and legally required, - keeping stock in optimum condition for use-stock rotation, expiry dates, minimum and maximum temperature recording, drug specific storage requirements and effect of environmental conditions).	26	Paper 1

4.2.2	Interpret pharmacy terminology and abbreviations to include: • proprietary/trade versus generic names of medicines, • common abbreviations for routes of administration, frequency, and time of administration), • understand common classifications of medicines such as: - o ecto-and endo-parasitocides, - o antimicrobials, - o opiate analgesics, - o cardiovascular, - o diuretics, - o cytotoxic/antineoplastic, - o corticosteroids, - o nonsteroidal anti-inflammatory drugs (NSAIDs), - o sedatives/tranquillisers, - o anti-convulsants, - o allergy drugs; including antihistamines, - o vaccines, - o anti-emetics.	26	Paper 1
4.2.3	Explain factors that can affect duration of action to include: • patient factors i.e., route of administration, hydration, multiple medications, • medicine factors such as effect of storage and formulation, • reasons for choice of administration routes that include bioavailability of drug when given by a different route, speed of onset of effect and according to patient needs.	25	Paper 1

4.2.4	Explain how to calculate and dispense appropriate quantities of medication to include: • formulae used to calculate dosages for tablets, liquids, solutions, and injections, • use of calculators and the importance of gross error checks, • loose tablets, bubble packs, • identify standard and international units, • safe handling of medicines, to include written and oral guidance to clients, • checks before dispensing such as: last veterinary examination, authorisation of prescription, weight check, checking of prescription history (frequency, any weight changes).	25	Paper 1
4.2.5	Summarise information that should be provided to a client concerning the administration of a prescribed medicine, to include: • purpose of medication, • safe handling and disposal, • route of administration, • Summary of Product Characteristics (SPC), • adverse reactions, • compliance.	26	Paper 2
4.2.6	Describe the urinary system and explain the production of urine to include: • the function and structure of the kidneys, ureters, bladder, urethra, the nephron as a functional unit and the role of the kidney in control of blood pressure and homeostasis.	19	Paper 1
4.2.7	Explain the function of the kidney in maintaining blood pressure and homeostasis to include: • renal endocrine functions.	19	Paper 1
4.2.8	Describe ways in which medicines act and are excreted, to include: • action, • excretion, • common side effects and adverse reactions, • handling precautions, • contraindications, • nursing implications.	27	Paper 2

4.3 Safely and Competently administer a range of medication

4.3.1 Explain techniques for administering medicines to include: • oral, • rectal, • topical, • parental, • sites commonly used for injection, • care of intravenous cannulae.	19	Paper 2
4.3.2 Explain the mechanisms for reporting adverse reactions to include: • recognition of adverse reactions and reporting procedures to the VMD.	27	Paper 3
4.3.3 Explain the implications of antibiotic resistance for veterinary practice, to include: • MRSA	29	Paper 2

Unit 5

Complex Veterinary Nursing Care

Introduction

Individuals working towards RCVS Registration are required to have knowledge of complex nursing of sick animals within a clinical environment including the principles of first aid, planning, and implementing nursing care for both medical and surgical small companion animal patients.

Examination information

Paper 1 Preparing to deliver patient care – 11 Questions.

Paper 2 Application of patient care – 24 Questions.

Paper 3 Being an accountable professional within veterinary practice – 2 Questions.

At the point of registration, the veterinary nurse will be able to:		Day One Competences	Exam
5.1 Understand the principles of first aid			
5.1.1	Define the scope of first aid, mentioning legal entitlement to provide first aid to animals to include: - the meaning of first aid care, - the legal difference between first aid and emergency veterinary treatment, - provisions of the Veterinary Surgeons Act 1966 and Schedule 3 amendments in relation to first aid.	20	Paper 3
5.1.2	Explain the principles of first aid management and treatment, to include: - safety of self and others, - models of casualty assessment, - safe methods of movement, - systematic assessment of casualty.	20	Paper 2
5.1.3	Explain the concept of triage and identify situations that constitute emergencies, to include: - communication with clients and lay persons, - systematic gathering of information, - use of protocols to prioritise cases, - differentiate between commonly encountered emergency situations and those requiring attention through appointments in the immediate future.	20	Paper 1

5.1.4	Explain how to prepare for the admission of an emergency case, to include: • consulting room, • equipment, • consumables, • operating theatre.	20	Paper 1
5.1.5	Explain the contents and maintenance of an emergency 'crash box' or trolley.	20	Paper 1
5.1.6	Explain the principles of first aid treatment techniques, to include: • unconsciousness, • compromised airway (including CPR), • haemorrhage and wounds, • fractures.	20	Paper 2
5.1.7	Explain the first aid management of burns and ingestion of poison to include: • the immediate treatment of burns and scalds, • suitable first aid dressings, • common poisons such as metaldehyde, theobromine, • history taking, • immediate treatment, • veterinary poisons information services.	20 and 28	Paper 2
5.1.8	Explain what information should be given to a veterinary surgeon regarding a treated first aid casualty to include: • description of nature of incident, • timing, • treatment given, • condition of animal throughout, • presenting person's contact details, • owner details.	20	Paper 2
5.1.9	Explain how to support the veterinary surgeon during resuscitation and stabilisation procedures to include: • assist with resuscitation and stabilisation, • record keeping throughout, • ensuring safety such as floors clear and sharps accounted for.	20	Paper 2

5.1.10	Explain the principles of administering blood and blood products, to include: • donors, • Collection and storage, • equipment and administration, • patient monitoring and complications, • reasons for reactions, • recognition and action to take, • significance and consequences of transfusion rates and central venous pressure.	20	Paper 2
5.1.11	Explain the principles of respiratory therapy to include: • oxygen supplementation, • tracheostomy, • thoracic drains, • pulse oximetry; blood gas analysis, • physiotherapy and postural drainage.	20	Paper 2
5.1.12	Assess and record levels of consciousness.	20	Paper 2
5.2 Planning and implementing veterinary care plans			
5.2.1	Explain the care needs of patients in relation to commonly encountered diseases and traumatic conditions, to include: • recumbency, • post-surgical care, • trauma, • requirement for fluid therapy, • requirement for assisted feeding, • containment and physical therapies, • recognition of normal and abnormal excretions/secretions and their implications.	19	Paper 2
5.2.2	Outline principles of species-specific nursing, mentioning cats, dogs, exotics to include: • medical and surgical nursing needs, • provision of nursing care and stimulation in in-patients in health and ill-health, • records for hospitalised care, post operative care and the physiological effects of anaesthetic agents, • planning for discharge, wound care and management, application of dressings and bandages, with identification of purposes and types such as pressure, support, dressing retention.	19	Paper 2

5.2.3	Plan, deliver, use and evaluate care for animals with a range of conditions, using an appropriate model or framework, using this to assess animals, inform the delivery of nursing care, to include medically and surgically related problems, to include: the influence of environmental, physical, and psychological factors.	18	Paper 2
5.2.4	Explain how a nursing model is used to inform patient assessment to include physical, behavioural, and owner-related factors to include: - in-patient assessment, using a logical sequence and methodology, - holistic approach.	18	Paper 1
5.2.5	Differentiate between actual and potential nursing problems to include: - identifying actual and potential problems, - planning to prevent problems such as decubitus ulcers.	18	Paper 1
5.2.6	Use a reflective approach to support nursing problem solving to include: - the reflective process, - value of reflection in learning.	14 and 16	Paper 1
5.2.7	Explain the core requirements for a homecare plan.	19	Paper 2
5.2.8	Analyse the factors to consider and demonstrate effective care planning when planning for discharge, to include: condition of the patient and home circumstances.	18	Paper 2
5.2.9	Demonstrate effective care planning for discharge.	18	Paper 2
5.2.10	Explain the importance of client understanding and agreement in the home management of a patient and identify factors that may inhibit this.	10	Paper 2
5.3 Medical nursing care			

5.3.1	Describe the function of the endocrine system in relation to the control of body systems to include. • outlining the functions and location of composite organs.	19	Paper 1
5.3.2	Explain the functions of the autonomic and motor nervous system and the special senses to include: • structure and function of neurons, nerve impulse transmission and basic reflex arc, • clinically relevant peripheral nerves-radial, median, ulna, sciatic and femoral, • functions of the cranial nerves, • structure and basic physiology of the special sense organs (eyes and ears) with brief descriptions of modalities of taste, olfaction and touch.	19	Paper 1
5.3.3	Describe the pathology of a range of commonly encountered and medical disorders, to include: • circulatory disorders, • respiratory disorders, • urinary tract disorders, • endocrine disorders, • neurological disorders, • alimentary tract disorders, • reproductive tract disorders, • musculoskeletal disorders, • disorders of the sense organs, • degenerative, infective, and neoplastic conditions commonly encountered in general practice, • presentation, diagnosis, and veterinary treatment.	18	Paper 1
5.3.4	Explain how compensatory mechanisms may give rise to symptoms of disease to include: • pyrexia, • tachycardia, • tachypnoea, • hypotension, • anuria.	18	Paper 2

5.3.5	Summarise the species-specific intensive nursing requirements of patients, mentioning cats, dogs, and exotics, to include: • trauma, • major surgical procedures, • critical medical conditions.	18	Paper 2
5.3.6	Explain the nursing needs of a critically ill animal to include: • breathing and cardiovascular function, • nutrition and fluid balance, • mobility, • hygiene, • maintaining body temperature, • pain and stress.	19	Paper 2
5.3.7	Explain the observations required of a critically ill patient to include: • frequency, • vital signs, • blood pressure monitoring, • ECG, • neurological function. • Pain scoring.	19	Paper 2
5.3.8	Recognise clinical and behavioural indicators of a change in condition, to include: • responses to shock, • infection, • pain, • stress.	19	Paper 2
5.3.9	Explain the principles of intravenous cannulation, to include: • indications, • identification of access points and veins, • selection of cannula, • risks and complications.	19	Paper 2

5.3.10	Explain the care of an intravenous catheter, to include: • site care, • maintaining patency, • mentioning intermittent use, • parenteral nutrition, • central lines.	19	Paper 2
5.3.11	Explain the principles of record keeping and reporting for critically ill animals.	7	Paper 3
5.3.12	Understand the administration of complex medications, to include: • infused medications, • intravenous bolus medications.	19	Paper 2
5.3.13	Describe the placement and management of feeding tubes.	19	Paper 2
5.3.14	Explain methods of assisted feeding, to include: • hand feeding, • syringe feeding, • tube feeding.	19	Paper 2
5.3.15	Explain the management of indwelling, urinary catheters, to include: • placement of, and assistance with the placement of urinary catheters, • catheter care.	19	Paper 2
5.3.16	Explain the management bowel function, to include: • enemata.	19	Paper 2
5.3.17	Understand how to discard used equipment and surplus medication appropriately and safely.	25	Paper 2
5.3.18	Explain the care for patients with compromised mobility, to include: • positioning and changes of position, • bedding requirements, • physiotherapy.	19	Paper 2

5.3.19	Understand and describe physiotherapy techniques to include: • thoracic coupage, • passive limb exercises, • active exercise.	19	Paper 2
5.3.20	Explain key principles of genetic inheritance and define terms, including phenotype, genotype, allele.	18	Paper 1
5.3.21	Explain the nursing and management of neonates, to include recognition of abnormalities and complications.	19	Paper 2
5.4 Post-operative nursing care			
5.4.1	Explain the physiology, recognition, and management of post operative shock to include: • types of shock, • physiology of hypovolaemic shock, • compensatory mechanisms, • signs of shock, • fluid replacement, • arrest of haemorrhage complications.	19	Paper 2
5.4.2	Explain the requirements for handover from the operating theatre, to include: • surgical procedure, • anaesthetic, • observations at handover, • treatment instructions.	19	Paper 2
5.4.3	Explain how post-operative fluid balance is maintained, to include: • altered intake/output, • calculating fluid requirements, • maintaining intravenous infusion.	19	Paper 2

5.4.4	Explain core nursing requirements during post-operative convalescence, to include: • fluid and nutrition, • elimination, • mobility, exercise, • pain relief, alleviation of stress, • wound management.	19	Paper 2
5.4.5	Summarise the principles of effective post-operative pain management to include: • monitoring effective pain relief (physiological signs of pain), • common analgesics used peri and intra-operatively, • epidural analgesia, • local/regional blocks.	34	Paper 2
5.4.6	Describe the principles of surgical wound care and deliver the care required, to include: • observation, • management of drainage, • appearance of haematoma, infection, • drains, • dressings and bandaging, • removal of drains, closures, • preventing interference, • haematoma and bruising, • the purpose, types and management of wound drainage, • dressing types and their application, • suture removal, • use of Elizabethan collar etc to prevent patient interference.	19	Paper 2

Unit 6

Surgical nursing and theatre assistance

Introduction

Individuals working towards RCVS Registration are expected to work competently within a theatre preparing the theatre and patients for surgical procedure including assisting in theatre.

Examination information

Paper 1 Preparing to deliver patient care – 9 Questions.

Paper 2 Application of patient care – 5 Questions.

Paper 3 Being an accountable professional within veterinary practice – 0 Questions.

At the point of registration, the veterinary nurse will be able to:		Day One Competences	Exam
6.1 Prepare the environment and equipment for surgery			
6.1.1	Explain the principles of operating theatre design, to include: • clean and dirty areas, • heating, lighting, ventilation, • circulation of personnel and materials, • preparing an environment for surgical procedures, • clean and dirty areas, • circulation of personnel and equipment between clean and dirty areas, • scavenging.	30	Paper 1
6.1.2	Explain effective operating theatre protocols, to include: • daily and periodic cleaning of environment, furniture, and equipment.	30	Paper 1
6.1.3	Explain the principles of planning an operating list to include: • preferred order of priority for sterile, aseptic, and dirty procedures.	30	Paper 1
6.1.4	Distinguish between essential, non-essential and inappropriate furnishings and equipment within the theatre environment to include: • issues with non-essential items such as dust-traps, venting of autoclaves.	30	Paper 1

6.1.5	Describe the construction and care of common groups of instruments, to include: • materials used, • care and storage requirements, • identifying damage, • safe handling.	30	Paper 1
6.1.6	Identify commonly used instruments and explain their use, to include: • general surgical, • dental, • orthopaedic, • methodical layout, • use of different surgical instruments, • assisting with tissue handling, • anticipating needs of the surgeon, • insertion of wound drainage systems.	30	Paper 1
6.1.7	Identify types of wound closure material and explain their properties and use, to include: • sutures, • staples, • glue, • types and properties (absorbable and non-absorbable), • synthetic and natural materials, • mono and polyfilaments, • contraindications, • needle types.	30	Paper 1
6.1.8	Explain the use of instrument trolleys and Mayo tables, to include layout of instruments.	30	Paper 1
6.1.9	Explain how to clean instruments effectively, to include: • hand-cleaning, • ultrasonic cleaning, • cleaning solutions, • delicate items, • checking function, • lubricating, • sharpening.	30	Paper 1

6.1.10	Describe the operation of an autoclave, to include safety, loading, monitoring of effective sterilisation to include: - types of autoclave and siting of them, - efficacy testing.	29	Paper 1
6.1.11	Explain the process of sterilisation, to include: - moist heat and dry heat, - gas, - cold chemicals, - gamma radiation, - the health and safety risks with each method.	29	Paper 1
6.1.12	Explain how to pack, label and store autoclaved items to include: - materials used for drapes/gowns, - disposable versus reusable drapes and gowns, - folding and packing techniques for drapes and gowns, - instrument packing techniques, - labelling techniques.	29	Paper 1
6.2 Patient preparation			
6.2.1	Describe requirements for clipping and skin preparation/preparation of operation sites, to include: - care and use of clippers, - identification of incision site, - first skin scrub (concentric circles versus back-and-forth technique, skin disinfectants and antiseptic solutions), - foot bandage.	30	Paper 2
6.2.2	Explain the safe use of patient transport systems, to include: - hoists, - trolleys, - stretchers.	30	Paper 2
6.3 Theatre assistance			

6.3.1	Understand how to behave appropriately in an operating theatre, to include: • communication, • movement, • personal hygiene, • safety of self and others, • scrubbed nurse, • circulating nurse.	30	Paper 2
6.3.2	Explain how to keep track of instruments and swabs, to include: • timing and recording of instrument, • swab counts.	31	Paper 2
6.3.3	Summarise observations to be made of an animal during surgery, to include: • blood loss, • tourniquets, • urine output, • coordination with anaesthetic monitoring observations, • monitoring of gross drainage and collection of fluids during procedures.	30	Paper 2
6.3.4	Describe the safe disposal of hazardous materials, to include: • sharps, • swabs, • suction bottle contents, • tissue/anatomical waste (body parts).	30	Paper 2

Unit 7

Anaesthesia and Recovery

Introduction

Individuals working towards RCVS Registration are expected to work competently within a theatre preparing for, supporting and monitoring of veterinary anaesthesia including the monitoring of the recovery of patients following anaesthesia.

Examination information

Paper 1 Preparing to deliver patient care – 16 Questions.

Paper 2 Application of patient care – 15 Questions.

Paper 3 Being an accountable professional within veterinary practice – 0 Questions.

At the point of registration, the veterinary nurse will be able to:		Day One Competences	Exam
7.1 Preparing patients, equipment, and materials for anaesthetic procedures			
7.1.1	Summarise the preparation and prepare animals for general anaesthesia, to include: • pre-anaesthetics checks, • fasting, • premedication, • checking admission information and procedures carried out, • the principles of pre-medication and drugs in common use, • general anaesthetic risks associated with special cases, such as toxic patients, limb fractures, existing conditions, obesity, ruptured diaphragm, caesarean section and gastric dilation and volvulus (GDV), • American Society of Anaesthesiologists (ASA) risk scoring.	32	Paper 2
7.1.2	Explain the principles of withholding food and fluids prior to anaesthesia to include: • risk of regurgitation, • pulmonary acid aspiration syndrome, • varying periods of withholding in special cases i.e., geriatric/paediatric.	32	Paper 2

7.1.3	Summarise and prepare the materials and equipment needed for induction of anaesthesia, to include: • consumables, • drugs and intravenous fluids, • laryngoscope, • endotracheal tubes, • monitoring equipment.	33	Paper 1
7.1.4	Explain the function and maintenance of key parts of an anaesthetic machine. Identify, and summarise the use, of anaesthetic breathing systems, to include: • re-breathing, • non-re-breathing, • knowledge of the function and maintenance of key parts and safety checking of equipment for the inhalation anaesthetic agents (Gas supply/delivery system such as piped/cylinders or generators), • key components of the anaesthetic machine, • pollution control systems, • advantages and disadvantages of non-re-breathing systems, • gas flow in the following systems Lack, Mini-Lack, Bain, T-Piece and Humphrey ADE, • advantages and disadvantages of re-breathing systems, • gas flow in circle system, • the advantages and disadvantages of Intermittent Positive Pressure Ventilation (IPPV) and its practical use.	32	Paper 1
7.1.5	Explain the safety checks to be made of anaesthetic equipment, to include: • endotracheal tubes/airway management device, • breathing systems, • anaesthetic machines, • pollution control systems, • ventilator, • tube patency and integrity, • breathing systems intact and not leaking, APL valve working and open/closed as appropriate, • anaesthetic machine - oxygen flush working, gas supply connected and sufficient, vaporiser filled. • scavenging-weight absorber, system connected and working.	32	Paper 1

7.1.6	Summarise types of endotracheal tube and describe their use and maintenance. • cuffed and non-cuffed, • disposable and, • re-sterilisable, • supraglottic device, • correct placement (breath sounds, chest movement) and cuff inflation.	32	Paper 1
7.2 Assist in administering and maintaining anaesthetics to patients			
7.2.1	Describe the structure and function of the circulatory system. To include: • structure and function of circulatory system: heart and blood vessels, • function and formation of constituents of blood, • the path of the blood through the circulatory system, • name and location of major vessels of the body, • the cardiac cycle and recognition of the cardiac cycle on an electrocardiograph, • factors controlling blood pressure and circulatory volume, • structure and function of the lymphatic system, location of its main components.	32	Paper 1
7.2.2	Describe the structure of the respiratory system and explain the process of respiration to include: • structure and function of the respiratory system airway, and lungs, • definition of terms associated with respiration, • respiratory cycle, mechanisms of gaseous exchange, neural control of respiration.	32	Paper 1
7.2.3	Define different methods of anaesthesia to include: • types of anaesthesia/analgesia: - general, epidural, regional, local, and topical, • advantages and disadvantages of the different methods.	33	Paper 1

7.2.4	Explain the physiology and anaesthetic terminology of general anaesthesia, to include: • sedation, • muscle relaxation, • pain relief, • physiology of sedation and general anaesthesia, 'triad of anaesthesia', • exchange of gases in the lung and principles of tissue respiration, • the effect of anaesthetic agents on the autonomic nervous system especially renal and hepatic perfusion and function, • terminology: dead space, tidal volume, and minute volume.	33	Paper 1
7.2.5	Summarise the function of key groups of anaesthetic drugs, to include: • intravenous and gaseous anaesthetics, • intramuscular anaesthetics, • sedatives, • analgesics, • muscle relaxants, • principles of analgesia and the advantages of pre-emptive multi modal analgesia (nonsteroidal anti-inflammatory drugs, opioids and local anaesthetic techniques), • principles of Intravenous, inhalation and chamber induction and the maintenance of anaesthesia using carrier gases, volatile agents, total intravenous anaesthesia and "top up" doses. <i>Note - Candidates will not be asked questions using trade names but generic names/active ingredients may be used.</i>	33	Paper 2
7.2.6	Summarise the concept of balanced anaesthesia to include: • triad of anaesthesia.	33	Paper 2
7.2.7	Explain stages, planes, and levels of anaesthesia.	33	Paper 2
7.2.8	Calculate fresh gas flow rate according to species, weight, and circuit factor to include: • calculation formulae, • gross error checks, • significance of circuit factors.	33	Paper 1

7.2.9	Explain the use of monitoring equipment, to include: • capnograph, • pulse oximeter, • electro-cardiograph, • indications for use, • effective use of equipment.	33	Paper 2
7.2.10	Explain the principles of effective intubation to include: • correct size of endotracheal tube, • use of laryngoscope, • identification of epiglottis, • avoidance of laryngeal spasm, • correct inflation of cuff.	33	Paper 2
7.3 Monitoring and recovery of anaesthesia			
7.3.1	Explain the observations to be made of an anaesthetised animal, and how these should be recorded, to include: • temperature, pulse, respiration, • level of consciousness, • frequency of observations, eye position, muscle tone and reflexes, mucous membranes, capillary refill time, heart rate/rhythm, • pulse oximetry, electrocardiogram, blood pressure monitoring, capnography, • reporting of significant changes and maintaining anaesthetic record, • timing of extubation.	33	Paper 2
7.3.2	Describe the observations to be made of equipment during an anaesthetic, including how recognise and manage equipment failure to include: • gases and volatile agents, • circuits and tube, • monitoring equipment, • power supply and failure, • connections, • supply of gases and volatile agents, • correlation of equipment read-outs with condition of patient, • manual ventilation.	33	Paper 2

7.3.3	Summarise observations to be reported to the veterinary surgeon during anaesthetic and recovery monitoring to include: • key changes and observations, • principles of effective pain management.	33/34	Paper 2
7.3.4	Explain the routine care requirements of an anaesthetised animal, to include: • maintaining temperature, • prevention of pressure necrosis, • avoidance of joint strain and limb swelling, • prevention of corneal ulcers, • removal of purse string sutures, monitoring aids etc.	32	Paper 2
7.3.5	Explain the positioning and monitoring of a patient during anaesthetic recovery, to include: • extubation safety, • recognising when to extubate, • laryngeal spasm, • effect of patient positioning on respiratory and cardiovascular function.	32	Paper 2
7.3.6	Explain how to recognise respiratory and cardiac arrest to include: • respiratory obstruction, • respiratory and cardiac arrest, • laryngeal spasm.	32	Paper 2