



# Subject Benchmark Statement

## Veterinary Nursing

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## About this Statement

This document is a QAA Subject Benchmark Statement for Veterinary Nursing that defines what can be expected of a graduate in the subject, in terms of what they might know, do and understand at the end of their studies. Subject Benchmark Statements are an established part of the quality assurance arrangements in UK higher education, but not a regulatory requirement. They are sector-owned reference points, developed and written by academics and practitioners on behalf of their subject. Subject Benchmark Statements also describe the nature and characteristics of awards in a particular subject or area. Subject Benchmark Statements are published in QAA's capacity as an expert quality body on behalf of the higher education sector. A summary of the Statement is also available on the QAA website.

Key changes from the previous Subject Benchmark Statement include:

- a revised structure for the Statement, which includes the introduction of cross-cutting themes of:
  - equality, diversity and inclusion
  - accessibility and the needs of disabled students
  - education for sustainable development
  - employability, entrepreneurship and enterprise education
- a comprehensive review updating the context and purposes, including course design and content, in order to inform and underpin the revised benchmark standards.

## How can I use this document?

Subject Benchmark Statements are not intended to prescribe any particular approaches to teaching, learning or assessment. Rather, they provide a framework, agreed by the subject community, that forms the basis on which those responsible for curriculum design, approval and update can reflect upon a course and its component modules. This allows for flexibility and innovation in course design while providing a broadly accepted external reference point for that discipline.

They may also be used as a reference point by external examiners in considering whether the design of a course and the threshold standards of achievement are comparable with those of other higher education providers. They also support professional, statutory and regulatory bodies (PSRBs) with the academic standards expected of students.

You may want to read this document if you are:

- involved in the design, delivery and review of courses in Veterinary Nursing
- a prospective student thinking about undertaking a course in Veterinary Nursing
- an employer, to find out about the knowledge and skills generally expected of Veterinary Nursing graduates.

## Relationship to legislation

The responsibility for academic standards lies with the higher education provider which awards the degree. Higher education providers are responsible for meeting the requirements of legislation and any other regulatory requirements placed upon them by their relevant funding and regulatory bodies. This Statement does not interpret legislation, nor does it incorporate statutory or regulatory requirements.

The status of the Statement will differ depending on the educational jurisdictions of the UK. In England, Subject Benchmark Statements are not sector-recognised standards as set out under the Office for Students' [regulatory framework](#). However, they are specified as a key reference point, as appropriate, for academic standards in Wales under the [Quality Assessment Framework for Wales](#) and in Scotland as part of the [Quality Enhancement Framework](#). Subject Benchmark Statements are part of the current quality requirements in Northern Ireland. Because the Statement describes outcomes and attributes expected at the threshold standard of achievement in a UK-wide context, many higher education providers will use them as an enhancement tool for course design and approval, and for subsequent monitoring and review, in addition to helping demonstrate the security of academic standards.

## Additional sector reference points

Higher education providers are likely to consider other reference points in addition to this Statement in designing, delivering and reviewing courses. These may include requirements set out by PSRBs and industry or employer expectations. QAA has also published [Advice and Guidance](#) to support the [Quality Code for Higher Education](#) which will be helpful when using this Statement – for example, in [course design](#), [learning and teaching](#), [external expertise](#) and [monitoring and evaluation](#).

Explanations of unfamiliar terms used in this Subject Benchmark Statement can be found in [QAA's Glossary](#). Sources of information about other requirements and examples of guidance and good practice are signposted within the Statement where appropriate.

The Royal College of Veterinary Surgeons (RCVS) is the PSRB for Veterinary Nursing, and, as such, maintains a non-statutory register of veterinary nurses. It is also responsible for setting the RCVS [Standards Framework for Veterinary Nurse Education](#).

Courses which are fully accredited by the RCVS are considered registrable qualifications or License to Practise Qualifications. Graduates of these courses are entitled to apply for entry to the register, in accordance with the [Veterinary Nurse Registration Rules 2017](#). When registered with the RCVS, veterinary nurses are permitted to use the postnominals 'RVN'.

Post-registration qualifications or the Certificate in Advanced Veterinary Nursing are also accredited by the RCVS under the [Post-registration Framework for Veterinary Nursing](#). On gaining an accredited post-professional qualification and registering with the RCVS, veterinary nurses are permitted to use the postnominals 'Cert AVN'.

# 1 Context and purposes of a Veterinary Nursing degree

## Context

1.1 Veterinary nurses provide a high standard of professional service and care, based on a sound knowledge of the patient's condition and its individual needs. This may be carried out in a wide variety of settings, for animals at all life stages, with due consideration of the background and needs of the animal's owner or keeper.

1.2 Veterinary nursing aims to improve the health and welfare of animals in their care and enhance their quality of life while minimising pain and suffering. Veterinary nursing can either be proactive or reactive, autonomous or collaborative.

1.3 Veterinary nurses are able to:

- apply their knowledge and skills in the provision of nursing care, enabling veterinary patients to achieve the best possible quality of life, whatever their condition, while ensuring that the welfare of the veterinary patient is not compromised
- provide medical treatment or any minor surgery (not involving entry into a body cavity) to animals under the direction of a veterinary surgeon who has that animal under their care
- play a significant role in promoting animal health and welfare by supporting and educating owners and members of the public.

1.4 The Royal College of Veterinary Surgeons (RCVS) maintains a non-statutory register of veterinary nurses. Veterinary nurses who wish to practise in the UK must be registered as a veterinary nurse with the RCVS. They must agree to adhere to the RCVS Code of Professional Conduct and be accountable for their actions as professionals as well as maintaining their skills and knowledge by undertaking, and reflecting on, regular and relevant continuing professional development. They are accountable for their professional conduct through the mechanism of fitness to practise.

1.5 [The Code of Professional Conduct for Veterinary Nurses](#) states that veterinary nurses seek to ensure the health and welfare of animals committed to their care and to fulfil their professional responsibilities, by maintaining five principles of practice:

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

## Purposes and characteristics of a Veterinary Nursing degree

1.6 The purpose of this Subject Benchmark Statement is to make explicit the nature and the academic standards of degrees in Veterinary Nursing. A course in Veterinary Nursing is a science-based degree with a strong vocational focus, which should equip graduates to become a registered veterinary nurse (RVN) at the point of graduation.

1.7 A Licence to Practise Veterinary Nursing course accredited by the RCVS should be designed to enable graduates to acquire and evidence the Day One Competences (DOC), Day One Skills List (DOS) and Professional Behaviours and Attributes (PB) for Veterinary Nurses. These are the minimum essential requirements set out by the RCVS that all student veterinary nurses must meet in order to join the RCVS register of veterinary nurses.



1.8 The Subject Benchmark Statement for Veterinary Nursing describes the subject matter Veterinary Nursing degrees should cover and identifies the knowledge and skills that are typically included within the courses. These statements include expressions of the professional / employment-related abilities that graduates would be expected to have developed during their higher education and the associated practice-based experiences that are incorporated within foundation, bachelor's with honours and master's degrees.

1.9 The Statement clarifies the boundaries of the subject area and the specific threshold standards for foundation degrees (located at Level 5 on the FHEQ) and bachelor's degrees with honours (located at Level 6 on the FHEQ and Level 10 on the Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework (SCQF) and master's level courses (Level 7 on the FHEQ and Level 11 on the SCQF).

1.10 The Statement allows for variety and flexibility in the design of courses, accommodating a measure of diversity and innovation between higher education providers that reflects their individual strengths.

## Equality, diversity and inclusion

1.11 This Subject Benchmark Statement addresses inclusivity throughout and advocates support for diverse students, acknowledging that equity and diversity are interdependent. Promoting equity of opportunity for all is underpinned by valuing differences, treating everyone with dignity and respect, encouraging aspirations and supporting people with diverse abilities, identities and backgrounds to succeed.

1.12 An inclusive environment for learning, including clinical placement, anticipates and accommodates the varied requirements of students. Courses should be proactively and flexibly designed to ensure equitable access to educational opportunities. Course providers, staff and students all have a role in, and responsibility for, promoting equity and diversity and challenging biases and stereotypes.

1.13 Veterinary nursing programmes should be designed to create an environment that encourages openness and participation, and which fosters an individual's understanding of their personal responsibility for equity and inclusive practice, both as a student veterinary nurse and as an RVN. This should be considered a professional responsibility when working as part of a professional team and when supporting and educating animal owners or members of the public.

## Accessibility

1.14 Accessibility considers whether all aspects of a course, however they are encountered, can be understood by everyone. Accessibility should, as a minimum, meet any regulatory requirements and should apply to all stages of the course, from providing pre-application information through to graduation and beyond. It may include, but is not limited to:

- taking actions to ensure that all elements of the course curriculum are accessible to all students
- ensuring that all students have access to appropriate and safe learning spaces and resources that support their learning
- using a variety of assessments, which can be adjusted to meet the needs of individual students, to ensure that all students have the opportunity to succeed in order to meet the RCVS requirement for DOC/DOS/PB and be eligible to join the RCVS register of veterinary nurses.

1.15 Proactive and innovative approaches should be taken in the design of courses, modules, teaching practices and assessments to build in flexibility and inclusivity and avoid creating barriers for students with specific learning differences.

1.16 Accessibility should include enabling the same opportunities for workplace learning for all students, as well as providing students with inclusive digital accessibility without discrimination.

## Sustainability

1.17 The Veterinary Nursing profession can contribute towards responsible and sustainable development as envisaged by the [UN Sustainable Development Goals](#), partly in terms of disciplinary content, and partly via disciplinary method (see QAA and Advance HE's [Education for Sustainable Development Guidance](#), 2021). Specifically, Veterinary Nursing courses can draw on the [UN Principles for Responsible Management Education \(PRME\)](#) to develop the capabilities of students so that they become future generators of a sustainable veterinary profession. There is an expectation that ethics, responsibility and sustainability (ERS) are integrated into the Veterinary Nursing curriculum.

1.18 Sustainable management is required for planetary survival, and organisations, including higher education providers and veterinary practices, will play a key role in meeting targets set to halve global emissions by 2030 (IPCC, 2022). Veterinary nurses should be equipped to engage meaningfully with climate challenges and embed climate solutions in veterinary functions and processes. The principles of sustainable management extend to the wider issue of sustainable development articulated by the [UN Sustainable Development Goals](#). Consequently, management for the purpose of economic, social and environmental sustainability should be integrated into the Veterinary Nursing curriculum.

1.19 The following examples are topics related to sustainable development that could usefully be incorporated in Veterinary Nursing courses ([Vet Sustain 2020](#)), but the list is by no means exhaustive:

- advocating animal welfare as a core sustainability objective
- advocating the use of sustainable breeding practices and genetics
- supporting animal welfare centred husbandry and management, including stimulating living environments to permit highly motivated behaviours
- advocating for wildlife welfare
- mitigating antimicrobial resistance
- reducing the risk of zoonoses
- ensuring diversity and inclusion
- supporting mental health and well-being
- promoting sustainable lifestyles; reducing the wastage of resources and its impacts on ecosystems and landscapes; minimising plastic waste by reusing and recycling materials where possible
- reducing medical waste while upholding infection control.

## Enterprise and entrepreneurship education

1.20 [Enterprise and entrepreneurship education](#) supports behaviours, attributes and competencies that are likely to have a significant impact on the individual student in terms of successful careers. It prepares students for changing environments and provides enhanced impact through placements and activities that build links between academic institutions and external organisations.

1.21 Beyond employment, entrepreneurship education provides competencies to help students lead a rewarding, self-determined professional life, well placed to add social, cultural and economic value to society through their careers. It supports the development of problem identification and solving, innovation, creativity and communication, and promotes practical application and interaction.

1.22 Involving employers in curriculum and assessment design will support graduate employability. Entrepreneurship focuses on competencies and transferable themes, including business awareness, professional ethics, leadership and personal motivation as examples. Entrepreneurship education should be designed in consultation with stakeholders such as employers, professional bodies and service users. A range of important themes can be considered, such as project planning and management, sustainability, innovation and career development, reflection, and personal development. Themes may be considered using veterinary-specific applications and examples. Collaborative student work should be encouraged, promoting team working, negotiation and leadership skills. Students can be encouraged to consider their personal and professional development as well as supporting the development of others, as appropriate.



## 2 Distinctive features of a Veterinary Nursing degree

### Design

2.1 Veterinary Nursing courses include a wide range of subject areas that are necessary to support holistic nursing care. As a minimum, courses should include:

- communication
- animal physiology
- husbandry
- welfare and behaviour
- infection control
- anaesthesia
- surgical nursing and theatre practice
- pharmacology
- laboratory and diagnostic techniques
- ethics
- principles of evidence-based practice.

2.2 The delivery and assessment of these subject areas affords graduates the opportunity to meet the requirements of the RCVS DOC/DOS/PB. This is a requirement for a Veterinary Nursing course to gain RCVS accreditation (Licence to Practise) and allow graduates to apply to join the RCVS Veterinary Nurse register.

2.3 Foundation degree level courses will mainly focus on the subject content that supports the learning and assessment of the RCVS DOC/DOS/PB. Honours degree courses will incorporate additional subjects that recognise the wide-ranging clinical role of an RVN and/or the running and operation of a veterinary practice as a commercial business. Master's level courses should build further on these areas of specialism or focus.

2.4 Due to the vocational nature of a Veterinary Nursing degree, all courses will require extensive practical teaching to cover the full range of DOS.

2.5 Sufficient clinical placement time in an approved training practice (TP) must be built into the design of any Licence to Practise course to ensure that students can complete the number of hours of pre-registration practice required by the RCVS prior to graduation. Time spent in clinical placements allows for practice and refinement of the DOC/DOS/PB which will help ensure that graduates are ready for the role of an RVN at the point of graduation.

### Progression

2.6 Over the course of a foundation degree (FHEQ Level 5) or a bachelor's degree with honours (FHEQ Level 6; FQHEIS Level 10) a Veterinary Nursing student will progress from one level of study to the next, in line with the regulations and processes for each institution. However, it is expected that each level would see the attainment of knowledge, expertise and experience that builds towards the final achievement of meeting the threshold-level subject-specific and generic skills listed in this Statement. This will usually include successful completion and the award of credit for the full range of learning and assessment, including any practical components. Upon graduation from an undergraduate degree, it would be expected that a student who had achieved a second-class degree or higher would be capable of, and equipped for, undertaking postgraduate study in Veterinary Nursing or a related discipline. Entry requirements to postgraduate courses are, however, determined by individual providers and may require specified levels of achievement at undergraduate level. Upon graduation, postgraduate students will be expected to contribute to the advancement

of the profession through innovation, within legal and professional boundaries. Holders of a master's degree in Veterinary Nursing will develop the knowledge base and demonstrate excellence in research and practice.

## Flexibility

2.7 Higher education providers structure the courses they offer to support students' learning and attainment. Depending on the educational mission of the provider, this may include opportunities to engage in learning on campus, online, and/or through hybrid learning, arranged in terms, by semester, year-long, block or other formats. These may be offered in full and/or part-time modes of study and credit may be accumulated through the completion of micro-credentials or shorter periods of accredited learning.

## Partnership

2.8 Higher education providers should work in partnership with the RCVS to ensure that accreditation and quality assurance requirements are met, thereby enabling completing students to be eligible to register as RVN or Cert AVN Nurses.

2.9 Providers may operate in partnership with further education colleges, enabling students to study at various geographical locations and improving course accessibility. Providers are expected to develop processes for oversight to ensure that partners involved in degree delivery meet all the academic and RCVS standards required.

2.10 Students should also work in partnership with their provider and in particular their own course teams. The student voice should play a significant role in course development, delivery, review and the overall student experience.

2.11 All course providers work in partnership with clinical placement providers to allow the required access to clinical cases and the veterinary practice environment. This is necessary to complete the DOC/DOS/PB and the required hours in clinical placement. There should be a collaborative written agreement between clinical supervisors, course providers, placement providers and students.

2.12 Approval and monitoring of training practices and auxiliary training practices should be undertaken by course providers to ensure that clinical learning facilities are, and remain, appropriate. Course providers should ensure the training and standardisation of clinical supervisors.

## Monitoring and review

2.13 Degree-awarding bodies, and their collaborative partnerships, routinely collect and analyse information and undertake periodic course review according to their own needs. Considering the student voice will form part of this to ensure an inclusive review. They draw on a range of external reference points, including this Statement, to ensure that their provision aligns with sector norms. Monitoring and evaluation are a periodic assessment of a course, conducted internally or by external independent evaluators. Evaluation uses information from both current and historic monitoring to develop an understanding of student achievement or inform future course planning.

2.14 Externality is an essential component of the quality assurance system in the UK. Providers will use external reviewers as part of periodic review to gain an external perspective on any proposed changes and ensure threshold standards are achieved and content is appropriate for the subject.

2.15 The external examiner system currently in use across the UK higher education sector also helps to ensure consistency in the way academic standards are secured by degree-awarding bodies. Typically, external examiners will be asked to comment on the types, principles and purposes of assessments being offered to students. They will consider the types of modules on offer to students, the outcomes of a cohort and how these compare to similar provision offered within other UK higher education providers. External examiners are asked to produce a report each year and make recommendations for changes to modules and assessments (where appropriate). Subject Benchmark Statements, such as this one, can play an important role in supporting external examiners in advising on whether threshold standards are being met in a specific subject area.

## 3 Content, structure and delivery

### Content

3.1 Courses in Veterinary Nursing leading to foundation or honours degrees aim to develop students' knowledge and understanding across a range of species in the following subject areas:

- anatomy and physiology
- pharmacology
- husbandry, nutrition and dietetics
- delivery of nursing care to support veterinary patients suffering from both medical and surgical conditions
- provision of diagnostic support to include imaging and laboratory diagnostics
- supporting the delivery of anaesthesia and analgesia
- supporting patients and clients in an emergency and critical care context
- maintaining a clinical environment and infection control
- working as part of the surgical team and management of the theatre environment, including maintaining aseptic and sterile conditions in a variety of contexts
- legislation affecting the veterinary practice and its employees as well as general legislation covering the welfare requirements of keeping pets
- respect for different cultures, values, views and beliefs, and the requirements of anti-discriminatory practice commensurate with a professional ethos.

### Research and evidence-based practice

3.2 Research and evidence-based practice contributes to the developing knowledge and evidence base for Veterinary Nursing. Courses in Veterinary Nursing can cover the following activities:

- critical appraisal of published research
- implementing relevant research findings into practice
- engaging in research and knowledge exchange activities.

3.3 It is anticipated that holders of degrees in **small animal** Veterinary Nursing are proficient in delivering nursing care to a range of species, including:

- cats
- dogs
- exotic species.

3.4 It is also anticipated that holders of degrees in **equine** Veterinary Nursing are proficient in delivering nursing care to horses.

3.5 Some higher education providers also include the basic husbandry of farm animal species in their curriculum.

3.6 Veterinary nursing students develop a range of clinical, technical, personal, professional and generic skills that are underpinned by areas of subject-specific knowledge

and understanding covering the variety of animal species described above.

## Clinical and technical skills

3.7 Courses in Veterinary Nursing aim to develop students' competence in a broad range of clinical and technical skills, including:

- handling and restraint of a variety of species
- planning and delivering appropriate nursing care to a variety of species
- advising and supporting clients in the care of their pets
- performing diagnostic procedures and tests
- documenting and communicating the results of procedures and tests
- wound management
- fluid therapy and the administration of drugs via a range of routes
- preparing patients, the clinical environment and equipment for veterinary procedures
- maintaining anaesthesia.

3.8 Nursing skills are developed both within the classroom and the workplace. Practical placements ensure students can apply the skills taught by the higher education provider in an authentic environment.

## Personal and professional skills and behaviours

3.9 Courses are designed to ensure students are aware of ethical principles, cultural diversity, legislation and the personal and professional responsibilities set out in the [RCVS Code of Professional Conduct for Veterinary Nurses](#).

3.10 Students should develop the ability to:

- work as part of a multidisciplinary team to deliver health care services to patients and clients. This requires excellent communication skills and the ability to maintain a professional relationship with clients, colleagues, the public and external stakeholders even when subject to emotional and economic pressures
- respond appropriately to situations and circumstances that require the application of an ethical and moral standpoint, recognising the potential risks and, where necessary, utilising knowledge of relevant legislation
- act as an advocate for patients and clients while always maintaining a confidential standpoint
- use research and current data to inform decision-making and take personal responsibility for their actions
- maintain a reflective approach to their professional practice to identify areas for improvement and development.

## Teaching and learning

3.11 Strategies and methods for teaching, learning and assessment are determined by individual higher education providers in conjunction with the requirements of the RCVS and aim to complement the broad learning outcomes for foundation or honours Veterinary Nursing degrees.

3.12 The goal of student learning is a reflective and critical approach to the application of knowledge and skills in Veterinary Nursing. In order that graduates can develop the ability to learn independently, an emphasis is placed on student-centred modes of learning and

teaching, to foster a professional approach to lifelong learning.

3.13 Teaching and learning should enable students to acquire skills in effective communication, information technology, team working, problem-solving and evidence-based practice. Where appropriate, students will have the opportunity to develop skills in research methodology. Typically, courses leading to a bachelor's degree with honours incorporate a short research project or independent study that forms the basis of a dissertation or report.

## Assessment

3.14 Assessment strategies should ensure alignment between learning outcomes, learning and teaching methods, and competencies, and discriminate between achievement at threshold and higher levels. A variety of assessment styles may be employed to test the wide range of knowledge and skills required by an RVN. Assessment methods should help prepare the student for Day One in clinical practice.

3.15 Assessment should be progressive in terms of level and content and generate effective feedback that enables students to develop their knowledge and skills, including a range of transferable skills that includes critical digital literacy. Course teams should take advantage of these subject-specific and transferable skills and diversify how students are assessed, using a range of methodologies that allow students from all backgrounds and characteristics to demonstrate their learning and development. Where possible, assessments should be authentic, with real-world applications to enhance employability skills and professional development. They should also permit reasonable adjustments to ensure inclusivity while ensuring that students are able to demonstrate competence in all requirements of an RVN.

3.16 Ongoing formative assessment, including self and peer assessment, allows for feedback on performance throughout the course, while summative assessments ensure that students meet academic and professional requirements.

3.17 Assessment of competence and subsequent fitness to practise is determined in partnership between academic and clinical staff. An integral aspect of all accredited License to Practise courses is clinical practice, by means of one or more periods of placement within a suitable clinical environment that meets the conditions for accreditation of the RCVS.

3.18 At postgraduate level, there should be a strong emphasis on requiring students to apply evidence-based subject-specific knowledge to decision making and solutions to complex and unfamiliar problems. Assessment of a range of research skills is also considered crucial when determining whether a student has met postgraduate-level learning outcomes.



## 4 Benchmark standards

### Introduction

4.1 This Subject Benchmark Statement sets out the minimum threshold standards that a student will have demonstrated when they are awarded either a foundation degree, a bachelor's degree with honours or a master's degree in Veterinary Nursing. Demonstrating these standards over time will show that a student has achieved the range of knowledge, understanding and skills expected of graduates in Veterinary Nursing.

4.2 The vast majority of students who graduate with a bachelor's degree with honours will perform significantly better than the minimum threshold standards. Each higher education provider has its own method of determining what appropriate evidence of this achievement will be and should refer to [Annex D in The Frameworks for Higher Education Qualifications of UK Degree-Awarding Bodies](#). This Annex sets out common descriptions of the four main degree outcome classifications for bachelor's degrees with honours: 1st, 2.1, 2.2 and 3rd.

### Generic skills

Graduates should be able to:

Foundation degree (FHEQ Level 5)	Bachelor's degree with honours (FHEQ Level 6 / SCQF Level 10)	Master's degree (FHEQ Level 7)
Articulate opinions and formulate arguments effectively both verbally and in writing	Articulate opinions and formulate arguments effectively both verbally and in writing to provide compelling debate with other professionals as the patient's advocate	Debate effectively both verbally and in writing as the patient's advocate with other professionals
Learn independently and utilise problem-solving skills	Learn independently and demonstrate an analytical approach to problem-solving	Learn independently and implement an analytical approach to problem-solving
Demonstrate the principles of evidence-based practice	Apply the concept of evidence-based practice in the clinical environment. Critically evaluate arguments, assumptions, abstract concepts and data	Create and critique evidence to establish best practice in the clinical environment
Collaborate and contribute to the work of the team	Contribute proactively to the aims and organisation of a team	Lead the development of the aims and organisation of a team

Use digital skills competently and effectively to include information gathering in line with legal and ethical requirements	Use digital skills to enhance presentations and to facilitate data analysis in line with legal and ethical requirements	Create digitally enhanced presentations and use digital skills to facilitate data analysis in line with legal and ethical requirements
Demonstrate management of confidential information in an appropriate manner	Demonstrate management of confidential information in line with legal requirements, guiding colleagues where necessary	Manage confidential information in line with legal requirements, supporting colleagues in maintaining this ethos
Demonstrate self-awareness and self-confidence in the clinical environment	Demonstrate self-awareness and self-confidence in the clinical environment	Demonstrate self-awareness and self-confidence in the clinical environment
Demonstrate knowledge of, and advocate respect for, diverse cultures, values, views and beliefs. Role model behaviours that underpin anti-discriminatory practices	Demonstrate knowledge of, and advocate respect for, diverse cultures, values, views and beliefs. Role model behaviours that underpin anti-discriminatory practices	Demonstrate knowledge of, and advocate respect for, diverse cultures, values, views and beliefs. Role model behaviours that underpin anti-discriminatory practices
Recognise barriers for those with protected characteristics and understand how to minimise these	Analyse and take action to address any identified barriers to those with protected characteristics	Evaluate potential barriers to those with protected characteristics and identify appropriate actions
Maintain a non-judgmental position in all aspects of work and avoid stigmatising any category of veterinary client, members of the team or the public	Maintain a non-judgmental position in all aspects of work and avoid stigmatising any category of veterinary client, members of the team or the public	Maintain a non-judgmental position in all aspects of work and avoid stigmatising any category of veterinary client, members of the team or the public
Adopt a sustainable approach to all aspects of Veterinary Nursing practice	Develop a sustainable approach to all aspects of Veterinary Nursing practice	Innovate and develop a sustainable approach to all aspects of Veterinary Nursing practice
Adopt a reflective approach to professional practice, including the identification of opportunities to improve individual and team-working practices	Adopt a reflective approach to professional practice in both self and others within the team, including improvement of patient care practices and the management of the clinical environment	Lead a reflective approach to professional practice in both self and others within the team, including improvement of patient care practices and the management of the clinical environment

Adopt well-being practices to maintain fitness to practise, recognising where additional support is required	Adopt well-being practices to maintain fitness to practise in self and others, recognising where additional support is required	Adopt well-being practices to maintain fitness to practise in self and others, recognising where additional support is required
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## Principles and concepts: application

Graduates should be able to:

Foundation degree (FHEQ Level 5)	Bachelor's degree with honours (FHEQ Level 6 / SCQF Level 10)	Master's degree (FHEQ Level 7)
Select and apply theories, concepts and principles to deliver holistic veterinary healthcare	Select and apply theories, concepts and principles, evaluating the most appropriate frameworks to deliver holistic veterinary healthcare	Select and apply advanced theories, concepts and principles that incorporate other relevant disciplines in providing holistic care in complex and unpredictable situations
Recognise potential risk and appropriate interventions to prevent complications occurring, where possible	Recognise potential risk, appropriate interventions, and the need to develop protocols to minimise risk while providing quality veterinary healthcare	Critically evaluate and enhance current protocols of the management of risk in the veterinary practice, while informing strategic level and direction
Analyse and interpret relevant educational/promotional information and use this knowledge to promote animal health and welfare	Critically analyse contemporary issues in animal health and welfare	Develop innovative strategies to promote animal health and welfare in line with evidenced-based practice
Use appropriate research and suitable evidence to underpin and justify clinical decisions	Articulate and justify decision-making and problem-solving processes associated with Veterinary Nursing practice even where there is incomplete data	Systematically synthesise advanced and specialist information to develop innovative proposals to address complex patient care
Undertake and document a systematic nursing assessment considering the needs of the patient and, where applicable, their owner	Use relevant theoretical and research evidence to undertake and document a comprehensive, systematic nursing assessment considering the needs of the patient and, where applicable, their owner	Develop a systematic and evidence-based framework to assess the needs of the patient and owner (regardless of their cultural and socioeconomic background)

Assess priorities in nursing practice and deliver care competently to meet identified needs	Evaluate evolving priorities within a complex and changing environment and communicate appropriately	Facilitate team development, demonstrating leadership skills to ensure the team delivers the care required
Formulate and document a plan of care with the collaboration of the veterinary team and consent of clients in the best interest of the patient	Critically evaluate research findings and use these to inform changes to planned care	Create research and contribute and add to the evidence base
Demonstrate accountability for veterinary healthcare delivered, considering social, cultural, spiritual, legal, political, economic and welfare factors	Demonstrate an ability to critically challenge the veterinary healthcare delivered, considering dynamic social, cultural, spiritual, legal, political, economic and welfare factors	Act autonomously to make strategic decisions and develop appropriate practice guidelines, taking responsibility for outcomes in abstract and unpredictably complex contexts
Accurately document and evaluate the outcomes of professional interventions	Critically evaluate outcomes of professional interventions, adjusting Veterinary Nursing care accordingly	Use outcomes of interventions to inform development of self and others and disseminate/lead as part of clinical governance
Participate in teamwork that respects and uses the contributions of colleagues in a variety of veterinary healthcare situations	Contribute with skill and confidence to effective multidisciplinary working, providing direction as necessary	Apply and develop advanced interpersonal, team and networking skills to strategically enhance team performance in unpredictably complex contexts and contribute to specialist professional communities
Recognise the moral and ethical issues that relate to veterinary patient care	Critically evaluate the moral and ethical issues that relate to veterinary patient care and advocate for animal welfare	Systematically apply an advanced awareness of ethical and professional values and codes of conduct, to personal and strategic decisions, actions, responsibilities, outcomes and dilemmas, while working proactively with others to suggest and advocate appropriate solutions in unpredictably complex contexts

## Subject knowledge, understanding and associated skills

Graduates should be able to:

Foundation degree (FHEQ Level 5)	Bachelor's degree with honours (FHEQ Level 6 / SCQF Level 10)	Master's degree (FHEQ Level 7)
Demonstrate a sound knowledge of the fundamental subjects which underpin Veterinary Nursing, and apply the knowledge and skills required of a veterinary nurse in everyday practice	Demonstrate a robust knowledge of the fundamental subjects which underpin Veterinary Nursing, apply the knowledge and skills required of a veterinary nurse in everyday practice, and continually evaluate nursing care provision to inform the enhancement of professional practise	Be cognisant of the knowledge, skills and behaviours aligned to professional practitioners
Demonstrate the skills of cultural awareness and role modelling behaviours that underpin anti-discriminatory practice	Critically analyse the diversity of experience and values of groups and individuals to advance anti-discriminatory practice	Apply the skills of inclusivity and adaptation in the pursuit of anti-discriminatory practice
Communicate effectively with others in a clear and articulate manner, to a wide variety of audiences, using a range of media	Articulately present robust evidence in written and verbal format, using technology which supports sound decision-making	Demonstrate decision-making using evidence, criticality and originality in thought
Develop and maintain therapeutic interpersonal relationships with clients considering diversity, environments and other impacting factors	Enhance therapeutic interpersonal relationships with a diverse range of clients through creative use of concepts and theories and critical reflection	Demonstrate inclusive and adaptive behaviours aligned with professional interrelationships
Reflect upon and provide modern, contemporary and evidence-based Veterinary Nursing through practical skills and application of knowledge	Demonstrate robust and evidence-based modern and contemporary Veterinary Nursing using critical judgement to evaluate, inform decision-making and synthesise new approaches to enhance quality of care	Articulate judgements using thoughtful, evidence-based and critical reasoning as a reflective base

Use evidence, data and a range of technology to inform judgements and enhance veterinary healthcare	Apply the skills of critical analysis and syntheses, using robust evidence and data in the creation of new theory, in the pursuit of healthcare excellence	Apply the skills of evaluation to apply critical reasoning to justify evidence-based judgements in the advancement of health care excellence
Apply skills of introspection and reflection to improve professional practice	Adopt a reflective approach to self-improvement using critical evaluation and analysis with consideration to the impact on colleagues, to enhance professional practice	Consider an evaluative and critically reflective approach to self-improvement to professional practice

## Working as a professional veterinary nurse: expectations

Graduates should be able to:

Foundation degree (FHEQ Level 5)	Bachelor's degree with honours (FHEQ Level 6 / SCQF Level 10)	Master's degree (FHEQ Level 7)
Manage themselves, their own professional practise and that of others, in accordance with the Code of Professional Conduct, recognising their own abilities and limitations	Manage themselves, their own professional practise and that of others in accordance with the Code of Professional Conduct, and critically evaluate and reflect on their own abilities and limitations	Manage themselves, their own professional practise and that of others in accordance with the Code of Professional Conduct. Critically evaluate and reflect on the importance of educating and promoting these expectations
Select and apply knowledge and skills to a variety of clinical settings and unexpected situations	Select and apply knowledge and skills to a variety of clinical settings and unexpected situations	Develop knowledge and skills through contribution to evidence-based Veterinary Nursing to a variety of clinical settings and unexpected situations
Work in collaboration with clients and colleagues to identify and provide the therapeutic and preventative veterinary healthcare requirements to meet the needs of patients	Implement strategies to promote and evaluate collaborative working with patients, clients and colleagues to identify and provide therapeutic and preventative veterinary healthcare requirements of patients	Synthesise strategies to promote and evaluate collaborative working with patients, clients and colleagues to identify and provide therapeutic and preventative veterinary healthcare requirements of patients



Provide empathetic support to patients, clients and colleagues in changing and potentially challenging situations	Anticipate and deal with challenging situations, involving patients, clients and colleagues, in an empathetic manner while minimising risk where necessary	Lead and support colleagues through a diverse range of challenging situations, involving patients, clients and colleagues, in an empathetic manner while minimising risk, where appropriate
Practise in accordance with the professional, ethical and legal framework	Recognise the complexity of the professional, ethical and legal framework and its impact on decision-making and practise accordingly	Appraise the complexity of the professional, ethical and legal frameworks. Provide guidance and leadership to colleagues in relation to the impacts of decision-making
Uphold personal responsibility and impartial decision-making across a range of situations	Critically reflect on personal responsibility and decision-making across a range of situations	Critically reflect and evaluate on both personal and interprofessional responsibility and decision-making across a range of situations
Contribute to public protection by creating and maintaining a safe clinical environment	Select and implement a range of risk management strategies to create and maintain a safe clinical environment for protection	Analyse and inform processes to improve a range of risk and management strategies to create and maintain a safe clinical environment, taking into account one health
Provide guidance, role-modelling and support to others in the veterinary environment	Provide guidance, role-modelling, mentorship and support to others in the veterinary environment, ensuring effective supervision and monitoring	Inspire self and others to act as ambassadors to uphold the reputation of the profession both in and out of the veterinary environment
Understand the role of self and of others, including when delegation, supervision and seeking advice is appropriate	Critically analyse roles of self and of others, including appropriate delegation, supervision and seeking advice	Critically evaluate and reflect upon roles of self and of others, providing guidance on appropriate delegation, supervision and when to seek advice

Demonstrate empathy with patients and clients and act as an advocate for them, when appropriate, with an appreciation for their own mental and physical health and well-being	Provide advice to clients and act as an advocate for them and the patient, when appropriate, with an appreciation for their own mental and physical health and well-being	Awareness of factors that impact on mental and physical health and well-being. Implement strategies to support others to provide advice to clients and act as an advocate for them and the patient, when appropriate
Participate in the development of an evidence base in clinical practice and understand the importance of such work	Plan and execute research and development work, including the development of an evidence base for clinical practice	Propose new approaches to the continual development of evidence-based Veterinary Nursing. Evaluate the impact of their research and dissemination of concepts
Adopt and promote equality, diversity and inclusion within the veterinary environment and beyond	Adopt and promote equality, diversity and inclusion within the veterinary environment and beyond	Adopt and promote equality, diversity and inclusion within the veterinary environment and beyond
Reflect on own skills and recognise the opportunities to develop and acquire new competences in line with professional development requirements	Critically evaluate own skills and recognise and engage with the opportunities to develop and acquire new competences in line with professional development requirements	Support and lead colleagues to recognise and engage with the opportunities to develop and acquire new competences in line with professional development requirements

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## 6 Membership of the Advisory Group

### Membership of the Advisory Group for the Subject Benchmark Statement for Veterinary Nursing 2024

Catherine Phillips (Chair)	Hartpury University
Susan Howarth (Deputy Chair)	Harper Adams University
George Aspey	Harper Adams University / My Pets Vets Ltd
Claire Bloor	Myerscough College
Georgina Darnell	Plumpton College
Julie Dugmore	Royal College of Veterinary Surgeons
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Nicci Johnson	Nottingham Trent University
Kevin Kendall	QAA Officer
Hilary Orpet	Royal Veterinary College
Sarah Reynolds-Golding	University Centre Askham Bryan
Laura Sperry	QAA Coordinator
Sarah Vivian	University of Bristol
Kirsty Young	SRUC (Scotland's Rural College)
Izzy Riley	Hartpury University

### Membership of the Advisory Group for the Subject Benchmark Statement for Veterinary Nursing 2019

The second edition, published in 2019, was revised by QAA to align the content with the revised UK Quality Code for Higher Education, published in 2018. Proposed revisions were checked and verified by the Chair of the Subject Benchmark Statement for Veterinary Nursing from 2015.

Sue Badger	Formerly University of Bristol
Dr Andy Smith	QAA

### Membership of the Advisory Group for the Subject Benchmark Statement for Veterinary Nursing 2015

Details below are as published in the original Subject Benchmark Statement for Veterinary Nursing.

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Andrea Jeffery	University of Bristol
Kathy Kissick	Myerscough College
Dr David Smith	Edinburgh Napier University
<b>Regulatory body representative</b>	
Vicky Hedges	Royal College of Veterinary Surgeons
<b>Employer representative</b>	
Niall Taylor	Orchard Veterinary Group
<b>QAA Officers</b>	
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