



## Higher National Unit specification: general information

**Unit title:** Veterinary Nursing: Essential Nursing Skills

**Unit code:** H0YD 34

**Superclass:** SN

**Publication date:** March 2012

**Source:** Scottish Qualifications Authority

**Version:** 01

### Unit purpose

This Unit is designed to provide candidates with knowledge and understanding of planning and evaluating care, safe handling, restraint and nursing care of patients. The Unit is suitable for candidates seeking employment in veterinary nursing, animal care or similar professions.

On completion of the Unit the candidate should be able to:

- 1 Describe the nursing process and care planning.
- 2 Demonstrate safe handling and restraint of small animals.
- 3 Explain the principles and practices of veterinary nursing care.

### Recommended prior knowledge and skills

Candidates should have achieved a credit level pass in Standard Grade Biology or equivalent and should have a good knowledge of the anatomy and physiology of healthy animals. Some practical experience and animal handling skills gained in a veterinary practice would be beneficial prior to undertaking this Unit. The practical competencies gained by undertaking the Unit *Veterinary Nursing: Supervised Practice 1* in the practice placement will complement the knowledge and understanding of this Unit.

### Credit points and level

1 Higher National Unit credit at SCQF level 7: (8 SCQF credit points at SCQF level 7\*)

*\*SCQF credit points are used to allocate credit to qualifications in the Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework (SCQF). Each qualification in the Framework is allocated a number of SCQF credit points at an SCQF level. There are 12 SCQF levels, ranging from Access 1 to Doctorates.*

## **General information (cont)**

### **Core Skills**

There are opportunities to develop the Critical Thinking and Reviewing and Evaluating components of the *Problem Solving* Core Skill at level 5 in this Unit, although there is no automatic certification of this Core Skill or Core Skill component.

### **Context for delivery**

If this Unit is delivered as part of a Group Award, it is recommended that it should be taught and assessed within the subject area of the Group Award to which it contributes.

## Higher National Unit specification: statement of standards

**Unit title:** Veterinary Nursing: Essential Nursing Skills

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The sections of the Unit stating the Outcomes, Knowledge and/or Skills, and Evidence Requirements are mandatory.

Where evidence for Outcomes is assessed on a sample basis, the whole of the content listed in the Knowledge and/or Skills section must be taught and available for assessment. Candidates should not know in advance the items on which they will be assessed and different items should be sampled on each assessment occasion.

### Outcome 1

Describe the nursing process and care planning.

#### Knowledge and/or Skills

- ◆ Roles of the veterinary surgeon, the veterinary nurse and lay staff within the context of the Veterinary Surgeons Act 1966
- ◆ Nursing process
- ◆ Care planning
- ◆ Models of nursing
  - Orpet and Jeffery
  - Roper, Logan and Tierney
  - Orem
  - other relevant nursing models
- ◆ Admitting patients
- ◆ Patient assessment
- ◆ Normal and abnormal signs in cats, dogs, exotics and horses
- ◆ Patient monitoring
- ◆ Hospitalisation records
- ◆ Reflection on nursing activities
  - process of reflection
  - reflective models
  - reflective diaries
- ◆ Care plan review
- ◆ Discharge and owner guidance

## Higher National Unit specification: statement of standards (cont)

**Unit title:** Veterinary Nursing: Essential Nursing Skills

### Evidence Requirements

Candidates will need to provide evidence to demonstrate their Knowledge and/or Skills by showing that they can:

- ◆ describe the roles of two members of the veterinary practice team in relation to the Veterinary Surgeons Act 1966
- ◆ describe the elements of the nursing process from admission to discharge for one patient
- ◆ outline the differences between two models of nursing
- ◆ describe how to identify normal and abnormal signs in three species

Candidates will also need to provide performance evidence to demonstrate their knowledge and skills by showing that they can:

- ◆ review a care plan for one small animal patient
  - follow one care plan
  - reflect on own performance within the veterinary team
  - review care plan

## Higher National Unit specification: statement of standards (cont)

**Unit title:** Veterinary Nursing: Essential Nursing Skills

### Outcome 2

Demonstrate safe handling and restraint of small animals.

#### Knowledge and/or Skills

- ◆ Body language
  - dogs
  - cats
  - rabbits
  - rodents
  - birds
  - reptiles
- ◆ Patients with sensory impairment
- ◆ Personal protective equipment
- ◆ Handling and restraint equipment
- ◆ Techniques for catching
- ◆ Safe lifting techniques
- ◆ Restraint techniques
  - restraint on floor and tables
  - restraint for general examination
  - restraint for cephalic, jugular and, for rabbit, marginal ear vein, blood sampling/injection
  - restraint for lateral recumbency
  - restraint of head for examination or eye/nasal/aural medication
- ◆ Safe movement and transportation of animals
- ◆ Aggressive patients

#### Evidence Requirements

Candidates will need to provide evidence to demonstrate their Knowledge and/or Skills by showing that they can:

- ◆ demonstrate safe techniques in approaching and handling one small mammal, one bird and one reptile for:
  - catching and removing from accommodation
  - lifting and moving
  - restraint for blood sampling.

Candidates will also need to provide evidence to demonstrate their knowledge and skills by showing that they can:

- ◆ describe the changes they would make to standard handling procedures when dealing with patients with sensory impairment or those with aggressive tendencies

## Higher National Unit specification: statement of standards

**Unit title:** Veterinary Nursing: Essential Nursing Skills

### Outcome 3

Explain the principles and practices of veterinary nursing care.

#### Knowledge and/or Skills

- ◆ Accommodation requirements for hospitalised patients
  - layout and access, size, design and construction materials
  - environmental conditions
  - bedding, substrates and associated equipment
  - safety considerations
- ◆ Measurement of vital signs.
- ◆ Normal parameters for dog, cat, rabbit, horse
  - temperature, pulse and respiration
  - capillary refill time and mucous membrane colour
  - blood pressure
- ◆ Care needs of dog, cat, horse and exotic animal patients
  - recumbency
  - post-surgical and trauma
  - vomiting and regurgitation
  - diarrhoea and constipation
  - urinary incontinence and retention
  - respiratory impediment
  - wound care and bandaging
  - feeding and water
  - fluid therapy
  - assisted feeding
  - containment and physical therapies
  - basic hygiene, bathing and coat care
  - mental stimulation
- ◆ Differentiating between actual and potential nursing problems.
- ◆ Behavioural and clinical indicators of change in condition
  - shock
  - infection
  - pain
  - stress
- ◆ Physiology of changes in condition
  - pyrexia
  - tachycardia
  - bradycardia
  - tachypnoea
  - bradypnoea
  - hypo/hypertension
  - anuria
- ◆ Nursing response to changes in patient condition.

## Higher National Unit specification: statement of standards (cont)

**Unit title:** Veterinary Nursing: Essential Nursing Skills

### Evidence Requirements

Candidates will need to provide evidence to demonstrate their Knowledge and/or Skills by showing that they can:

- ◆ explain the accommodation requirements for two given hospitalised patients
- ◆ describe the normal parameters of vital signs for the dog, cat and rabbit and explain how to measure them
- ◆ explain the care needs for four of the following
  - recumbent patient
  - vomiting patient
  - constipated patient
  - patient with urinary incontinence
  - patient with wounds and bandages
  - patient requiring assisted feeding
  - patient requiring fluid therapy
- ◆ describe the indicators and physiological changes associated with patient deterioration for one given situation
- ◆ explain the nursing response to patient deterioration for one given situation.

## Higher National Unit specification: support notes

### Unit title: Veterinary Nursing: Essential Nursing Skills

This part of the Unit specification is offered as guidance. The support notes are not mandatory.

While the exact time allocated to this Unit is at the discretion of the centre, the notional design length is 40 hours.

### Guidance on the content and context for this Unit

Although this Unit may be taken by candidates wishing to develop and/or enhance their skills, it is primarily intended for candidates who are studying towards the HNC/D in Veterinary Nursing and the teaching and learning should be delivered in this context.

The Unit is specifically designed to introduce veterinary nursing students or other interested parties to the handling and care of small animal patients within a veterinary practice.

Additional information relating to each Outcome is given below.

#### Outcome 1

Veterinary nursing students are expected to be aware of the role of the veterinary nurse, how the role of the nurse and veterinary nurse has developed, and how this role interacts with the veterinarian. They must understand the limitations of the role, and how this changes between training and qualification. Other job roles within or related to veterinary practice may also be discussed (eg Animal Nursing Assistants, receptionists and other laypersons, advanced diploma and other specialist nurses, physiotherapists, radiographers, etc.). Care planning theory and nursing models should include any up to date theory and models developed relevant to veterinary nursing, in addition to those listed in this Unit. Candidates should be able to follow prepared care plans in providing nursing care, but are not required to create a care plan themselves.

#### Outcome 2

This Outcome is primarily about gaining practical competence. It is expected that candidates have regular access to a wide variety of dogs and cats (of different breed and temperament), small mammals (rabbits, guinea pigs, rats, mice, gerbils, ferrets and other common pet species), exotics (lizards, snakes, tortoises) and birds.

Candidates should be able to restrain animals confidently for a range of clinical situations, including all types of examination (eg assessment of gait and neurological examination) with full consideration for their own safety, and that of the animal and other people. This should include the use of personal protective equipment and restraint equipment (muzzles, dog and cat catchers, cat bags, crush cages, etc.).



## Higher National Unit specification: support notes (cont)

**Unit title:** Veterinary Nursing: Essential Nursing Skills

### Outcome 3

Candidates should understand how to select appropriate accommodation for their patients, carry out basic nursing interventions, monitor patient condition and take appropriate action when changes are identified. This should all be done with reference to the qualified staff. Access to practical facilities should be provided to allow this theory to be put in to practice, and simulated training carried out prior to candidates caring for patients.

It is not expected that candidates will be responsible for administration of fluids, tube feeding or urinary catheterisation, although they will be able to care for these patients with supervision from qualified staff.

### Guidance on the delivery of this Unit

Whilst this Unit may be delivered on a standalone basis, it has been designed as part of the HNC/D in Veterinary Nursing. It is recommended that candidates have a good knowledge of Health and Safety as evidenced by the level 7 Unit *Veterinary Practice: Operational Requirements* before undertaking this Unit. Candidates should be familiar with the normal physiology of animals: undertaking the level 7 Units *Veterinary Nursing: Canine and Feline Anatomy and Physiology* and *Exotic Animal Healthcare Studies* prior to, or at the same time as this Unit, would be useful. A good understanding of the importance of effective communication with other members of the veterinary team and clients is also essential: the level 7 Unit *Veterinary Nursing: Client Relations* would therefore be useful.

Delivery could involve classroom-based lectures and demonstration using simulation models. The emphasis for the delivery of Outcome 2 should be on practical handling of a wide variety of animals, both in a college and in the veterinary practice setting. Learning could also be facilitated with the use of DVDs and CR-ROMs. Students should have a good underpinning knowledge of nursing techniques to allow effective application of those techniques,

### Guidance on the assessment of this Unit

Outcomes 1 and 3 could be assessed using a written paper consisting of a combination of short answer and scenario questions. The scenario questions could be used to assess the candidate's ability to explain the nursing requirements of patients in a variety of settings. In addition, for Outcome 1, the candidate should be able to review a nursing care plan; ideally this would be one formulated specifically for the candidate to follow. The candidate should then review the effect of their nursing interventions on the patient, and make revisions to the plan, as necessary.

Outcome 2 could be assessed within the college or the veterinary practice placement, as long as the setting is appropriate to the context of the Unit.

## Higher National Unit specification: support notes (cont)

**Unit title:** Veterinary Nursing: Essential Nursing Skills

### Assessment Guidelines

#### Outcome 1

The assessment of knowledge evidence for this Outcome can be combined with Outcome 3, details of which are given under Outcome 3.

The assessment of performance evidence for this Outcome could include a Nursing Care Plan review. A nursing care plan could be provided for the candidate to follow. The candidate then must reflect upon personal performance and provide a review, including suggested changes to the nursing care plan. Observation checklists should be used to record performance and should be retained for authentication purposes.

#### Outcome 2

Performance evidence for handling three species of animal effectively could be generated in supervised conditions during practical sessions. Observation checklists should be used to record performance and should be retained for authentication purposes.

Oral questioning could be used to demonstrate knowledge evidence. Observation checklists should be used to record performance and should be retained for authentication purposes.

#### Outcome 3

The assessment of this Outcome can be combined with the assessment of knowledge evidence for Outcome 1 and could take the form of a closed-book test consisting of structured questions undertaken in controlled conditions, lasting two and a half hours.

### Online and Distance Learning

If this Unit is delivered by open or distance learning methods, additional resources will be required for candidate support, assessment and quality assurance. For further information and advice, please refer to the SQA guide: *Assessment and Quality Assurance for Open and Distance Learning* ([www.sqa.org.uk](http://www.sqa.org.uk)).

## Higher National Unit specification: support notes (cont)

**Unit title:** Veterinary Nursing: Essential Nursing Skills

### Opportunities for developing Core Skills

There are opportunities to develop the Critical Thinking and Reviewing and Evaluating components of the *Problem Solving* Core Skill at level 5 in this Unit, although there is no automatic certification of this Core Skill or Core Skill component.

Opportunities exist for the development of Critical Thinking when considering care plans for Outcome 1 and when demonstrating safe handling of small animals for Outcome 2. Outcome 1 also presents opportunities for the development of Reviewing and Evaluating skills when reflecting upon and reviewing care plans.

### Disabled candidates and/or those with additional support needs

The additional support needs of individual candidates should be taken into account when planning learning experiences, selecting assessment instruments, or considering whether any reasonable adjustments may be required. Further advice can be found on our website [www.sqa.org.uk/assessmentarrangements](http://www.sqa.org.uk/assessmentarrangements)

## History of changes to Unit

Version	Description of change	Date

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## General information for candidates

### Unit title: Veterinary Nursing: Essential Nursing Skills

This Unit is ideally placed within the HND Veterinary Nursing framework and is relevant for those who work, or plan to work, in the veterinary or allied industries.

The Unit is designed to provide you with knowledge of the process used to nurse veterinary patients, the ability to recognise normal and abnormal function and behaviour, and the ability to respond to that information. You will also become confident in handling a variety of small animals and be able to administer nursing care to veterinary patients under the direction of qualified staff.

The Unit comprises three Outcomes:

Outcome 1 covers the history of nursing including the way a veterinary surgeon and nurse's roles have developed, the nursing process and models of nursing, the contents of a care plan. You will also develop your skills in reflecting on your own performance to allow you to develop your nursing skills and identify the impact your nursing has on your patients. The Unit also covers patient assessment and the process of admitting and discharging patients.

Outcome 2 covers the body language of small animals, handling and restraint techniques, safe lifting techniques and the equipment available to reduce risk to yourself and others. The Unit also covers the changes in handling technique when animals are sensory impaired, or are aggressive.

Outcome 3 looks at the accommodation for small animals and horses in a veterinary setting, the monitoring of condition in a variety of species, enabling you to identify problems and your response to those problems. The Unit also covers the basic nursing techniques required to meet the identified needs of veterinary patients.

In order to complete this Unit successfully you will be required to achieve a satisfactory level of performance in the assessments for this Unit. Outcomes 1 and 3 will be assessed as a written paper on the nursing process and the practices of nursing care. In addition, Outcome 1 will be assessed by a nursing care plan review that requires you to reflect on the effect of your nursing and provide suggestions for updates to the plan. Outcome 2 requires you to demonstrate competence in handling a variety of species of animal for several situations.

There may be opportunities to develop Core Skills in this Unit.