



Higher National Unit specification: general information

Unit title: Veterinary Nursing: Infection Control

Unit code: H0YF 34

Superclass: SN

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Unit purpose

This Unit is designed to provide candidates with knowledge and understanding of communicable diseases, their transmission and control within veterinary practice. 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 Explain the aetiology and transmission of key communicable diseases.
- 2 Explain the principles and procedures for infection control within veterinary practice.
- 3 Interpret the results of clinical audit and make recommendations for improvement.

Recommended prior knowledge and skills

It is recommended that completion of the SCQF Level 7 Unit *Veterinary Nursing: Canine and Feline Anatomy and Physiology* prior to, or at the same time as this, would be useful. Completion of *Veterinary Nursing: Essential Nursing Skills* would be useful.

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 Core Skills of *Problem Solving, Information and Communication Technology (ICT)* and *Communication* at level 5 in this Unit, although there is no automatic certification of Core Skills or Core Skills components.

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

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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

Explain the aetiology and transmission of key communicable diseases.

Knowledge and/or Skills

- ◆ Common terminology relating to infection.
- ◆ Basic structure and characteristics of pathogenic micro-organisms including:
 - bacteria
 - viruses
 - fungi
 - protozoa
- ◆ Transmission of infection, including the 'chain of infection'.
- ◆ Aetiology and transmission of common communicable diseases
 - zoonotic diseases
 - nosocomial infections
 - notifiable diseases
- ◆ Impact of zoonoses on human health.

Evidence Requirements

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

- ◆ describe the characteristics of three pathogenic micro-organisms
- ◆ explain the aetiology, transmission (relating to each element of the 'chain of infection') and effect on a new host (animal or human) of:
 - one nosocomial infection
 - one zoonosis
 - one notifiable disease

Higher National Unit specification: statement of standards (cont)

Unit title: Veterinary Nursing: Infection Control

Outcome 2

Explain the principles and procedures for infection control within veterinary practice.

Knowledge and/or Skills

- ◆ Methods of preventing disease
 - environment
 - nutrition
 - prophylactic treatments
 - reduction of stress
 - maintaining skin integrity
- ◆ Reduction in micro-organisms and controlling the spread of disease
 - hand hygiene (World Health Organisation standard) and other personal hygiene measures
 - personal protective equipment
 - decontamination of equipment and environment including cleaning, disinfection and sterilisation
 - waste disposal
 - isolation and barrier nursing
 - quarantine
 - role of prompt treatment
 - euthanasia
- ◆ Measures for reducing hospital-acquired infections
 - traumatic and surgical wound care
 - catheters
 - intravenous cannulae
- ◆ Assessment of infection risk of common nursing tasks.
- ◆ Protocols for infection control.

Evidence Requirements

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

- ◆ Explain the roles of three different methods in preventing disease
- ◆ Describe the process of decontamination using one disinfection and one sterilisation method
- ◆ Describe the isolation procedures and barrier nursing methods for a patient with an infectious disease
- ◆ Explain one measure to reduce hospital-acquired infections arising from
 - wound care
 - catheters
 - intravenous cannulae

Higher National Unit specification: statement of standards (cont)

Unit title: Veterinary Nursing: Infection Control

Outcome 3

Interpret the results of clinical audit and make recommendations for improvement.

Knowledge and/or Skills

- ◆ Clinical audit process.
- ◆ Infection monitoring tools
 - incidence monitoring
 - environmental swabbing
 - autoclave monitoring
- ◆ Reporting process.
- ◆ Protocol and risk assessment review.
- ◆ Implications of antibiotic resistance.
- ◆ Communication of results within the veterinary team, with clients and with regulatory bodies.
- ◆ Making recommendations following audit.

Evidence Requirements

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

- ◆ describe the clinical audit process
- ◆ report the results of one clinical audit based on one infection monitoring tool
- ◆ interpret the results of the clinical audit
- ◆ make recommendations for improvement to infection control protocols

Higher National Unit specification: support notes

Unit title: Veterinary Nursing: Infection Control

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 HND 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 principles and practices of controlling infection within a veterinary practice.

Additional information relating to each Outcome is given below.

Outcome 1

This Outcome introduces students to pathogenic organisms relevant to veterinary practice. Although candidates need to be aware of the basic characteristics of the micro-organisms, the emphasis should be on those characteristics that make them effective pathogens. The candidates also need to be aware of the 'Chain of Transmission', and apply this to the transmission of common communicable diseases.

Zoonotic diseases are of major importance in veterinary practice and candidates must be able to understand the way in which these diseases affect humans. They must also understand the way in which these diseases are transmitted in order to reduce the risk of contracting the infection.

Outcome 2

This Outcome concentrates on the prevention and control of infectious diseases. The candidates should understand how to care for an animal in order to reduce the chance of it contracting infections. Methods for controlling the spread of disease should be thoroughly understood to enable candidates to demonstrate them effectively in the workplace. Current best practice should be included, and any updates in techniques for hand-washing taken into account (World Health Organisation method at time of writing).

Higher National Unit specification: support notes (cont)

Unit title: Veterinary Nursing: Infection Control

Outcome 3

The process of clinical audit should be understood by the candidate, in order to apply this to infection control. The candidates should understand the methods available for monitoring infection within the veterinary practice; any new methods should also be included. Although the candidates need to be aware of environmental swabbing, and be able to take swabs correctly from appropriate locations, they do not need to culture the swabs themselves. It would be useful to consider the role of the nurse where there is non-compliance within the practice setting. How the nurse could manage a situation where other clinical and non-clinical staff are not following infection control procedures should be considered. The fact that infection control is never just down to one person but is a team effort should be emphasised. Role play using real scenarios could be useful here. The candidates will also need to have the skills to report the results of the audit and communicate these with the relevant people.

Guidance on the delivery of this Unit

Whilst this Unit may be delivered on a stand-alone basis, it has been designed as part of the HNC/D in Veterinary Nursing. It is recommended that candidates are familiar with normal physiology of animals, and completion of the SCQF Level 7 Unit *Veterinary Nursing: Canine and Feline Anatomy and Physiology* prior to, or at the same time, would be useful. A good understanding of veterinary nursing techniques is desirable, therefore completion of *Veterinary Nursing: Essential Nursing Skills* would be useful.

It is envisaged that most of the delivery of this Unit will be a combination of classroom-based lectures and demonstration using an appropriate veterinary nursing environment. Practical teaching of hand-washing techniques is required in Outcome 2 and UV light cabinets may be used to support this training. Learning could also be facilitated with the use of DVDs and CR-ROMs. Students should have a good underpinning knowledge of infection control techniques to allow effective application of the techniques.

Guidance on the assessment of this Unit

Outcomes 1 and 2 could be assessed using a closed-book written test. An investigative report on a clinical audit could be used for Outcome 3. The audit could be based on a situation in a veterinary practice and the report would relate to the audit results.

Higher National Unit specification: support notes (cont)

Unit title: Veterinary Nursing: Infection Control

Assessment Guidelines

Outcome 1

The assessment of this Outcome can be combined with Outcome 2, details of which are given under Outcome 2.

Outcome 2

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

Outcome 3

A case study of a clinical audit carried out in a veterinary practice could be used to generate the evidence required for this Outcome.

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).

Opportunities for developing Core Skills

There are opportunities to develop the Core Skills of *Problem Solving*, *ICT* and *Communication* at level 5 in this Unit, although there is no automatic certification of Core Skills or Core Skills components. The investigation and report required for Outcome 3 offer opportunities for the development of all three Core Skills.

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

History of changes to Unit

Version	Description of change	Date

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General information for candidates

Unit title: Veterinary Nursing: Infection Control

This Unit is designed to provide you with knowledge of the organisms that cause disease, the ways in which they spread and the ways in which animal diseases affect humans. You will then build on this knowledge to identify ways of preventing disease and controlling its spread. This Unit also provides you with the knowledge and skills to carry out a clinical audit to identify improvements to the ways that infection is controlled in particular situations.

It would be beneficial for you to have successfully achieved the SCQF Level 7 Unit *Veterinary Nursing: Canine and Feline Anatomy and Physiology* and *Veterinary Nursing: Essential Nursing Skills* before starting this Unit. This Unit is ideally placed within the HNC/D Veterinary Nursing framework and is relevant for those who work in the veterinary or allied industries.

The Unit comprises three Outcomes:

Outcome 1

This Outcome covers the micro-organisms that cause disease and the characteristics that make them effective pathogens. It also discusses the ways in which infective material transmits to susceptible hosts. You will also cover the common communicable veterinary diseases, hospital-acquired infections and zoonotic diseases; learning about the ways they transmit and affect new hosts in order to reduce the risk of spread.

Outcome 2

This Outcome covers the methods of care that support an animal's ability to remain disease free. In the event of not being able to prevent the patient contracting disease, methods for the reduction or control of the spread of infectious disease will be discussed. The veterinary nurse plays a vital role in ensuring other patients, particularly those that are vulnerable, are not affected by diseases from other in-patients.

Outcome 3

This Outcome looks at the ways in which the efficacy of infection control measures can be assessed. It will provide you with the knowledge to be able to carry out a clinical audit, reflect on the activities of the veterinary practice designed to reduce the incidences of infection and make recommendations for changes to protocols. You must also be able to communicate the results of your audit effectively with all appropriate people.

In order to complete this Unit successfully you will be required to achieve a satisfactory level of performance. Outcomes 1 and 2 will be assessed as a closed-book test. Outcome 3 will be assessed by an investigative report.

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