



Higher National Unit specification: general information

Unit title: Veterinary Nursing: Theatre and Surgical Practice

Unit code: H103 35

Superclass: SN

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Unit purpose

This Unit is designed to provide candidates with knowledge, understanding and practical experience of the requirements and protocols of a veterinary operating theatre in addition to the pre-, intra- and post-operative care of patients. It is a suitable Unit for candidates wishing to seek employment in the veterinary nursing field.

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

- 1 Explain veterinary operating theatre principles and practices.
- 2 Explain the roles and duties of theatre nursing staff.
- 3 Identify surgical instruments and describe their construction, function and preparation for use.
- 4 Explain the management of patients pre-, intra- and post-operatively.

Recommended prior knowledge and skills

Candidates should have achieved passes in relevant level 7 Units in the HN Veterinary Nursing framework, or equivalent. Achievement of *Veterinary Nursing: Infection Control*, *Veterinary Nursing: Care of the Terminally Ill Patient* and *Veterinary Nursing: Client Relations* would be particularly beneficial. Candidates should also have achieved the Unit *Veterinary Practice Operational Requirements*.

Credit points and level

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

**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* and *Working with Others* 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. It is included in the framework of the HND in Veterinary Nursing.

Higher National Unit specification: statement of standards

Unit title: Veterinary Nursing: Theatre and Surgical Practice

Unit code: H103 35

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 veterinary operating theatre principles and practices.

Knowledge and/or Skills

- ◆ Theatre design and layout
 - clean and dirty areas
 - heating
 - lighting
 - ventilation
- ◆ Theatre furniture and equipment
 - operating table
 - diathermy Unit
 - positioning aids
 - suction machine
 - instrument trolley
- ◆ Theatre asepsis
- ◆ Cleaning protocols
 - daily
 - periodic
- ◆ Planning operating lists
- ◆ Patient transfer systems
 - stretchers
 - trolleys
 - hoists

Higher National Unit specification: statement of standards (cont)

Unit title: Veterinary Nursing: Theatre and Surgical Practice

Evidence Requirements

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

- ◆ describe five features of a well-designed theatre
- ◆ compare two alternative heating, lighting or ventilation systems available for use in theatre
- ◆ describe the use of two items of operating theatre furniture or equipment
- ◆ explain effective daily and periodic theatre cleaning protocols to ensure asepsis of the theatre environment
- ◆ explain the planning of an operating list for a given scenario
- ◆ explain the use of stretchers, trolleys or hoists to transfer patients.

Outcome 2

Explain the roles and duties of theatre nursing staff.

Knowledge and/or Skills

- ◆ Roles of nursing staff
 - circulating nurse
 - scrub nurse
- ◆ Theatre personnel pre-entry procedures
 - hand hygiene
 - scrubbing up
 - gowning and gloving (open and closed methods)
- ◆ Maintaining sterility and asepsis in theatre
- ◆ Theatre protocol
 - communication
 - movement
 - personal hygiene

Evidence Requirements

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

- ◆ explain the role of either the circulating nurse or the scrub nurse
- ◆ describe theatre pre-entry procedures for one member of the surgical team
- ◆ describe theatre protocol for the maintenance of sterility
- ◆ explain two protocols for interactions between surgical team members

Higher National Unit specification: statement of standards (cont)

Unit title: Veterinary Nursing: Theatre and Surgical Practice

Outcome 3

Identify surgical instruments and describe their construction, function and preparation for use.

Knowledge and/or Skills

- ◆ Identification and description of the use of instruments for:
 - general surgery
 - orthopaedic surgery
 - dental surgery
 - ophthalmic surgery
- ◆ Construction of instruments
- ◆ Preparation for sterilisation
 - cleaning
 - packing
- ◆ Handling and passing instruments

Evidence Requirements

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

- ◆ identify ten surgical instruments selected from general, orthopaedic and dental instruments
- ◆ describe the construction and function of three surgical instruments
- ◆ describe how to prepare pack either a single instrument or a kit in preparation for sterilisation by the autoclave method
- ◆ describe the correct method of handling and passing sterilised instruments in theatre

Higher National Unit specification: statement of standards (cont)

Unit title: Veterinary Nursing: Theatre and Surgical Practice

Outcome 4

Explain the management of patients pre-, intra- and post-operatively.

Knowledge and/or Skills

- ◆ Medication
- ◆ Management prior to surgery
 - communication with owners
 - withholding food
 - monitoring defecation and urination
- ◆ Preparation for surgery
 - equipment
 - skin preparation
 - bandaging
 - patient positioning
 - drapes
- ◆ Intra-operative care
 - monitoring vital signs
 - patient observations
 - control of haemorrhage
 - control of body temperature
 - prevention of corneal ulcers
 - maintaining adequate perfusion
- ◆ Wound closure
 - sutures
 - staples
 - glue
- ◆ Post-operative care
 - requirements for handover
 - control of body temperature
 - monitoring vital signs
 - removal of endotracheal tubes
 - recognising post-operative shock
 - wound management
 - monitoring and maintaining intravenous fluid therapy
 - monitoring and managing pain
- ◆ Long-term post-operative complications
 - shock
 - coughing
 - decubitus ulcers
 - hypostatic pneumonia

Higher National Unit specification: statement of standards (cont)

Unit title: Veterinary Nursing: Theatre and Surgical Practice

Evidence Requirements

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

- ◆ explain the preparation of two patients prior to surgery using given scenarios, including
 - advice to be given to owners
 - skin preparation
 - positioning of patients
 - drapes
- ◆ explain one method of controlling blood loss or maintaining body temperature during surgery
- ◆ explain one post-operative complication that is caused by poor perfusion during surgery
- ◆ explain the use of two types of suture material
- ◆ describe one suture pattern
- ◆ compare the advantages and disadvantages of two wound closure techniques
- ◆ explain three methods of monitoring vital signs
- ◆ describe five symptoms indicating that a patient is in pain and describe one appropriate analgesic
- ◆ explain the correct procedure to remove an endotracheal tube in one species
- ◆ explain the requirements for handover from the operating theatre for one patient using a given scenario
- ◆ describe post-operative wound management in a given scenario

Higher National Unit specification: support notes

Unit title: Veterinary Nursing: Theatre and Surgical Practice

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 in employment 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 related to the routines and procedures undertaken within a veterinary practice operating theatre. Although general health and safety legislation will be covered in other Units, its particular importance with respect to theatre practice procedures should be emphasised throughout.

At the time of writing the health and safety legislations to be included are:

- ◆ Health and Safety at Work Act (1974)
- ◆ Control of Substances Hazardous to Health (COSHH) Regulations (2002)
- ◆ Controlled Waste Regulations (1992)
- ◆ Special Waste Amendment Regulations (Scotland) (2004)
- ◆ Hazardous Waste Regulations (England and Wales) (2005)
- ◆ Environmental Protection Act (1990)
- ◆ Reporting of Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Register (RIDDOR) (1995)
- ◆ First Aid at Work.

Additional information relating to each Outcome is given below.

Outcome 1

This Outcome covers the principles of an operating theatre and this should include the theatre as an aseptic environment and how it is prepared as such. Appropriate cleaning protocols with potential hazards to this aseptic environment should be included. Design and layout of a theatre should be discussed together with the various options available, ie theatre temperature regulation and ventilation systems. Planning a daily operating list with examples of procedures in their preferred order of priority. Safe use of theatre equipment, lighting, diathermy, suction, instrument trolley and patient transport systems — trolleys and hoists should all be covered.

Outcome 2

Candidates should gain a good understanding of correct hand hygiene and scrubbing up methods and correct gowning and gloving up techniques including open, closed and plunge methods and both back tie and side tie gowns. Disposable and re-usable gowns should be considered and appropriate theatre clothing — masks, caps and footwear. Candidates should have a clear understanding of the role of the scrub nurse and the circulating nurse.

Higher National Unit specification: support notes (cont)

Unit title: Veterinary Nursing: Theatre and Surgical Practice

Outcome 3

Preparation of surgical instruments should include the procedures for newly acquired instruments and cleaning methods — hand cleaning and ultrasonic cleaning. The storage requirements for different instruments should be included. Emphasis should be placed on the need for asepsis when handling and passing of instruments. Candidates should be familiar with a range of instruments including general, orthopaedic (including implants), dental and ophthalmic.

Outcome 4

This Outcome should focus on the nurse's role in assisting the veterinary surgeon to manage the patient before, during and after surgery. Candidates should have a clear understanding of the pre-, intra- and post-operative care needs of the patient, highlighting the importance of monitoring vital signs and pain levels throughout. As part of the pre-operative element of teaching, mention must be made of drape materials and draping systems such as plain, fenestrated, adhesive barrier, draping limbs and sub-draping. Intra-operative care should include particular reference to the need to maintain adequate perfusion in order to avoid pressure necrosis, joint strain and limb swelling. Observations of the patient should include blood loss, tourniquets and urine output. Emphasis should also be placed on which functions a qualified veterinary nurse may and may not carry out, under the terms of the 2002 Amendment to Schedule 3 of the Veterinary Surgeons Act 1966.

Guidance on the delivery of this Unit

This Unit has been devised with the intention that it forms part of the framework of the HND in Veterinary Nursing and should be delivered with that in mind.

It is envisaged that the delivery of this Unit will be a combination of classroom-based lectures covering the principles of theatre and surgical nursing supported by practical sessions in the operating theatre introducing students to the role of circulating and scrubbed theatre nurse duties in addition to patient care before, during and after surgery. This will complement the candidate's normal duties at the practice placement.

Guidance on the assessment of this Unit

This Unit could be assessed by two assessments. Outcomes 1, 2 and 3 could be assessed jointly by a written test. Outcome 4 could be assessed by a second written test or report.

Higher National Unit specification: support notes (cont)

Unit title: Veterinary Nursing: Theatre and Surgical Practice

Assessment Guidelines

Outcome 1

The assessment of this Outcome could be combined with Outcomes 2 and 3, details of which are given under Outcome 3.

Outcome 2

The assessment of this Outcome could be combined with Outcomes 1 and 3, details of which are given under Outcome 3.

Outcome 3

The assessment of this Outcome could be combined with Outcomes 1 and 2. This could be conducted as an holistic closed-book test consisting of structured and extended response questions undertaken in controlled conditions and lasting one and a half hours.

Outcome 4

The assessment of this Outcome could be conducted as a closed-book test consisting of structured and extended response questions or a written report undertaken in controlled conditions and lasting one 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).

Opportunities for developing Core Skills

There are opportunities throughout this Unit to develop the Core Skills of *Problem Solving* and *Working with Others* at level 5 when practising the techniques integral to Outcomes 2 and 3, although there is no automatic certification of Core Skills or Core Skills components.

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: Theatre and Surgical Practice

This is a specialist surgical nursing Unit relating to the functioning of a veterinary practice operating theatre. The Unit will provide you with an understanding of the high specification requirements of this working environment, particularly with regard to asepsis and nursing care of the patient prior to, during and post-operatively. College delivery of underpinning knowledge and practical sessions will be complemented by practical opportunities in the practice placement.

The Unit is organised into four Outcomes, covering the following topics:

- ◆ veterinary operating theatre principles and practices
- ◆ the roles of theatre nursing staff
- ◆ surgical instruments: their construction, function and preparation for use
- ◆ the management of patients pre-, intra- and post-operatively

The assessments for this Unit will consist of two written tests.

Outcomes 1, 2 and 3 will be assessed by an holistic closed-book written test consisting of structured and extended response questions undertaken in controlled conditions and lasting one and a half hours. Outcome 4 will be assessed by a separate closed-book written test consisting of structured and extended response questions undertaken in controlled conditions and lasting one and a half hours.

This Unit is included in the framework for the HNC/D in Veterinary Nursing.