



Higher National Unit specification: general information

This Graded Unit has been validated as part of the HND in Veterinary Nursing. Centres are required to develop the assessment instrument in accordance with this validated specification. Centres wishing to use another type of Graded Unit or assessment instrument are required to submit proposals detailing the justification for change for validation.

Graded Unit title: Veterinary Nursing: Graded Unit 2

Graded Unit code: H10Y 35

Type of Graded Unit: Examination

Assessment Instrument: Closed-book Examination

Publication date: July 2018

Source: Scottish Qualifications Authority

Version: 04

Unit purpose

This Graded Unit is designed to provide evidence that the candidate has achieved the following principal aims of the HND in Veterinary Nursing:

- ◆ to develop the ability to absorb, manage and evaluate large amounts of complex subject-specific information
- ◆ to develop and apply a broad range of specialised vocational knowledge and skills
- ◆ to develop an understanding of the interdisciplinary links between the key subject areas within veterinary nursing
- ◆ to apply knowledge and understanding in both non-routine and complex contexts
- ◆ to build on previously acquired transferable skills
- ◆ to develop self-reliance and study skills
- ◆ to prepare candidates for professional registration and the allied responsibilities of the role of veterinary nurse
- ◆ to enable progression to further academic qualifications (including progression within SCQF)
- ◆ to develop the ability to absorb, manage and evaluate large amounts of complex subject-specific information
- ◆ to develop and apply a broad range of specialised vocational knowledge and skills

General information (cont)

- ♦ to develop an understanding of the interdisciplinary links between the key subject areas within veterinary nursing
- ♦ to apply knowledge and understanding in both non-routine and complex contexts
- ♦ to build on previously acquired transferable skills
- ♦ to develop self-reliance and study skills
- ♦ to prepare candidates for professional registration and the allied responsibilities of the role of veterinary nurse
- ♦ to enable progression to further academic qualifications (including progression within SCQF).

Recommended prior knowledge and skills

It is recommended that the candidate should have completed or be in the process of completing the following Units relating to these specific aims prior to undertaking this Graded Unit:

- ♦ *Veterinary Nursing: Supervised Practice 1*
- ♦ *Veterinary Nursing: First Aid Procedures*
- ♦ *Veterinary Nursing: Laboratory Techniques*
- ♦ *Veterinary Nursing: Diagnostic Imaging Techniques*
- ♦ *Theatre and Surgical Veterinary Nursing Practice*
- ♦ *Veterinary Nursing: Anaesthesia*
- ♦ *Veterinary Nursing: Small Animal Health Conditions*
- ♦ *Veterinary Nursing: Supervised Practice 2*
- ♦ *Veterinary Nursing: Supervised Practice 3*

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 National 1 to Doctorates.*

Core Skills

There are no Core Skills embedded in this Graded Unit specification.

General information (cont)

Assessment

This examination-based Graded Unit is a closed-book examination. It will consist of a written examination of 3 hours.

The examination will be in two sections, A and B, with each section lasting 1½ hours. A break between the sections will be allowed, provided that Section B remains unseen until after the break.

Section A will be a practical examination requiring candidates to demonstrate competence in selected skills. This Objectively Structured Clinical Examination (OSCE) will consist of ten practical tasks. Each task must be completed in no longer than six minutes.

Section B will be a written examination consisting of structured questions in which there will be no choice and unstructured essay questions in which there will be a degree of choice.

To achieve this Unit, candidates should successfully complete a minimum of 7 out of the 10 practical tasks in Section A and at least 50% of the available marks in Section B with achievement being graded according to overall marks attained.

Higher National Graded Unit specification: instructions for designing the assessment task and assessing candidates

Graded Unit title: Veterinary Nursing: Graded Unit 2

Conditions of assessment

The assessment is based on a closed-book examination lasting 3 hours.

Reasonable assistance is the term used by SQA to describe the difference between providing learners with some direction to generate the required evidence for assessment and providing too much support which would compromise the integrity of the assessment. Reasonable assistance is part of all learning and teaching processes.

In relation to the assessment of Higher National Examination-based Graded Units, assessors may provide advice and guidance on examination technique and clarification on the meaning of command words which may appear within an examination paper, prior to the formal examination.

Remediation is not allowed in Examination-based Graded Unit assessments.

The examination should be unseen and the assessment should be conducted in controlled and invigilated conditions.

At all times, the security, integrity and confidentiality of examinations must be ensured.

Instructions for designing the assessment task

The examination should be designed to assess the candidate's critical knowledge and understanding of the topics relating to the specific aims which this Graded Unit is designed to cover.

The OSCE tasks in section A should be designed in accordance with the ranges indicated in Table 1 below. The questions and corresponding marks for Section B should be designed in accordance with the ranges indicated in Table 2. However, the overall total mark for the written examination is 50.

The format of the examination should be designed to meet the following requirements.

- ◆ The examination should be in two sections.
- ◆ Section A should last 1½ hours and should consist of 10 OSCE tasks lasting 6 minutes each. These tasks should be conducted on an individual basis with one assessor per candidate.
- ◆ Each OSCE task should be assessed according to a predetermined checklist.
- ◆ Section B should last 1½ hours and should consist of structured questions and three unstructured essay questions.
- ◆ The structured questions should be worth 35 marks and the essay questions should be worth 15 marks.
- ◆ The structured questions may be split into several parts and each part given a separate mark.
- ◆ Candidates will be required to attempt all structured questions of Section B but there should be a choice of one from three in the essay questions.
- ◆ The written examination paper must cover aspects of integration and problem solving.

Higher National Graded Unit specification: instructions for designing the assessment task and assessing candidates (cont)

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Table 1: Section A

Key topics	Level of demand	Suggested number of OSCE tasks per key topic
Demonstrate Diagnostic Imaging Techniques	Apply clinical skills, knowledge and understanding to demonstrate diagnostic and patient care concepts that relate to given diagnostic imaging scenarios.	1
Demonstrate Laboratory Diagnostic Techniques	Apply clinical skills, knowledge and understanding to demonstrate diagnostic and patient care concepts that relate to given laboratory diagnostic scenarios.	2
Demonstrate Nursing Care Techniques	Apply clinical skills, knowledge and understanding to demonstrate nursing care concepts that relate to given health scenarios. This should include, but not be limited to, administration of medication, application of bandages, fluid therapy, intravenous catheterisation, tube feeding and urinary catheter care.	3
Demonstrate Nursing Support for Anaesthesia	Apply clinical skills, knowledge and understanding to demonstrate anaesthetic nursing support in given surgical scenarios.	2
Demonstrate Theatre Practice Techniques	Apply clinical skills, knowledge and understanding to demonstrate theatre practice techniques in given scenarios.	2

Higher National Graded Unit specification: instructions for designing the assessment task and assessing candidates (cont)

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Table 2: Section B

Key topics	Level of demand	Percentage weighting for each topic
Applying diagnostic techniques and patient care concepts — structured questions	Apply knowledge and understanding to explain the diagnostic and patient care concepts that relate to given medical health situations. Use knowledge and understanding to draw conclusions about relevant diagnostic results and how the results would be interpreted to develop a care strategy.	30
Applying anaesthetic, surgical and theatre nursing concepts — structured questions	Apply knowledge and understanding to explain anaesthetic, surgical and theatre nursing concepts in given surgical situations. Use knowledge and understanding to explain the recovery needs of the patient.	40
Applying diagnostic techniques and patient care concepts — essay questions	Apply knowledge and understanding to identify, explain and analyse the diagnostic and patient care techniques used in given situations. Use knowledge and understanding to compare the diagnostic and care requirements of a range of animal patients.	30

To ensure a suitably integrated approach, some questions will cover more than one topic. In these cases, precise attribution of marks to a particular topic may not be possible. The weightings above are, therefore, approximate and should be seen as strong guidelines on the proportion of the total marks which will relate to each topic.

The examination will be marked out of 100. Assessors will aggregate the marks achieved by the candidate to arrive at an overall mark for the examination. Assessors will then assign a grade to the candidate for this Graded Unit based on the following grade boundaries:

Higher National Graded Unit specification: instructions for designing the assessment task and assessing candidates (cont)

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Successful completion of less than seven OSCE tasks will result in non-achievement of Section A. Successful completion of seven or more tasks will accrue credit for Section A according to the table below:

OSCE tasks achieved (out of 12)	Credit (%)	Section A marks contributing to final mark and grade for GU
Less than 7	Nil achievement	N/a
7	50	25
8	67	33.5
9	84	42
10	100	50

The written examination for Section B will be marked out of 50. Assessors will aggregate the marks achieved by the candidate in Sections A and B to arrive at an overall mark for the examination.

Assessors will then assign a grade to the candidate for this Graded Unit based on the following grade boundaries:

- ◆ A = 70%–100%
- ◆ B = 60%–69%
- ◆ C = 50%–59%

Any learner who has failed their Higher National Examination-based Graded Unit or wishes to upgrade their award must be given a re-assessment opportunity, or in exceptional circumstances, two re-assessment opportunities. This must be done by using a substantially different examination.

The final grading given must reflect the quality of the learner's evidence at the time of the completion of the graded unit. Learners must be awarded the highest grade achieved, whether through first sitting or through any re-assessment.

Higher National Graded Unit specification: instructions for designing the assessment task and assessing candidates (cont)

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Guidance on grading candidates

Candidates who meet the minimum Evidence Requirements will have their achievement graded as a C (competent), A (highly competent), or B (somewhere between A and C). The grade related criteria to be used to judge candidate performance for this Graded Unit is specified in the following table:

Grade A	Grade C
<p>Is a seamless, coherent piece of work or exam script which consistently:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">♦ interprets and understands the scenarios and questions in a way which demonstrates insight and a clear understanding of issues and relationships between disciplines♦ responses are logically structured and coherently expressed demonstrating consistent use of correct terminology♦ demonstration of clinical skills, clearly indicates a high level of practical competence and confidence across a wide range of tasks♦ consolidates and integrates required knowledge and skills linking concepts and ideas and relating answers explicitly to the question♦ provides a strong understanding of the subject or problem posed and signposts the subsequent direction the answer takes♦ provides clear recommendations that demonstrate a strong understanding of the situation or problem posed, and the most appropriate solutions	<p>Is a co-ordinated piece of work or exam script which:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">♦ interprets and understands the questions by identifying the key issues and can explain the relationship between disciplines♦ makes relevant points, though responses may be uneven♦ demonstration of clinical skills, indicates an acceptable level of practical competence and confidence across a range of tasks♦ consolidates and integrates knowledge and skills but may lack continuity and consistency and fails to show clear links to concepts and ideas♦ provides an understanding of the subject and problem posed♦ provides appropriate recommendations that reflect the situation or problem posed

Higher National Graded Unit specification: instructions for designing the assessment task and assessing candidates (cont)

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Support notes

Section A — OSCE Tasks

- ◆ This section should allow candidates to demonstrate that they have the required clinical competency to perform a range of practical tasks integrating knowledge, understanding and practical experience gained during the completion of the following Units: *Veterinary Nursing: Supervised Practice 1*, *Veterinary Nursing: First Aid Procedures*, *Veterinary Nursing: Laboratory Techniques*, *Veterinary Nursing: Diagnostic Imaging Techniques*, *Theatre and Surgical Veterinary Nursing Practice*, *Veterinary Nursing: Anaesthesia*, *Veterinary Nursing: Small Animal Health Conditions*, *Veterinary Nursing: Supervised Practice 2* and *Veterinary Nursing: Supervised Practice 3*.

The OSCE tasks should present scenarios that require candidates to demonstrate a range of practical nursing skills in a variety of contexts. This may include presenting scenarios involving a range of small animal species requiring specific diagnostic, anaesthetic or nursing support. The following examples are provided as guidance:

- ◆ The veterinary surgeon wants to anaesthetise a cat for ovariohysterectomy.

Using the equipment available, select, assemble and attach the most appropriate anaesthetic breathing system for this patient.

As this is the first induction of the day, you will also need to check that the anaesthetic machine is ready for use. Explain to the assessor the checks that you are making.

For this patient you are required to calculate:

- a Tidal volume (x ml/kg)
- b Minute volume
- c Fresh gas flow per minute

The patient has a pre-anaesthetic respiration rate of x breaths per minute. Show all your workings including units.

- ◆ This German Shepherd puppy has been admitted to the surgery with recurrent cystitis.

The veterinary surgeon has asked you to set up the equipment and position the dog to obtain a right lateral cystogram.

The dog has been anaesthetised and is being monitored.

Note: you are not expected to set exposure factors, change the focal film distance, or to make an exposure.

Please tell the examiner when the patient is correctly positioned for the exposure.

Higher National Graded Unit specification: instructions for designing the assessment task and assessing candidates (cont)

Graded Unit title: Veterinary Nursing: Graded Unit 2

Section B —Structured questions and essay

Part 1

- ◆ This section should demonstrate candidates' integration of knowledge, understanding and cognitive skills, across the following Units: *Veterinary Nursing: Laboratory Techniques*, *Veterinary Nursing: Diagnostic Imaging Techniques* and *Veterinary Nursing: Small Animal Health Conditions*.

The questions may present a topic that requires candidates to explain how a situation may be managed, issues surrounding that topic and the wider issues that may arise. This may include presenting specific medical health conditions and requiring candidates to explain the role of laboratory diagnostics and imaging as part of the patient care regime. The following examples are provided as guidance:

- ◆ An elderly cat is presented with signs of weight loss, poor skin and coat condition, anorexia and vomiting. The vet suspects that the cat is suffering from chronic renal failure and asks you to perform blood tests. State which parameters are indicative of chronic renal failure and explain how and why the results will vary from normal.
- ◆ A bitch is admitted following recurrent cystitis. The vet has decided to perform contrast radiography of the bladder. State what views should be taken and describe the points of centring and collimation. State which contrast media would be appropriate in this situation and explain how the contrast media would be introduced into the bladder.

Part 2

- ◆ This section should demonstrate candidates' integration of knowledge, understanding and cognitive skills, across the following Units: *Theatre and Surgical Veterinary Nursing Practice*, *Veterinary Nursing: Anaesthesia* and *Veterinary Nursing: Small Animal Health Conditions*

The questions may present a topic that requires candidates to explain how a situation may be managed, issues surrounding that topic and the wider issues that may arise. This may include presenting a surgical care scenario and requiring candidates to explain the anaesthetic, surgical and theatre nursing care requirements of the patient. The following examples are provided as guidance:

- ◆ A rabbit is presented for dental therapy which needs to be performed under anaesthetic. Describe the pre-anaesthetic care needs of this patient. Explain the induction process in this case, making reference to preferred drugs and the intubation process.
- ◆ A dog is presented for a routine castration. Describe how to monitor the anaesthetic in this instance and explain the recovery process from a nursing care point of view.
- ◆ You have been asked to assist as the scrubbed nurse in the case of a cruciate repair. Explain what pre-operative preparations you should undergo and describe your role during the procedure.

Higher National Graded Unit specification: instructions for designing the assessment task and assessing candidates (cont)

Graded Unit title: Veterinary Nursing: Graded Unit 2

Part 3 – Essay Questions

This section should demonstrate candidates' integration of knowledge, understanding and cognitive skills, across all Units given in the 'Recommended prior knowledge and skills' section of the General Information for this Unit.

The questions may present a topic that requires candidates to explain how a situation may be managed, issues surrounding that topic and the wider issues that may arise.

This may include presenting complex medical or surgical scenarios and requiring candidates to explain the diagnostic and/ or surgical care needs of the patient.

The following examples are provided as guidance:

- ◆ A 6 month old Springer Spaniel puppy is presented at the surgery with vomiting and abdominal pain. The vet suspects a blockage as the puppy has a history of eating unusual objects. The vet decides to perform radiography to confirm the diagnosis and as a result, a decision is made to perform a laparotomy to remove what appears to be a peach pip from the intestines. Explain the radiographic and anaesthetic procedures that are likely to be conducted in this situation, making specific reference to the role of the nurse.
- ◆ A cat is admitted for a femoral head osteotomy following a road traffic accident. Explain the role of the circulating nurse in this situation and describe the specific orthopaedic instruments that are likely to be required for this procedure.
- ◆ An overweight Labrador bitch is admitted with suspected Diabetes mellitus. The vet decides to perform a glucose curve. Explain the diagnostic process in this instance, making specific reference to the techniques used to collect, process and analyse the samples. Include in your answer the nursing care needs of the patient during the process.

Equality and inclusion

This graded unit specification has been designed to ensure that there are no unnecessary barriers to learning or assessment. The individual needs of learners should be taken into account when planning learning experiences, selecting assessment methods or considering alternative evidence.

Further advice can be found on our website www.sqa.org.uk/assessmentarrangements.

History of changes to Unit

Version	Description of change	Date
04	Update of Conditions of Assessment	17/07/18
03	Amendment to number of OSCEs from 12 to 10.	18/01/13
02	Correction to table heading on Page 5.	13/06/12

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General information for candidates

Graded Unit title: Veterinary Nursing: Graded Unit 2

This Unit provides you with the opportunity to demonstrate your ability to integrate knowledge, understanding and skills from the following Units:

- ◆ *Veterinary Nursing: Supervised Practice 1*
- ◆ *Veterinary Nursing: First Aid Procedures*
- ◆ *Veterinary Nursing: Laboratory Techniques*
- ◆ *Veterinary Nursing: Diagnostic Imaging Techniques*
- ◆ *Theatre and Surgical Veterinary Nursing Practice*
- ◆ *Veterinary Nursing: Anaesthesia*
- ◆ *Veterinary Nursing: Small Animal Health Conditions*
- ◆ *Veterinary Nursing: Supervised Practice 2*
- ◆ *Veterinary Nursing: Supervised Practice 3*

These Units support the aims of the Veterinary Nursing HND and will be assessed by means of a three hour examination.

The examination will be in two parts with section A taking the form of an Objective Structured Clinical Examination (OSCE). This will comprise ten practical tasks which you will have gained experience in while completing the supervised practice Units.

Section B, will be a closed-book written examination. The questions in the examination will allow you to show how issues of diagnostics, health conditions, anaesthesia, surgical and theatre practice are integrated and will allow you to identify links between them.

Section A

In this section you will be required to complete 10 practical tasks. Each task will last 6 minutes and will be completed in timed, controlled conditions on a one to one basis with an assessor. You will be required to pass 7 out of the 10 tasks in order to achieve a pass in section A. The tasks selected will cover a range of nursing techniques and skills and will include aspects of diagnostic imaging, laboratory diagnostics, anaesthesia, theatre and surgical practice and general nursing support of the sick patient. Questions may be in a format similar to the question below:

- ◆ A German Shepherd puppy has been admitted to the surgery with recurrent cystitis.

The veterinary surgeon has asked you to set up the equipment and position the dog to obtain a right lateral cystogram.

The dog has been anaesthetised and is being monitored.

Note: you are not expected to set exposure factors, change the focal film distance, or to make an exposure.

Please tell the assessor when the patient is correctly positioned for the exposure.

General information for candidates (cont)

Graded Unit title: Veterinary Nursing: Graded Unit 2

Section B

Part 1

In this section you will be presented with short scenarios and asked to answer structured questions about each scenario. These questions will require you to address specific aspects of the scenario, eg the role of laboratory diagnostics and imaging, anaesthesia, surgical and theatre practice as part of the patient care regime. Questions may be in a format similar to the example below.

- ◆ An elderly cat is presented with signs of weight loss, poor skin and coat condition, anorexia and vomiting. The vet suspects that the cat is suffering from chronic renal failure and asks you to perform blood tests. State which parameters are indicative of chronic renal failure and explain how and why the results will vary from normal.

Part 2

In this section you will be presented with a topic or situation that is more complex and requires you to integrate your knowledge and understanding to discuss the wider care needs of the patient including diagnostics, surgical and medical care.

Questions may be in a format similar to the example below.

- ◆ A 6 month old Springer Spaniel puppy is presented at the surgery with vomiting and abdominal pain. The vet suspects a blockage as the puppy has a history of eating unusual objects. Radiography is performed to confirm the diagnosis and a laparotomy is done to remove a peach pip from the intestines. Explain the radiographic and anaesthetic procedures that are likely to be conducted in this situation, making specific reference to the role of the nurse.

Your centre will provide you with support in preparing for, and undertaking, the examination.