



Higher National Unit specification: general information

Unit title: Veterinary Nursing: Client Relations

Unit code: H0YA 34

Superclass: AF

Publication date: March 2012

Source: Scottish Qualifications Authority

Version: 01

Unit purpose

This Unit is designed to introduce the candidate to various aspects of the work of the veterinary nurse in a typical veterinary practice. It will enable the candidate to gain knowledge, understanding and practical experience of general communication and administrative duties in the practice and specific responsibilities of the veterinary nurse. The Unit is intended for candidates wishing to work in the veterinary nursing field.

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

- 1 Describe the establishment and maintenance of effective interpersonal skills in the workplace.
- 2 Explain veterinary practice reception procedures.
- 3 Describe the organisation and management of nursing clinics.

Recommended prior knowledge and skills

Candidates should have an entry profile of *Communication, Problem Solving and Working with Others* at SCQF level 4. Some experience of working with the public would be beneficial.

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 *Communication*, *Problem Solving* and *Working with Others* and the Using Number component of *Numeracy*, all 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 HNC/D in Veterinary Nursing.

Higher National Unit specification: statement of standards

Unit title: Veterinary Nursing: Client Relations

Unit code: H0YA 34

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 establishment and maintenance of effective interpersonal skills in the workplace.

Knowledge and/or Skills

- ◆ Analysis of human behaviour.
- ◆ Oral communication skills.
- ◆ Non-verbal communication and its effects.
- ◆ Establishing and maintaining effective working relationships within the veterinary practice.
- ◆ Establishing effective relationships with clients and patients.

Evidence Requirements

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

- ◆ describe three factors influencing the development of an effective practice team
- ◆ describe one effective method of dealing with each of the following:
 - a distressed client
 - an assertive client
 - an angry client

Higher National Unit specification: statement of standards (cont)

Unit title: Veterinary Nursing: Client Relations

Outcome 2

Explain veterinary practice reception procedures.

Knowledge and/or Skills

- ◆ Reception duties, including:
 - communicating with clients
 - organising work areas
- ◆ Methods of record keeping and effective filing including:
 - retrieving, filing and storing records
- ◆ Financial control systems.
- ◆ Data protection and confidentiality.
- ◆ RCVS guidance on record keeping and confidentiality.
- ◆ RCVS guidance on clinical second opinions.
- ◆ Valid consents to treatment.

Evidence Requirements

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

- ◆ describe three reception duties performed in veterinary practice
- ◆ explain two implications of the Data Protection Act for the veterinary practice
- ◆ describe one protocol for clinical second opinions
- ◆ explain why protocols are required for clinical second opinions
- ◆ explain the role of consent forms in veterinary practice.

Outcome 3

Describe the organisation and management of nursing clinics.

Knowledge and/or Skills

- ◆ Clinics as support systems for animal owners
- ◆ Planning, developing and managing nursing clinics, including:
 - puppy parties
 - obesity clinics
 - treatment clinics
 - geriatric clinics.

Evidence Requirements

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

- ◆ describe the purpose and potential benefits of one nursing clinic
- ◆ describe the planning, development and management of one nursing clinic.

Higher National Unit specification: support notes

Unit title: Veterinary Nursing: Client Relations

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

This Unit is intended for candidates who are studying towards the HNC/D in Animal/Vet Nursing and the teaching and learning should be delivered in this context.

The Unit is specifically related to the duties and procedures undertaken within the veterinary practice.

Additional information relating to each Outcome is given below.

- 1 This Outcome covers communication skills as they relate to the veterinary practice as a workplace. Communicating with clients and their animals should also be a major focus of delivery. Identification of modes of communication encountered in veterinary practice to include effective communication such as verbal and non-verbal factors such as expression, posture, gesture and apparel, should be covered. Recognising own communication style and how we can improve and adapt upon this. Also the ability to recognise different communication styles that we may face in practice, eg two way discussion compared to authoritative statements, modes such as telephone, face to face, video conference, internet and models such as questioning and listening techniques. The ability to explain the dynamics of effective face to face interaction, mentioning social and environmental factors, body language and effective feedback mechanisms. The importance of good telephone communication and the effects it may have on the practice image. Barriers to effective communication should include emotional effects such as grief and loss, serious illness and euthanasia. Explore factors that may affect communication even further such as culture, age, grief, use of language and sensory impairment. This should be extended to cover reasons why clients do not comply with veterinary treatment instruction in some situations. The ways in which clients acquire information about veterinary care and services should be included since this may influence how clients interact with veterinary practice staff. The ability to recognise the nurse's role in supporting clients in making decisions about their animal's treatment, to include maintaining professional relationships with clients, supporting bereaved clients and supporting colleagues under pressure. Understanding factors that affect working relationships with clients and within the veterinary team to include the influences on relationships between members of an inter-professional team to include perceptions, roles, expertise and responsibilities. Time management and its importance to the general running of the practice, students must appreciate the importance in the work place and the ability to relate to this in personal situations. The use of effective questioning and methods of dealing with criticism, anger and distress are particularly important. The ability to summarise the handling of a complaint, eg keeping a record, the response given and action taken, addressing the subject of a complaint, dealing with aggressive or abusive clients. Recognise the needs of the customers including information requests and booking appointments, emphasis should be placed on the ability to respond appropriately in a professional manner.

Higher National Unit specification: support notes (cont)

Unit title: Veterinary Nursing: Client Relations

- 2 This Outcome covers general administrative and related work carried out by the veterinary nurse as part of reception duties. Greet and address the client appropriately, to include personal presentation, professional manner, communication with clients. Taking a patient history to include actively eliciting relevant information, correct interpretation of given facts, concise transmission of relevant information to a veterinary colleague. Appreciate the factors that may affect the human/animal relationship to include culture and religion, socio-economic status. Record keeping and effective filing should include both manual and electronic methods. The provisions of the Data Protection Act and the implications for veterinary practice should be covered with respect to client access, mail shots, confidentiality, etc. The circumstances in which client information may be disclosed and the ethical implications of information disclosure should be included. Reference should be made to criminal proceedings, public interest, insurance purposes and prior client permission. The information contained in the relevant parts of the RCVS Guide to Professional Conduct should be emphasised. Consideration of financial control systems should include payments, credits, debits, cheques, credit cards, invoices and VAT. Veterinary appointments should be discussed and should include prioritisation, routine/recall, emergency, urgent, non-urgent and re-examinations. Discussion of clinical second opinions: supersessions, procedures, consent forms should make reference to the relevant parts of the RCVS Guide to Professional Conduct. Referrals procedures: veterinary specialists and para-veterinary professionals to be included. Summarise the value of clients to a practice, critical to business growth to include active and bonded clients.
- 3 This Outcome deals with an increasingly important part of the veterinary nurse's specific responsibilities: clinics and similar events. These events help to increase the client base, subsequently making the nurse an increasingly valuable asset to any veterinary practice. This Outcome will present nurses who already run clinics with new ideas and skills to further their role in this area and, for those who have not yet embarked on this exciting part of nursing, with the inspiration to do so. Delivery should emphasise that this is an interesting and expanding role for veterinary nurses.

This Outcome will benefit from the input of pharmaceutical representatives, who often provide support to veterinary nurses in the setting up of clinics and puppy parties.

It must be emphasised that where a veterinary nurse is providing advice or treatment, she/he must be fully aware of the veterinary nurse's responsibilities under the RCVS Guide to Professional Conduct, in order that the line between the responsibilities of a veterinary nurse and a veterinary surgeon is not crossed.

Guidance on the delivery of this Unit

This Unit has been devised with the intention that it forms part of the framework of the HNC/D in Veterinary Nursing and should be delivered within this context.

It is envisaged that most of the delivery of this Unit will be a combination of classroom-based lectures and discussion sessions together with practical experience in the veterinary practice placement.

Higher National Unit specification: support notes (cont)

Unit title: Veterinary Nursing: Client Relations

Guidance on the assessment of this Unit

Centres should feel free to adopt an appropriate assessment strategy provided that it meets the specifications given in the Statement of Standards for this Unit.

Assessment Guidelines

Outcome 1

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

Outcome 2

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

Outcome 3

The assessment of this Outcome can be combined with Outcomes 1 and 2. This could be conducted as an holistic closed-book written test consisting of structured questions undertaken in controlled conditions and lasting 1.5 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

Although there is no automatic certification of Core Skills or Core Skills components in this Unit there are many opportunities for developing most of these at level 5.

Communication skills, both Oral and Written are central to this Unit since all Outcomes involve communicating with veterinary practice staff and the public. *Working with Others* is also a recurring strand in this Unit for similar reasons. Opportunities exist in Outcome 3 for the development of all three components of *Problem Solving* in the planning and organising of nursing clinics before the events, critical thinking during the clinics and reviewing and evaluating afterwards. Several aspects of the clinics will involve using number when considering, for example, obesity indices and treatment dosages.

Higher National Unit specification: support notes (cont)

Unit title: Veterinary Nursing: Client Relations

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

© Scottish Qualifications Authority 2012

This publication may be reproduced in whole or in part for educational purposes provided that no profit is derived from reproduction and that, if reproduced in part, the source is acknowledged.

Additional copies of this Unit specification can be purchased from the Scottish Qualifications Authority. Please contact the Business Development and Customer Support team, telephone 0303 333 0330.

General information for candidates

Unit title: Veterinary Nursing: Client Relations

This Unit is designed to introduce you to various aspects of the work of a veterinary nurse in a typical veterinary practice. It will enable you to gain knowledge, understanding and practical experience of general communication and administrative duties in the practice and specific responsibilities of the veterinary nurse.

The Unit is organised into three Outcomes covering the following topics:

- ◆ establishing and maintaining effective interpersonal skills in the workplace
- ◆ veterinary practice reception procedures
- ◆ organising and managing nursing clinics

Assessment for the Unit consists of one closed-book written test consisting of structured questions undertaken in controlled conditions and lasting 1.5 hours.