



The College of
Animal Welfare



Employer Guide to Veterinary Nursing Apprenticeships at The College of Animal Welfare

INTRODUCTION TO OUR VETERINARY NURSING APPRENTICESHIP

If you're looking to grow a competent Veterinary Nurse that meets the needs of your practice, then now could be the perfect time to recruit a student veterinary nurse onto our Level 3 Diploma in Veterinary Nursing (Apprenticeship) - Companion Animal Pathway.

This apprenticeship programme covers the key skills, knowledge and behaviours needed to ensure your student maintains safe working practices and takes responsibility for themselves, others and the animals in their care - coming out at the end of the programme fully equipped to thrive in their role as a veterinary nurse.

As the largest provider of veterinary nurse training in the UK, choosing us as your training provider offers your SVN the opportunity to train within a like-minded community who all share a common passion for animals and enthusiasm for an exciting and rewarding profession.

LEVEL 3 DIPLOMA IN VETERINARY NURSING (APPRENTICESHIP) KEY FACTS



30-36 months, including
two years of college
attendance



Practical
training



Day release
delivery



Available at any CAW
centre in England

WHAT WILL MY APPRENTICE LEARN?

Each apprentice is required to display the necessary knowledge, skills and behaviours to become a successful veterinary nurse. These are measured throughout the programme as detailed below:



Knowledge

This is the information, technical knowledge, and 'know-how' that the individual needs to have and to understand in order to successfully carry out their duties



Skills

The apprentice veterinary nurse will be trained to the standard of the RCVS Day One Skills and Competences for veterinary nurses.



Behaviours

It is necessary to abide by the RCVS Code of Professional Conduct for Veterinary Nurses and work within legal and ethical limits. Behaviour must demonstrate accountability, responsibility and a commitment to self-improvement.



LEVEL 3 DIPLOMA IN VETERINARY NURSING (COMPANION ANIMAL PATHWAY)

Veterinary nursing apprentices at The College of Animal Welfare will also complete the Level 3 Diploma in Veterinary Nursing as part of their programme of study. This includes the following units:

- **Professional Veterinary Nursing Responsibilities** – Professional responsibilities of the student and RVN, including the RCVS Code of Conduct, health and safety in the veterinary practice and legal/ethical duties
- **Diagnostic Principles** – Key principles of imaging and laboratory techniques to support the veterinary surgeon in diagnosis; including microscopy, endoscopy, ultrasound and radiography
- **Principles of Veterinary Nursing Care 1** – Underpinning knowledge relating to the care of patients in a veterinary environment including anatomy, physiology and emergency first aid
- **Pharmacology and Dispensary Management** – Basic veterinary pharmacology and its application, including the prescription, storage, supply and dispensing of medicines to standards required of an SQP
- **Practical Veterinary Nursing Skills 1** – Developing practical skills in RCVS approved Training Practices through the compilation of a portfolio of evidence
- **Anaesthesia and Theatre Nursing Skills** – The principles of anaesthesia and theatre practice including surgical instruments, assisting in theatre and the preparation and monitoring of patients during anaesthesia and sedation
- **Life Stage Nursing Care and Support** – How the patient's life stage influences their individual needs. The patient's response to disease and trauma, reproduction, nursing care of medical conditions, palliative care and euthanasia
- **Principles of Veterinary Nursing Care 2** – Nursing requirements of patients including fluid therapy, pain assessment, preventative care and physical therapy techniques
- **Surgical Nursing and Patient Care** – Specialised knowledge in surgical nursing, including pre, peri and post-operative nursing from admission to discharge
- **Practical Veterinary Nursing Skills 2** – Developing practical skills in RCVS approved Training Practices through the compilation of a portfolio of evidence

HOW WILL MY APPRENTICE BE ASSESSED?

ON PROGRAMME ASSESSMENTS

Apprentices undertake a variety of assessments including online examinations, assignments and case studies. Apprentices also complete an e-portfolio over the course of their training, as evidence of practical competence. At the end of year one there is a formative practical assessment.

If your apprentice is required to undertake Functional Skills Level 2 in English and Maths, these are assessed via online examinations and practical assessments.

Once they have completed these, and undertaken the required amount of training, they will be able to undertake the End Point Assessment.

END POINT ASSESSMENT (EPA)

The EPA consists of:

- A Professional Discussion
- A Practical Assessment in the form of an Objective Structured Clinical Examination (OSCE)

Professional Discussion

The Professional discussion is a structured 45 minute interview between the apprentice and an independent assessor covering a range of knowledge, skills and behaviours through scenario competence-based questions.

Practical Assessment

Once all other assessments have been passed, your apprentice will complete a final practical examination (OSCEs).

WHO CAN UNDERTAKE OUR APPRENTICESHIP PROGRAMME?

Anyone aged 16 or over can complete the apprenticeship providing they meet the following criteria:

- » Live in England and spend at least 50% of their working time in England
- » Have lived within the EU for at least the last 3 years
- » Not already undertaken a similar course at Level 3 or above
- » Not already receiving government funding for an alternative qualification
- » Be employed within a recognised Training Practice

Additional entry requirements also apply. Five GCSEs including maths, English and Science at grade C/4 or above or equivalent are needed. Please visit our website for full entry requirements.

APPRENTICESHIP QUICK FACTS



An apprentice must be paid at least the minimum starting wage for an apprentice (£8/hour as of April 2026)



The employer pays for the apprenticeship and cannot ask for the apprentice to contribute



All apprentices must spend a minimum of six hours per week undertaking off-the-job (OTJ) training – time spent at college counts towards this.



The VN Apprenticeship Standard is expected to take 30 – 36 months to complete

HOW MUCH WILL IT COST?

The Institute for Apprenticeships have set the fees for the Veterinary Nursing Apprenticeship Standard at £17,000, but the amount you pay depends on the size of your organisation.

NON-LEVY EMPLOYER

“ AN EMPLOYER WITH A PAYROLL BILL OF LESS THAN £3 MILLION. ”

A 5% contribution is required, provided you use your digital account to process the claim for 95% funding available.

The cost is £850.

LEVY PAYING EMPLOYER

“ AN EMPLOYER WITH A PAYROLL BILL OF OVER £3 MILLION. ”

The full £17,000 is payable from levy funds via the Digital Account Service (DAS).

PROFESSIONAL/AWARDING BODY FEES*

RCVS Registration: £228

Exam fees will be payable where a resit is required.

* RCVS registration and any exam resit fees are payable by employers and will be invoiced at cost.

WHERE CAN THE APPRENTICESHIP BE STUDIED?

The College of Animal Welfare offers the Level 3 Diploma in Veterinary Nursing (Apprenticeship) - Companion Animal Pathway from our centres based in Cambridgeshire, Edinburgh*, Leeds, North London and Wigan, in addition to satellite centres in Bodmin, Chorleywood, Guernsey, Horsham, Solihull and Stoke-on-Trent. Please check the website for details of course start dates and delivery formats at each of our centres.

www.caw.ac.uk/vn

Run on a day release basis the programme can be undertaken by students who are living and working in England in a veterinary practice that is approved by the Royal College of Veterinary Surgeons (RCVS) as a Training Practice (TP or aTP) earning at least the National Minimum Wage for Apprentices Subject to course requirements.

* Please note apprentices attending the Edinburgh centre must be resident in England and spend at least 50% of their employment in England.



WHAT IS INVOLVED WITH THE VN APPRENTICESHIP?

Initial process

- » CAW application system
- » RCVS Student Enrolment

On-Programme Training & Assessment:

- » Written course assignments
- » Course examinations
- » Day one skills and competences assessment
- » Completion of Level 3 Veterinary Nursing Diploma course
- » Level 2 Functional Skills in English and Maths unless exempt
- » Confirmation of RCVS hours to be met before moving through the gateway

Gateway to End Point Assessment

- » Employer End Point Assessment Organisation (EPAO) and CAW agree the apprentice VN meets the required standard

End Point Assessment

- » Professional discussion
- » OSCEs

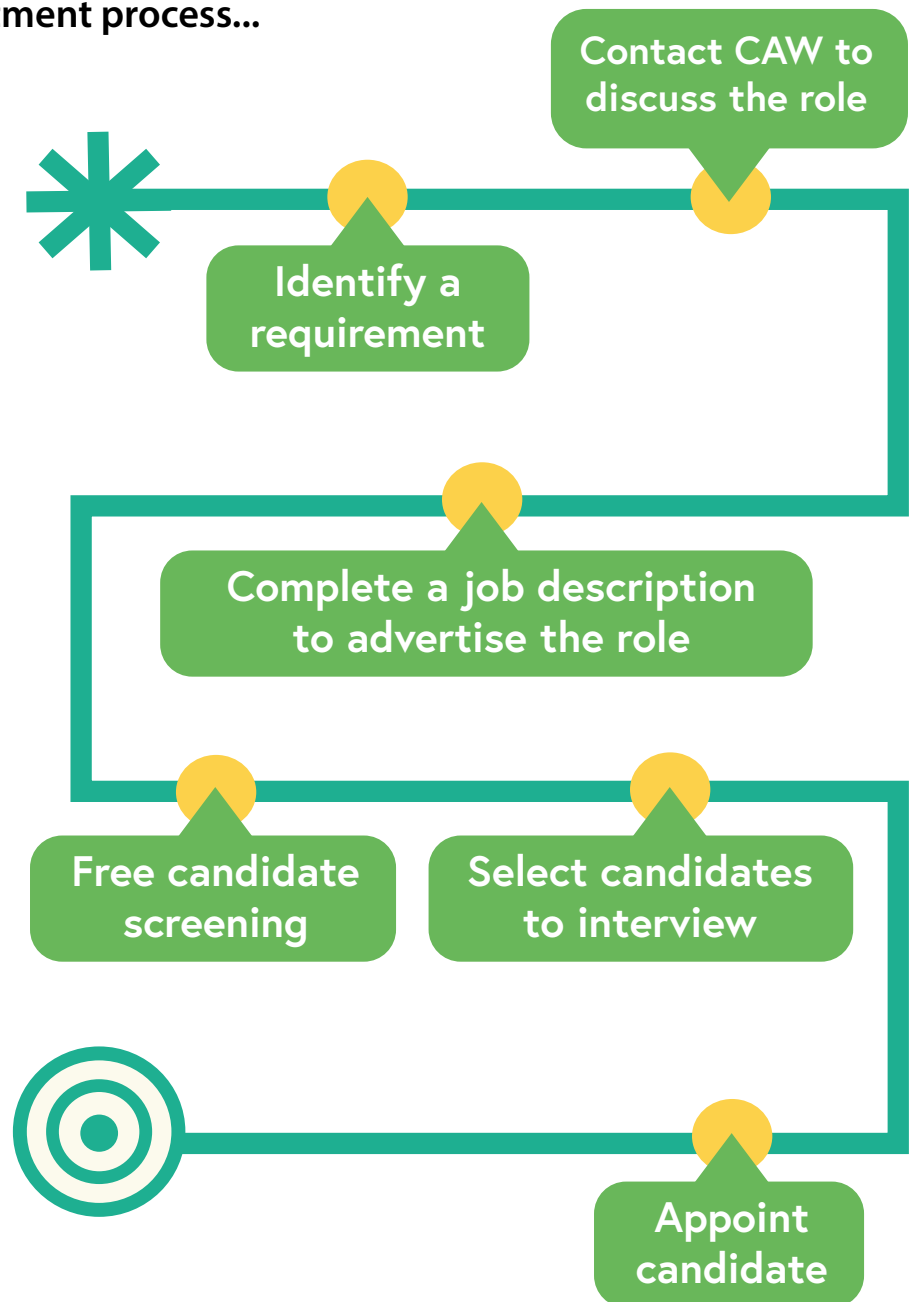
Qualified Veterinary Nurse ready to apply for RCVS VN Registration!

HOW TO RECRUIT AN APPRENTICE AT THE COLLEGE OF ANIMAL WELFARE

Recruiting a new apprentice

If you are looking to take on a new apprentice, please contact us and we can advise you on advertising your vacancy and assist you to recruit your apprentice for free.

Take a look at the recruitment process...



Training existing staff

If you are looking to train existing members of staff, your employee will need to select the apprenticeship they are interested in and apply online at: www.caw.ac.uk/vn



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ww.caw.ac.uk



The College of Animal Welfare on social media...

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All information is correct at the time of press and may be subject to change.