Working as a Veterinary Nurse

Careers Guide

The College of Animal Welfare
Contents

What do veterinary nurses do? ..................................3
Is veterinary nursing for me? .................................4-5
  Why Become a Veterinary Nurse .....................4
  Personal Qualities and Skills .........................5
How do you become a veterinary nurse? ............6-7
  Qualifications and Training ..........................6
  Gaining Work Experience .............................7
  Veterinary Nurse Training at CAW .................8
Career Progression for Veterinary Nurses ..........9

More about
The College of Animal Welfare

The College of Animal Welfare was established in 1989 with the vision to use education to help tackle animal welfare issues. Today, the College is one of the largest veterinary nurse training providers in the UK.
Veterinary nurses are vital to the running of a successful veterinary practice, and are responsible for working with veterinary surgeons to provide care and treatment to a variety of different animals such as dogs, cats and rabbits.

They perform a range of important duties such as:

- Preparing animals for surgery
- Taking bookings and completing paperwork
- Running nurse clinics such as diet, worming and grooming consultations
- Advising owners on pet welfare
- Monitoring anaesthetised animals
- Preparing animals for surgery and performing minor surgical procedures
- Taking x-rays and carrying out diagnostic tests
- Answering phones and welcoming clients
- Nursing sick animals
- And much more!
Why become a Veterinary Nurse?

Veterinary nursing a natural choice for those with their heart set on working in the veterinary industry. Joining the profession offers many benefits:

**Gain real job prospects**
Job prospects for registered veterinary nurses continue to remain high. What’s more – salary expectations have increased significantly in recent years. You can now expect a veterinary nurse salary to be in excess of £20,000 on average per year.

**Join a rewarding profession**
Veterinary nurses make a real difference to the lives of animals every single day. The sense of purpose that comes from nursing an ill animal back to health, makes veterinary nursing a rewarding and worthwhile career.

**Benefit from varied career options**
Veterinary nurses have numerous professional opportunities. You could work in first opinion practice; move into referral practice or work in industries such as management, research, teaching or sales.

**Gain the gift of life-long learning**
Continuing Professional Development (CPD) is a mandatory requirement for veterinary nurses, leaving plenty of opportunity to pursue professional interests and undertake specialist training in a range of topics, including the care of exotic pets, feline medicine, and dentistry.
Personal Qualities and Skills

Good veterinary nurses are hard-working, passionate about animals and dedicated to their work. Take a look at some of the skills and qualities that make a good veterinary nurse:

**Passion for animal welfare**

It goes without saying that working as a veterinary nurse is a great choice for those who are caring, giving and motivated to do the best for others.

**Good team player**

Veterinary nurses are often required to work together to complete certain tasks, therefore it’s important that you’re able to get along with and help others.

**Committed to ongoing learning**

As continuing professional development (CPD) is a professional requirement for veterinary nurses, you should be passionate about learning new skills and undertaking regular training. We offer a range of CPD courses for VNs, available to view at: [cpd.caw.ac.uk](http://cpd.caw.ac.uk)

**Resilience**

You should have the confidence to work with little supervision and have the skills to cope with the physical and emotional demands of the job.
How do you become a Veterinary Nurse?

Qualifications and Training

In order to become a veterinary nurse, you’ll need to complete a veterinary nursing qualification approved by the Royal College of Veterinary Surgeons (RCVS).

There are two types of training:

**Further Education**
Veterinary Nursing Diploma or Apprenticeship

**Higher Education**
Veterinary Nursing BSc (Hons) or FdSc degree

Entry requirements will vary by programme and provider. As a minimum, you’ll usually need to:

- Be at least 16 years of age
- Hold 5 GCSEs at grades 9-4 (or A* to C) including English, Maths and a Science Subject
- Gain relevant work experience in a veterinary practice

A list of approved training providers can be found on the RCVS website.

View pages 8-9 for more details about training at CAW.
How to Gain Work Experience or Employment in a Veterinary Practice

You’ll usually need to gain work experience or employment in a veterinary practice before training as a veterinary nurse.

**Take a look at our top tips and advice:**

- **Check online job boards** for student veterinary nurse positions, including Indeed, the CAW Jobs Board, Vet Times Jobs or Animal Jobs Direct.

- **Follow local veterinary colleges and veterinary practices on social media** to be the first to see any new vacancies posted.

- **Contact your local veterinary practices directly** to ask for a work placement or enquire about employment opportunities.

- **Attend relevant open evenings and career days** such as our *Careers With Animals Day* to discuss your career plans with local colleges and practices.

Please do not be put off from applying for a training programme if you do not have years of work experience. Good veterinary nurses come from all walks of life, with varying amounts of prior experience and applications will be judged on their own merit.
Veterinary Nursing Qualifications at The College of Animal Welfare

We offer a range of veterinary nursing qualifications, from Further Education (Level 3 Diploma) through to Higher Education (FdSc and BSc Honours).

All of our programmes will allow you to apply for professional registration as a Registered Veterinary Nurse with the Royal College of Veterinary Surgeons (RCVS).

**Further Education**

- Level 3 Diploma in Veterinary Nursing (Companion Animal Pathway)
- Level 3 Diploma in Equine Veterinary Nursing

**Higher Education**

- FdSc Veterinary Nursing (Royal Veterinary College)
- BSc Honours Veterinary Nursing (Middlesex University)

As the largest provider of veterinary nurse training in the UK, we can offer you the opportunity to train as a veterinary nurse by joining a community of like-minded students who all share a passion for animals and a desire to join an exciting and rewarding profession.

Visit [www.caw.ac.uk/vn](http://www.caw.ac.uk/vn) for more details about our courses.
Career Progression for Veterinary Nurses

Career opportunities for qualified veterinary nurses are varied and wide-ranging...

- Work as a sales representative for veterinary suppliers
- Train to become a veterinary physiotherapist or hydrotherapist
- Become a Head Veterinary Nurse or practice manager
- Teach VN students in education roles such as lecturing
- Work in a first opinion veterinary practice, referral practice or veterinary hospital
- Volunteer or work abroad
- Study additional qualifications or pursue specialist training in areas such as dentistry or feline medicine
- Academic research roles
- And much more!