

Veterinary Practice Training Newsletter

TP Times



April 2024

Spotlight on...
The College of Animal
Welfare's Basildon
centre

Just For Fun...

Test your knowledge and
enter our prize competition
- a bandaging bundle from
Millpledge!



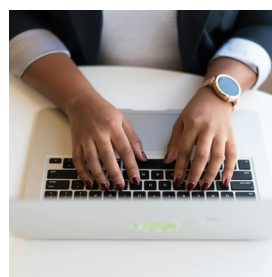
A guide for new
clinical coaches



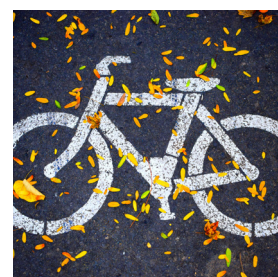
Academic Assignment
Writing



Enhancing
relationships at work



A guide to remote
invigilation



How to be more eco-
friendly in practice

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Welcome to the April issue...

Thank you for all the great feedback we have received so far since the February issue of TP Times went out.

Congratulations to Michelle Rewcastle who correctly solved the anagram in the last issue to give the answer of Ctenocephalides Felis, winning a place on one of The College of Animal Welfare’s one day congresses. A big thank you goes out to Millpledge for providing the winner of this issue’s prize competition with a bandaging bundle. Don’t miss out, turn to page 24 to enter!

The College of Animal Welfare (CAW) News section in this issue is spanning several pages! There are news, updates, meet the VN IQA team, information on OSCE tasks, Off-The-Job training hours, the EPA professional discussion, the new VLE and more!

As always, if there are articles or any other items that you wish to see, please let us know (tptimes@caw.ac.uk) as we really want this magazine to be full of information that is useful to you, whatever your role in the practice team.

Alison German RVN
Editor, TP Times

CAW launch new range of leadership and management webinars

The College of Animal Welfare is delighted to announce a new series of leadership and management webinars to run throughout 2024/5 designed to help those working in veterinary practice to build their confidence in leading and managing teams.

The first webinar will begin in May with each session exploring a different facet of workplace leadership. From effective communication, mastering meetings and problem solving, to conflict management and navigating change, these webinars delve into critical skills for effective leadership.

- 21/05/24 – Effective Communication and Feedback: Enhancing workplace interactions
- 06/06/24 – Empowering Growth: Coaching, mentoring and staff development
- 18/06/24 – Harmonising the Workplace: Mastering conflict and managing stress
- 25/07/24 – Navigating Change: Strategies for effective change management
- 08/08/24 – Project Management
- 22/08/24 – Leading with Efficiency and Effectiveness: Navigating team dynamics
- 26/09/24 – Operational Excellence: Management and objective setting
- 24/10/24 – Impactful Briefings and Presentations
- 13/11/24 – Self-Growth in a Professional World: A webinar on personal development
- 11/12/24 – Understanding and Managing Finances
- 15/01/25 – Mastering Meetings: Effective meeting management
- 12/02/25 – Decoding Problems: Effective techniques for problem solving

Each webinar will run from 9:30am to 12:30pm for just £20+VAT per session. [Find out more and book a place online here.](#)

RCVS VN Council elections – don’t forget to vote!

Voting for the 2024 Veterinary Nurses Council election is now underway. All Registered Veterinary Nurses (RVNs) will have been sent an email with a link to vote – please have you say on who you would like to represent you.

There are three candidates standing for election this year, one of whom is currently a member of VN Council, and two of whom are not. These are:

- Susan Howarth RVN
- Stuart Bobby Miller RVN
- Kirsty Young RVN

Remember that voting closes at 5pm on Friday 26 April 2024.

Newly revalidated top-up veterinary nursing degree now open for applications

The College of Animal Welfare’s BSc (Hons) Veterinary Nursing Top-Up degree programme, awarded by Middlesex University, is now open for applications to start in September 2024 (subject to RCVS revalidation). Aimed at diploma or foundation degree qualified veterinary nurses, this programme is ideal for those looking to study towards a degree for their own personal or professional growth.

The programme is run via distance learning and can be studied on a full-time or part-time basis. You will undertake live online lessons in a virtual classroom and complete online learning activities. The good news for some is that there are no exams! Instead assessment is carried out by written coursework, case studies, presentations and reflective pieces.

Throughout the programme you’ll develop skills in critical evaluation, academic writing and complex decision making. You will undertake the following modules

- Evidence Based Veterinary Nursing
- Surgical Veterinary Nursing
- Medical Veterinary Nursing
- Veterinary Nursing Futures
- Anaesthesia for Veterinary Nursing Practice
- Applied Emergency and Critical Care for Veterinary Nursing
- Quality Improvement Project

Whether you want to gain a degree for personal satisfaction or to enhance your career options to perhaps move into teaching, research or postgraduate study such as a masters, we welcome enquiries from all and are happy to discuss any questions you may have.

For more information visit [The College of Animal Welfare’s website](#), watch the video below or sign up to our [information webinar](#) on Wednesday 15 May from 7-8pm.



Scotland and Northern Ireland to introduce new XL Bully Laws

The Scottish first minister Humza Yousaf has confirmed that the Scottish government would “in essence replicate” UK legislation banning XL bully dogs without a licence. Owners living in Scotland will need an exemption certificate by 31 July 2024.

The Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs of Northern Ireland (DAERA) has also announced that new laws will be put in place on the ownership of XL bully type dogs but has not yet announced a timeline for this.

Have you subscribed to VN Times online?

VN Times is sent free of charge to all UK-based veterinary nursing students on a monthly basis. They have recently launched a digital version of the publication. If you are a student and haven’t yet signed up, you can do so by following the link below:

<https://store.magstand.com/VN-Times>

Free BEVA membership for student equine VNs

If you are a student equine veterinary nurse, make sure you have taken advantage of the British Equine Veterinary Association (BEVA) free student membership. Membership will give you access to online resources, journals and a discounted rate for BEVA congress. [Sign up here.](#)

BVNA Congress 2024 open for registration

The British Veterinary Nursing Association (BVNA) Congress, taking place this year between 11 – 13 October 2024 at Telford International Centre, is open for registration.

The packed programme also offers talks, practical workshops, product demonstrations, and interactive ‘challenging communications’ sessions led by VNFutures.

Tickets are now on sale, with an early bird price available until Wednesday 31 July 2024.

VetSkill launches new VN qualification in emergency and critical care

VetSkill is thrilled to announce an exciting addition to its growing portfolio of qualifications: the VetSkill VTEC Level 5 Diploma in Advanced Veterinary Nursing (Emergency and Critical Care).

This Ofqual-regulated qualification is an inspired addition to the current suite of Level 5 Diplomas in Advanced Veterinary Nursing joining advanced qualifications in medical nursing, surgical nursing and practice nurse.

The VetSkill suite of advanced veterinary nursing qualifications are designed for registered veterinary nurses (RVNs) seeking career progression, or to further their knowledge and practical skills to a mastery level, within areas of specific interest.

[Contact VetSkill](#) for more information.



Mind Matters awards funding to project exploring SVN mental health education

The RCVS Mind Matters Initiative (MMI) has awarded £20,000 to a research project taking a deep dive into whether there is adequate mental health education in the student veterinary nursing curriculum.

The funding comes from the MMI Sarah Brown Mental Health Research Grant which was founded in 2019 in memory of RCVS Council Member Sarah Brown, who passed away in 2017. This year's grant has been awarded to Dr Faye Didymus and Dr Jackie Hargreaves from Leeds Beckett University, who aim to address potential lack of understanding surrounding the importance of mental health education in the learning paths of student veterinary nurses. It is hoped this research will culminate in a set of evidence-based recommendations for how mental health education for student veterinary nurses could be enhanced.

Interested in contributing to this research? if you are a student veterinary nurse, registered veterinary nurse, and are involved with the delivery of diploma-route and degree-route veterinary nursing curricular, please [sign up to their free webinar](#) on Tuesday 23 April at 10.30am. During the webinar, the researchers will discuss their findings to date and offer an opportunity for attendees to contribute to the design and development of the second phase of the research.

Extension to XL Bully neutering window announced

The British Veterinary Association (BVA) has welcomed Defra's decision to extend the deadline for neutering XL Bully dogs in England and Wales following campaigning by the veterinary profession.

The new deadline to neuter XL Bully dogs that were under seven months on 31 January 2024 will now be 30 June 2025.

Responding to the announcement BVA President Anna Judson said: "We're pleased that the Government has listened to the veterinary profession's concerns and has taken on board our calls to extend the neutering age for XL Bullies in England and Wales to the recommended 18 months instead of one year. Given increasing evidence that neutering large breeds of dogs early can lead to developmental orthopaedic problems, alongside other medical conditions, this move strikes the right balance between ensuring the dogs' health and preventing breeding. It will also help ease the likely pressure on already overstretched vet teams."

New 'Mind Yourself' programme from MMI

The Mind Matters Initiative (MMI), run by the Royal College of Veterinary Surgeons (RCVS) have announced a new three-part training programme called 'Mind Yourself'.

Mind Yourself is open to all members of the veterinary profession, including veterinary surgeons, veterinary nurses, students, receptionists and practice managers, and is designed to help individuals improve and protect their mental health.

The programme consists of three online live sessions (8, 15 and 22 April from 4-4:50pm). The entire programme costs £15 per person or £50 for a bulk practice purchase for four people. [Find out more and book a place online.](#)



Spotlight on... Basildon!

In each of the forthcoming issue of TP Times we will be having a spotlight on one of The College of Animal Welfare's satellite centres, beginning with Basildon.

Our Basildon centre opened in 2023 inside Southfields Veterinary Specialists, a state-of-the-art referral centre offering services across 14 highly specialised fields; each with a dedicated team led by some of the most accomplished specialists in Europe. The centre boasts impressive facilities including a dedicated intensive care unit, MRI and CT scanners, oncology and radiotherapy suites and an on-site diagnostic laboratory.

The centre runs the companion animal VetSkill Level 3 Diploma in Veterinary Nursing and Veterinary Nursing (Level 3) Apprenticeship on a day release basis. Students can start in either January, April, July or October. Students may choose to come into the centre each week for classroom tuition (April and October intakes) or undertake the virtual blended learning option (undertaking weekly lessons via our online classroom and coming into centre for practical training days – approximately 10 during the programme).

The college facilities include a classroom/conferencing facility, tutorial rooms, clinical skills area, as well as access to a wellbeing room and kitchen facilities.

[View The College of Animal Welfare Veterinary Nursing courses.](#)



New rolling start VN courses at CAW

Do you have a student looking to start their VN training with The College of Animal Welfare (CAW)? Did you know they can now enrol and start at any time (at most of the CAW centres)? The new rolling start has been put in place for those students who are already employed in a veterinary practice. They can now enrol to start at any time and, once enrolled with the Royal College of Veterinary Surgeons (RCVS) and VetSkill, can start pre course activities and logging their practice hours before their classroom (virtual or in centre) lessons begin.

Pre course activities include course induction, preparing for study, Nursing Progress Log (NPL) guidance, health and safety, anatomy and physiology, and policies and responsibilities i.e. Code of Conduct, Fitness to Practise.

If you wish to discuss your student enrolling onto a veterinary nursing course, please contact the college on 01480 422060 and speak to a client advisor.

Ethnic diversity nursing scholarship


Vets Now have announced that their Ethnic Diversity Nursing Scholarship is now open for applications.

The scholarship programme is part of their wider commitment to supporting ethnic diversity across the veterinary profession. Successful candidates will be awarded an annual grant, mentoring from their ethnic diversity scholarship board members and a support network to help them through their studies.

To apply you must be a UK citizen who self-identifies as being from an ethnic minority and applying to enter one of the UK or ROI nursing colleges on a course accredited with the RCVS as a 'licence to practice' in veterinary nursing.

Your family's financial background will be considered during the application process, and you will be asked to submit proof of this as assessed by Student Finance, with priority given to students from lower-income families.

[Find out more here.](#)



Creating a supportive and safe workplace environment for students

A guide for new clinical coaches

By Robyn McCurry NCert(anaesth), APVN(zoo)

Deciding to become a clinical coach and being involved with the education of students is an amazing opportunity to contribute to the training of the next generation of nurses. Not only will you be a teacher but also a mentor; although this is a very exciting task it can also be hard to know where to start. This article aims to act as a guide to help new clinical coaches and their students start on their journey together.

Creating a safe and encouraging environment for students to learn in is the collective responsibility of everyone in practice. All veterinary staff have been students in the past, therefore it is important that this is remembered and the profession works together to support and inspire the next generation, welcoming them to a rewarding career. The student's clinical coach will lead the way in their practical training with the rest of the veterinary team supporting.

Prior to the first day

For a student veterinary nurse (SVN), going into the veterinary practice for the first time can be very daunting. During the first few weeks, students will need support, guidance and encouragement. It is important to communicate effectively with the student, without good communication feelings of frustration and confusion can occur (VDS, 2022).

Get in touch a week before SVNs are due to start and discussing the following:

- their start and finish times
- the practice protocol for various situations such as if they are sick or cannot attend practice for any reason.
- anything in particular that you want the student

to bring with them

- what uniform should be worn and who is to provide it

This isn't an exhaustive list but will help the student to feel more prepared and give them the opportunity to ask any questions they may have.

It can be hugely beneficial, prior to a student's first day, to allow them to come into practice for an hour or so, so that the first day is not such a shock to the system. It allows students to see the layout of the building and where they should go on their first day and who to report to. It is also a great opportunity for the student to meet their clinical supervisor. Remember if their clinical supervisor is not going to be present on the induction day or the student's first day then another member of staff needs to be appointed to "meet and greet" them.

During the first week the student should be introduced to as many people in practice as possible. You should also ensure that staff members know what the SVN can and cannot do to prevent any animosity or confusion later, e.g. the SVN being asked to carry out a task they are not allowed to do and having to explain that to the staff member.

Sending an email to all staff can be a quick and easy way to let everyone in the practice know about the new member of the team and what they will be working on. Sometimes it is nice for the student to send this email themselves as a way for them to introduce themselves to the team and use it as an ice breaker.

The importance of a good plan

The first few months are crucial to setting the student up for success, all new SVNs will need clear guidance and instruction as many will not have spent much time in practice before.

Take time to make a plan with the student and make sure they understand what parts of their training log they should be working on. They should be clear as to what areas of the practice they should be in each day, who they are shadowing (if not the clinical coach), and what to do if there are any questions that arise.

Ensure the whole clinical team is on board with supporting the student as they can impart so much knowledge with their own experience and expertise. It can be very easy for staff that have been in practice for many years to forget that new students do not have the knowledge, confidence or sometimes initiative of the more experienced students or other members of staff that have been there for a long time. Be mindful that not everyone in practice is going to want to help the student. Some team members may have personal circumstances going on or too high a workload, but whatever the reason it is important that they treat the student in a way that they would like to be treated.

Involving students in planning their training each week helps to give them control of, and take responsibility for, their learning in practice (Gould and Roffey-Barentsen, 2018). If students are clear about which area they should be working in and what tasks they need to complete that week, they will find it easier to seek out opportunities to achieve the targets set for them. Students who are left to their own devices and have little or no structure can quickly lose motivation and feel deflated and excluded, especially if there are no goals for them to achieve (Gould and Roffey-Barentsen, 2018).

All goals should be 'SMART':

- **Specific** - linked to what the student needs to/ wants to achieve
- **Measurable** - how will the coach and student

know the goal has been achieved?

- **Achievable** - is the goal actually achievable?
- **Relevant** - Is the goal relevant to what the student needs to learn
- **Time-based** - Have sufficient time to achieve it

All goals and plans should be reviewed by both the student and the coach at regular intervals, to ensure progress is being made and that any areas of weakness can be spotted and the plan altered to support the student to ensure they do not lose motivation or focus (Gould and Roffey-Barentsen, 2018).

Providing support

There is an obligation by the clinical coach and the practice to ensure that no discrimination is happening and to ensure the training provided is inclusive to the student as covered in the equality act of 2010 (Gov.uk, 2018). Being inclusive can be achieved by building up a positive dynamic and rapport with the student. Get to know the student and find out if there are any ways that they feel they need extra support in. Always be a positive role model for them and someone they can go to if they have any worries.

Being able to signpost a student to sources of help and support can be very important, even lifesaving at times. Students may be signposted for various different reasons, for example, any mental and physical health support, fitness to practice concerns, or learning support. Knowing where or how to refer students can make all the difference. Contacting the student's college or university is a very good starting point as they have access to copious amounts of information and support; many colleges and universities even offer free counselling services. It may also be worth considering having mental health first aiders available in the clinic for all staff members.

Conclusions

The key points to remember when starting out as a clinical coach is that communication is key, without good communication confusion and difficulties can arise which could lead to a setback for students. There is no greater feeling of the pride and joy when a student does well and their confidence visibly grows. Getting a student through their training or even achieving a new skill is a team effort and should be celebrated in practice.

References

1. Gould, J. and Roffey-Barentsen, J. (2018) *Achieving your diploma in education and training*. Los Angeles: SAGE.
2. Education, D. for (2018) *Equality act 2010: Advice for Schools*, GOV.UK. GOV.UK. Available at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/equality-act-2010-advice-for-schools> (Accessed: February 21, 2023).
3. The Veterinary Defence Society (2022) *The role of communication in mistakes*, The Veterinary Defence Society. Available at: <https://www.thevds.co.uk/news/theVDS/the-role-of-communications-in-mistakes#:~:text=The%20consequences%20of%20poor%20communication,potentially%20a%20claim%20is%20filed.> (Accessed: February 22, 2023).

Academic Assignment Writing

How to support students through the VetSkill Level 3 Diploma in Veterinary Nursing assignments.

By Virginia Fletcher DipAVN (Medical) RVN
Deputy Internal Moderator/Verifier, The College of Animal Welfare

Your student will be required to write a number of assignments as part of the assessment process for the VetSkill Level 3 Diploma in Veterinary Nursing qualification. Many students find this tricky, as they may not have carried out any kind of academic writing prior to this course. Writing an assignment is a good way to fully research a topic and learn about different types of patient care. Some students find they enjoy this part of the course immensely; it can lead to other writing, for example, articles for journals or for practice websites.

What is academic writing?

Academic writing is the style of writing used for case studies, research articles, and formal essays. Normally written in the third person, academic writing is aimed at a specific audience and holds a formal tone. Articles in veterinary nursing publications such as the Veterinary Nursing Journal or The Veterinary Nurse are written in this style.

Academic writing focuses on facts and is evidence-based. The information will be clear and concise throughout and move from each topic in a logical order.

Casual language and contractions are avoided. For example, terms such as “okay” would be avoided and terms like “don’t” and “it’s” would be written out in full as “do not” and “it is”.

Getting the basics

A good standard of English is expected prior to starting the course. Students are required to have a qualification at level 2 in the English language. This can be level 2 in Functional Skills English or GCSE grade 4 or above. Training providers will usually carry out an assessment prior to the start of the course to ensure all students are working to this level or if they need any additional support.

Proofreading is key. As a clinical supervisor, you are able to proofread your student’s work if they wish. Take care, however, not to comment on any content but review how the work is presented and expressed.

Common pit falls are:

- Incorrect use of capitals
- Incorrect use of punctuation
- Use of contractions
- Use of casual language and colloquial terms
- Story telling rather than focusing on facts
- Lack of evidence base to support views
- Repetition of points
- Plagiarism – usually due to poor paraphrasing.

Planning and writing an academic assignment

1. Encourage your student to read the assignment brief in full prior to starting their writing. **Ensure that they understand the question.** For some assignments, case scenarios will be provided, but cases experienced in practice will be expected for others. Some students may benefit from printing out the assignment brief and using it to jot down ideas in lessons.
2. Encourage them to **research the topic.** For example, if they turned a patient from lateral recumbency every four hours, they might look for evidence to support this time frame for patient turning and research the reasons for turning the patient. They could then also discover other views that they can discuss and use to reflect on, for example, turning lateral to sternal to lateral.
3. Next, they should **create a plan** of ideas for what could be included in their assignment. Be mindful that there will be different word counts for different assignments. The plan can be a list of bullet points with ideas, or a mind map or spider gram. Within the plan, they can include possible reference sources and ideas where they can challenge their practise further. A good essay plan will ensure that the full learning outcome is covered and may help to ensure topics are linked. A check list is available for each assignment indicating key criteria that should be covered.
For template assignments (VN01 and VN04) they could do a separate plan for each task. The different template tasks will have learning outcomes that are linked; this would have been noted in their essay plan.
The essay (VN07/08/09) requires an introduction and a conclusion. The learning outcomes can be covered in any order. Focus on the cases and use the check lists to link all of the criteria to the cases.
4. **Start writing.** Ensure they leave themselves plenty of time. Encourage them to start with the learning outcome that they find easiest to understand first. Start by considering the case or the scenario. The conclusion should be a concise summary with no new information. Some students find it easier to start with the conclusion but write the introduction last.
5. **Avoid plagiarism.** Students must interpret the information that they research and write in their own words. Assignments are expected to be referenced.
6. **Referencing.** Harvard referencing is probably one of the easiest methods and one of the most commonly used. Encourage your student to build their own reference list, but there are numerous reference generators. The current referencing requirements are a minimum of five different, relevant sources applied throughout the work and a reference list.
7. **Proofreading.** It is advisable to read the work out loud to check for grammar and punctuation issues. If students need further guidance on writing their assignments, they should be encouraged to contact their tutor for help and support.



 The College of Animal Welfare

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CAW news

This section is specifically aimed at training practices/clinical supervisors and students who are associated with/study at The College of Animal Welfare (CAW). Whilst some of the information may be relevant to students training with other providers, you should always follow the guidance of your own provider as not all information is transferable.

Update regarding student VN attendance

A reminder to all CAW VN students that you are no longer able to transfer between face-to-face classes and virtual classes, unless exceptional circumstances are agreed and a permanent transfer is approved. If you believe that a virtual group is more aligned with your individual circumstances, you may formally submit a transfer request. This request should be supported by your practice and submitted to your personal tutor who will forward it for consideration.

Changes to BBB Registration

It has been a few weeks now since we added a lobby area to the virtual classrooms for those VN students undertaking the blended virtual learning course. Please remember you need to be in the lobby ahead of the scheduled start time for us to ensure a prompt start.

Remote invigilated exams

We would encourage all students to read the article from VetSkill on remote invigilation on page 18. A reminder for all CAW students... if you are sitting an examination remotely there is a guidance section available on the VLE in the VN diploma course page. Go to course information, then examination information and you should see the online activity on how to prepare for remote examinations. PLEASE read this, it really can be the difference between passing and having your attempt voided.

SQP OSCE tasks

Having reviewed the performance of these tasks across a few OSCE series, it appears that the following areas are problematic.

SQP03 –Prescription

- 3) Ask questions to ensure the client has been given the necessary advice on the product when the medication was prescribed
- 5) Dispense the medication with the datasheet and clarify administration instructions
- 7) Record the required information regarding the transaction and retain the prescription.

SQP04 – supply NFA-VPS

- 2) Ask questions to ensure that the medication requested is appropriate
- 3) Ensure the client knows how to administer the medication safely and effectively
- 5) Supply the medication to the client and advise on any warnings on the SPC.

Further instructions have been added to the SQP03 & 04 step by step guides on the VLE to help with these areas. If you have any questions or require guidance then please post these on to the OSCE forum.

New apprenticeship and employer engagement manager at CAW



The College of Animal Welfare (CAW) have recently appointed Lyn Chant as Apprenticeship and Employer Engagement Manager. This is a newly created role that will provide employers with a new point of contact for any questions, concerns or feedback. Lyn first joined the veterinary profession in 1992 and since then has worked in various roles both within practice, and in education, including head nurse, assessor and IQA; most recently working as a regional director for a large corporate practice group.

If you use CAW as your training provider and wish to discuss any aspect of apprenticeship training please drop Lyn a line. There are plans in place to restart the CAW employer forum and set up regular online IQA drop-in groups for CAW clinical supervisors who may have questions related to student training; if you wish to take part in either of these please get in touch.

If you do not currently use The College of Animal Welfare as your training provider but are considering moving over, please feel free to give Lyn a call about what is involved on 01480 422060 / lchant@caw.ac.uk.

Matrix re-accreditation

The College of Animal Welfare will be having a Matrix re-accreditation visit the week commencing 15 April. This is an inspection that assesses the quality of the information, advice and guidance that we provide. As part of the visit, the inspector will speak to a selection of staff, students and employers and we would like to thank you, in advance, for your support if you, or your students, are called upon to be involved. The Matrix standard is a prestigious recognition of our commitment to delivering high-quality information, advice and guidance and one we are proud to have held for a number of years.

Togetherall

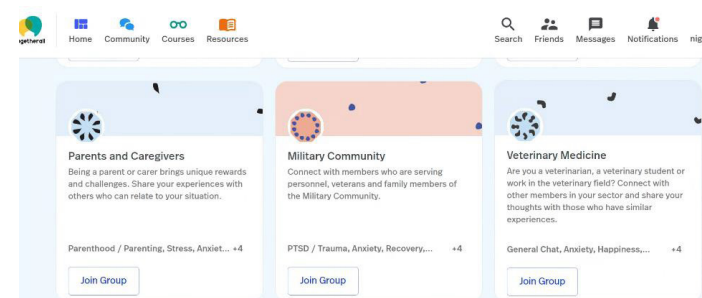
A reminder to all CAW students that you are entitled to free access to a safe online community called Togetherall; a place where people can feel safe to share their feelings, support each other, and get instant access to mental health support.

The Togetherall website has three main sections as follows:

- Community - forums where you can ask for support, or help others who are in need of it.
- Courses - interactive courses to help you feel more in control of your emotional health.
- Resources - tools to track your own journey and progress, and articles designed to help you learn skills to improve your wellbeing.

You also get access to licensed mental health practitioners 24/7 for extra support, when needed.

Togetherall have recently developed a [support network for veterinary professionals](#). To access it, simply log in to the site, click community at the top, choose groups and then scroll down to locate the 'Veterinary Medicine' group.



VN course evaluation survey

As part of its ongoing efforts to enhance the quality of its programmes, The College of Animal Welfare recently conducted a survey to gather insights from employers on the mode of delivery for student veterinary nurse training.

Thank you to everyone who took the time to complete the survey, your feedback will help us tailor our programmes to better align with industry demands and ensure that students are equipped with the skills and knowledge needed to excel in their careers.

Congratulations...

...to the most recent group of The College of Animal students who took their veterinary nursing OSCEs on 9 March 2024 with a 100% pass rate! These latest results mean CAW have now supported over 800 students in becoming qualified veterinary nurses since post covid assessments resumed in November 2020. Well done to all!



Blended learning at CAW

Are you wondering what studying online looks like? We are extremely proud of our online learning platform and virtual classrooms. Below are just some of the ways in which, depending on your course, you will learn and interact.

Our Virtual Learning Environment (VLE) provides interactive content and resources available at any time of the day or night. As well as accessing your course materials, you will be able to utilise wellbeing tools, study resources and an elibrary.

Our Virtual Classrooms offer live, realtime interactive lessons with chat features where you can get involved and ask (and answer!) questions. You can take part in polls and collaborate with your lecturer and peers using an interactive whiteboard.

Learning from the comfort of your own home has never been easier - watch the video below to see!



Ask an IQA!

Do you have a question about for one of the CAW IQAs? Maybe you are unsure about what species of animal can be used in your assignment, or want to know if spelling and grammar will be considered when your work is being marked... Whatever your question, please email it to us at tpimes@caw.ac.uk and we will get it answered for you!

CAW Distance Learning

School update:

Level 2 Veterinary Care Support

By Gary McAdam (Head of Distance Learning) and Kirsty Jones (Deputy Manager Distance Learning)
The College of Animal Welfare (CAW)

VetSkill have recently updated the criteria in the Veterinary Care Support course so we have taken this opportunity to rewrite and restructure the tasks and portfolio for those undertaking the VetSkill Level 2 Certificate in Veterinary Care Support and the Veterinary Care Support Level 2 Apprenticeship courses.

Learners now only have to complete and achieve 21 tasks to gain the VetSkill Veterinary Care Support qualification. In addition, those undertaking it as part of a level 2 apprenticeship will be required to undertake Functional Skills Maths and English (unless exempt), Off-The-Job training hours and an End Point Assessment.

The tasks have been designed to cover a variety of evidence to suit both the learner and the working environment. Written case reports, written questions, video and photographs, witness statements, professional discussions etc., can all be used as evidence for the learner's portfolio.

Learners will be employed in a veterinary practice and have a 12-14 month period to complete all 21 tasks and any functional skills if required. Learners will need a mentor (RVN or MRCVS) to provide submitted statements of competency; a range of occupationally qualified witnesses can also be used to authenticate the validity of the tasks which must be uploaded with the learner evidence.

New Task Formats

Topic	Task Name	Expected Evidence
01- Basic patient care	T1 – Administration of Medication	Case report 1 x oral and 1 x topical medication patients Questions
	T2 – Animal Accommodation – Isolation	Case report x1 patient Questions
	T3 – Animal Health and Welfare	Case report 1 x nail care 1 x coat care patient Questions
	T4 – Patient Handling and Health &Safety	Questions
02 – Nutrition and Species/Breed Specific Care	T5 – Breed/ Species Requirements	Report
	T6 – Animal Accommodation – Species Specific	Case reports x 2 species Questions
	T7 – Animal Feeding, Watering and Nutrition	Case reports x 2 adult species Questions
	T8 – Animal Feeding, Watering and Nutrition – Life Stage	Case reports x 2 life stage animals Questions
03 – Diagnostics	T9 – Diagnostic Care/Patient Restraint	Case reports x 5 different scenarios Questions
	T10 – Diagnostic Care/Tests – Radiography and Anaesthesia	Case report x 1 Questions
	T11 – Diagnostic Care/Tests – Lab	Case reports x 4 scenarios Questions

04 – Specialised Patient Care	T12 – Health Check Pre Op	Case report x 1 Questions
	T13 – Health Check Post Op	Case report x 1 Questions
	T14 – Health Check – In Patient Medical IVFT	Case report x 1 Questions
	T15 – Inpatient Care – Surgical	Case report x 1 Questions
	T16 – End of Life Care	Case report x 1 Questions
05 – Emergency Patient Care	T17 – Emergency Care – An Actual Emergency	Case report x 1 Questions
	T18 – Patient Care – Anaesthesia pre and post	Case report x 1 Questions
06 – Customer Care	T19 – Customer Care	Written – practice guide Practical Questions
07 – VCS Competency	T20 –VCS – Competency Log	Skills log and witness testimony
08 – Anatomy & Physiology	T21 – A&P Workbook	Workbook

The Level 2 Veterinary Care Support qualification/apprenticeship is run by CAW on a distance learning basis. There are no formal academic entry qualifications but learners do need to be employed in a veterinary practice, have access to all areas of the practice and have access to a practice mentor who will support them in their learning. All learners are allocated a personal tutor from CAW who will guide them through their course, and also support the mentor and the practice.

The Veterinary Care Assistant/Patient Care Assistant role is a career path in its own right, being valuable members of staff performing a key role in supporting the whole veterinary team. The qualification can also be used to help those who do not have the necessary GCSEs to begin veterinary nurse training, as completion of the VetSkill Level 2 Certificate for Veterinary Care Support, along with Level 2 qualifications in Maths and English will give learners the necessary requirements to enrol with the Royal College of Veterinary Surgeons (RCVS) as a student veterinary nurse.

Anyone over the age of 16 can undertake the VCA apprenticeship as long as they meet the apprenticeship eligibility criteria including living and working in England. Learners could be new to the job or could be an existing member of staff looking to upskill or retrain. The employer and the government pay the apprenticeship tuition fees.

If you, or a colleague are looking to undertake the course, please call us on 01480 422060 or email admin@caw.ac.uk to speak to one of our team of client advisors.



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CAW news

This section is specifically aimed at training practices/clinical supervisors and students who are associated with/study at The College of Animal Welfare (CAW). Whilst some of the information may be relevant to students training with other providers, you should always follow the guidance of your own provider as not all information is transferable.

Introducing our new Virtual Learning Environment (VLE)!

We are thrilled to announce the launch of the newly enhanced VLE, cawpers.com. This latest update is not just an upgrade; it's a complete overhaul aimed at providing an unparalleled learning experience.

What's New?

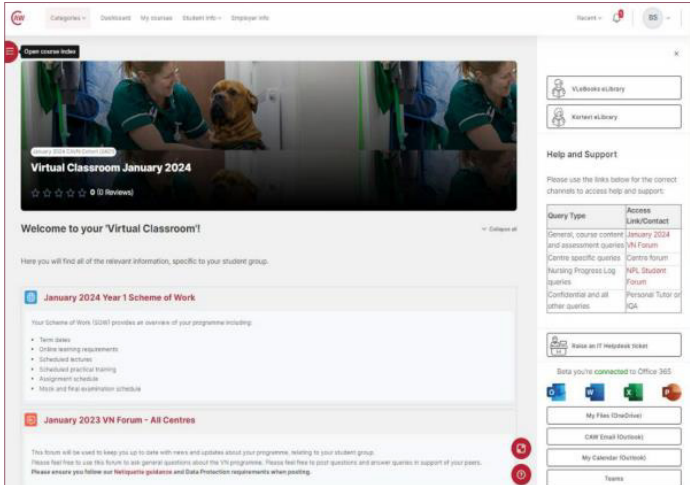
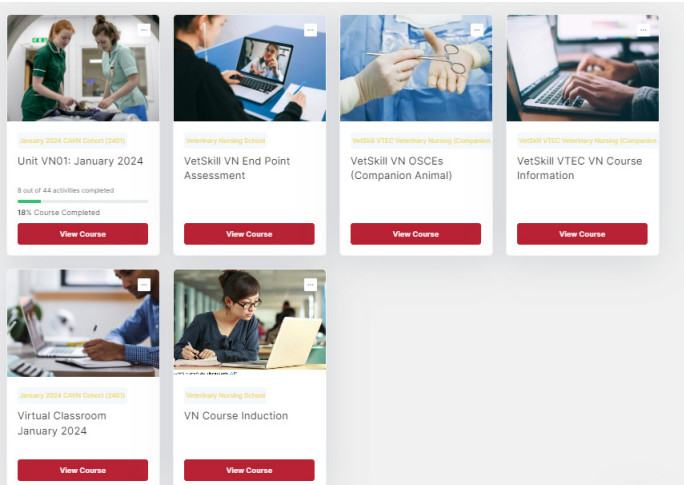
- **Revolutionised dashboard:** Dive into a more intuitive, user-friendly dashboard providing a clear view of your course progress and upcoming tasks, ensuring you're always ahead of your learning curve.
- **Enhanced course progress and task functionality:** With our improved course progress and task functionality, tracking your achievements and planning your study schedule has never been easier. Stay motivated with real-time updates and personalised progress indicators.
- **Simplified navigation:** Navigate through the platform with ease, thanks to our enhanced navigation system. Whether you're accessing course materials, participating in virtual lectures, or submitting assignments, every click takes you exactly where you need to be.
- **Microsoft 365 integration:** We've integrated Microsoft 365 directly into cawpers.com, giving you seamless access to your email, calendar, and OneDrive. This integration means all your essential tools are in one place, making study sessions more productive.

Following the enthusiastic reception from our Year 1 students who embarked on this new platform in January 2024, cohorts from April 2023 onwards will transition to the new VLE when they commence Year 2 units. To ensure a smooth transition, we urge all students to engage with the freshly updated 'VN Navigating the VLE (cawpers.com)' resource available on the VLE. This essential resource is designed to acquaint you with:

- Accessing Cawpers.com: Learn the straightforward steps to enter the new VLE.
- Logging In: Familiarise yourself with the login procedure to ensure secure access.
- Navigating the platform: Master the navigation of the site to make the most of your learning experience.
- Utilising Microsoft 365: Discover how to effectively use Microsoft 365 within the VLE for an integrated learning approach.

Experiencing Issues?

Should you encounter any issues accessing or navigating cawpers.com, do not hesitate to reach out to the IT helpdesk for support. Our team is here to assist with any technical difficulties and ensure your transition to the new VLE is as smooth as possible.



Apprenticeships – what does it mean?

Unlike normal college or university courses, apprenticeships combine work with training and study, allowing new skills and knowledge to be put straight into practice. It is a job with a formal programme of 'off-the-job training' (OTJT) allowing people to get hands-on experience. Apprenticeships are available from Level 2 (which is equivalent to GCSEs) up to Level 7 (master's degree level) and can be undertaken from age of 16 with no upper age limit. There are however government initiatives related to age e.g. currently if an employer takes on an apprentice aged 16-18 at their start date, they will receive an additional £1,000 to support the training.

Off-the-Job training is an essential component and a legal requirement of any apprenticeship in England. It is training received by the apprentice during their normal paid working hours (excluding overtime). It provides dedicated time for apprentices to focus on developing the skills, knowledge, and behaviours required to achieve their qualification. It is crucial that the activities undertaken during this time are relevant to the specific apprenticeship.

Apprenticeship duration. Apprenticeships can vary in length from one to five years e.g. the Level 2 Veterinary Care Support Apprenticeship typically takes between 12 to 18 months, the Level 3 Business Administrator Apprenticeship takes 18 to 24 months and the Veterinary Nursing Apprenticeship typically takes between 30 to 36 months. Regardless of the apprenticeship, the Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA) stipulate that all apprentices complete a minimum amount of off-the-job training, which currently stands at six hours per week for the duration of their apprenticeship. The actual amount of off-the-job training is likely to be higher to ensure successful completion of the apprenticeship standard. For example, a veterinary nursing apprentice on a programme with The College of Animal Welfare (CAW) attend college one day a week which equates to six hours, however in addition, they have several hours of independent online learning to complete ahead of, or after, their college day and they also need to gather evidence for their portfolio or NPL throughout their training.

Examples of off-the-job training activities:

- Attending/participating in college lectures
- Practical training e.g. shadowing colleagues in the workplace
- Receiving tutorial support at work
- Writing assignments and completing programme related projects
- Completion of a portfolio of work-based skills and behaviours evidence e.g. Nursing Progress Log (NPL)

- Receiving mentoring or one-to-one tuition at work
- Completion of online learning
- Attending CPD (Continuing Professional Development), training events and relevant webinars
- Receiving additional learning support
- Visiting other businesses, offices, or practices
- Participating in competitions relevant to the apprenticeship

Recording OTJT. Apprentices are required to maintain a log/record of off-the-job training signed by the employer or a representative of the employer. The College of Animal Welfare ask all apprentices to upload their completed monthly log to the Virtual Learning Environment (VLE) as close to the last working day of each month as possible. It is critical that students maintain accurate OTJT records as this is one of the eligibility criteria for entering the end-point assessment (see below).

Monitoring progress. Funding rules stipulate that all apprentices have a learner review at least four times a year (every 12 weeks) and that the employer or an appropriate representative e.g. head nurse/manager is expected to be present at these meetings so that they are involved with the training and fully in touch with the progress being made. Following the learner review, the documentation and agreed action plan will be sent to those in attendance for signatures using electronic signature software.

End Point Assessment (EPA). An EPA takes place at the end of an apprenticeship to assess knowledge and skills. The EPA varies across apprenticeships but can include:

- A practical assessment of skills e.g. workplace observation or OSCEs
- A presentation
- A written test
- An interview
- A professional discussion (PD)
- A combination of any of the above

The EPA is carried out by a registered end-point assessment organisation (EPAO) e.g. VetSkill, not the college or training provider where they studied. This ensures that the assessment is independent and impartial.

If you have any questions about the apprenticeships available at The College of Animal Welfare [visit our website](#) or call us on 01480 422060 and speak to one of our client advisors.

CAW news

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End Point Assessment [EPA] Professional Discussion Explained

All students undertaking the Veterinary Nurse (Level 3) Apprenticeship will undertake an End Point Assessment (EPA) once they have completed all other assessments to assess their occupational competence prior to professional registration. The EPA consists of two parts: A professional discussion (PD) and an Objective Structured Clinical Examination (OSCE). Once they have entered the gateway, they have 12 months to complete both assessments.

In order to help them best prepare for their PD, all CAW students will be provided with scenarios and a bank of sample questions to practice, as well as all the requirements for the actual assessment.

The PD is a two-way dialogue, lasting approximately 45 minutes, which is held under controlled conditions. It is recorded [text, video or audio] and graded by an assessor to assess the apprentice's skills, knowledge and behaviour. The results will be published within 15 working days of the assessment. Should they not be successful they can retake it again within the 12-month period after entering the gateway.

The apprentice will be asked 10 questions from a question bank that samples across five thematic areas as follows:

1. Legal (2 questions)
2. Veterinary environment (1 question)
3. Communication (1 question)
4. Diagnostic (1 Question)
5. Self-management (5 questions)

Some example questions that may be asked are:

Code of conduct:

- Explain what the RCVS Code of Conduct is
- What are your responsibilities to clients?
- What are your responsibilities to the RCVS?

Diagnostics

- How is an image formed in X-ray?
- How is an image formed in ultrasound?
- What are the diagnostic strengths of X-ray? (What is X-ray really good at showing?)

Legislation:

- Explain what the GDPR regulations are and how it is relevant to veterinary practice
- Explain where responsibilities lie in the Health and Safety Act to ensure a safe work place
- Explain what a risk assessment is and what it is for

Communication:

- How do you communicate with angry clients?
- How do you communicate with clients during an emergency?
- What is the importance of good communication in the veterinary team?

Veterinary Environment

- Name a common infectious disease and state how it is spread, whether it is zoonotic and who might be at risk dealing with those cases
- Explain the 4 legal prescribing categories and the SQP's remit

Self-Management

- Explain Evidence based nursing
- Explain clinical governance
- What are your strengths and weaknesses?

How to prepare for the Professional discussion

As students will have already completed an RCVS accredited level 3 Veterinary Nursing Diploma (with exception of the OSCE), they should have all the knowledge, skills and behaviors needed to successfully complete the assessment.

They will have 4-5 minutes to answer each question. They should practice the mock questions to perfect answering concisely. It may be best for them to have a discussion with someone they do not normally work closely with.

Grading

Students will be graded as fail, pass or distinction:

Fail - One or more questions are failed.

Fail criteria: Shows little understanding/knowledge of principles or techniques. Does not understand legislation.

Pass - All questions are passed, but six or fewer questions meet distinction criteria.

Pass criteria: Correctly describes in detail. Has sufficient knowledge. Shows importance of developing own knowledge and competence.

Distinction - All questions passed, and seven or more questions meet distinction criteria below: Provide examples. Can analyse and reflect. Uses evidence-based medicine.

Don't forget, if your student is worried about the PD or has any questions, please encourage them to contact their personal tutor.

Meet the CAW VN IQA Team!

Our Internal Quality Assurers (IQAs) are involved with supporting both students and training practices, maintaining crucial links between college and work. They regularly monitor portfolio evidence to maintain high standards of competence and support students and clinical coaches/supervisors from the start of a learner's journey. In addition IQAs approve new training practices, carrying out inspections and conduct support visits.



Jennifer Scrimshaw RVN - Lead IQA (Leeds)

I have been based at the Leeds centre for the past 6 years, starting as a part time member of the team and progressing to the Lead IQA role. Before starting at CAW I completed 12 years in practice where my main interest was anaesthesia and orthopaedics. IQAs have a varied role from conducting placement and training practice visits to moderating NPLs and ePortfolios. The variety in this role, and being able to support students and practice teams across the country, are definitely my favourite aspects of being an IQA.



Chloe Faulds RVN (Edinburgh)

I qualified as a veterinary nurse in January 2020 from CAW Edinburgh. I joined CAW in June 2023 after spending 7 years in a small animal practice. I spent my time within clinical practice training student veterinary nurses and loved every minute of it. When the IQA role was available I jumped at the chance to help more students gain their qualifications. I have a Cockapoo called Bree that loves life. Music is a massive passion of mine as I play the tenor drum in a pipe band, touring around the world to bring the traditional music to different countries.



Estelle Smith RVN (North London)

I qualified as a veterinary nurse in 2004 and gained my AI Assessor qualification in 2005. I really enjoyed the assessor role in practice so this naturally progressed to me becoming an IQA. The most rewarding part of the job is helping students with their ePortfolio, seeing them progress and qualify at the end of their Learning Journey. I live with my Husband Rory and two children - Isaac aged 14y and Sophie aged 11y. We do not currently have any pets however we often dog sit for their Uncle Jack who has a gorgeous black labrador named Jasper.



Frances Walkinshaw RVN, BSc(Hons), Cert VN ECC (Edinburgh)

I qualified as a Veterinary Nurse in 2008 with a BSc Hons degree from Edinburgh Napier University. Prior to starting with CAW in 2021 I worked in small animal practice. I have a keen interest in medical nursing and completed the VetsNow Certificate in ECC. I enjoy supporting students and coaches. I also carry out training practice visits as part of my role. In my spare time I am a volunteer coach with the RDA, a volunteer Beaver Scout Leader and I enjoy spending time doing outdoor activities with my two children.



Helen Taylor RVN Dip (AVN) (Leeds)

I joined CAW in January 2024 after working as a nurse in small animal practice for 17 years. I completed my nurse training at CAW in 2008 and then undertook the Advanced Diploma in Veterinary Nursing in 2014, before topping that up to a BSc. I've worked as a head nurse and team leader and have worked in a charity hospital for the past 10 years. I enjoy the hands on nature of nursing and have an interest in triage and emergency work. However I have moved into this new role as I really enjoy working alongside and supporting students in their training.



Natasha Hunt RVN BSc Hons CertVNECC (Huntingdon)

My name is Natasha and I am one of the IQAs based at Huntingdon. I qualified as a RVN in 2016 with a BSc Hons degree and joined the IQA team at CAW in 2021. Prior to CAW I worked in a small animal hospital and have experience in a referral hospital. I am interested in surgical nursing, dental nursing and have spent a lot of time in practice treating and caring for wildlife.



Rachel Israel RVN

I qualified as an RVN in 2013 and shortly after also qualified as a clinical coach. After spending years in practice, I then joined CAW in March 2023. Over the years I have enjoyed working in both independent and charity vets ranging from small clinics to large hospitals. I have a passion for supporting students and helping them achieve their goals.



Sally Betterton RVN (Huntingdon)

I joined CAW in July 2023 after 30 years in small animal practice. I have been a head nurse, nurse manager and, before coming to CAW, I was a practice manager in a referral hospital. I joined CAW because I wanted to support the next generation of nurses and I really enjoy the contact with the students and the training practices. In my spare time I do crochet, pottery, gardening and looking after my granddaughter.



Sophie Pengelly BVetMed Cert AVP MRCVS (Wigan)

I have been an IQA since July 2022. I really enjoy seeing students' progress in their day one skills and seeing their confidence grow throughout their course. Before I joined CAW, I worked as a vet in first opinion small animal practice, focusing on medical and emergency cases which allowed me to complete my Cert AVP. I have two rescue cats (Minerva and Bellatrix) a border terrier named Zuko and a working cocker spaniel called Bumi. They keep me very busy alongside playing many board games with friends and family.



Sophie Sidwell PGCE RVN (Huntingdon)

I joined CAW in 2017 after working in two equine referral practices for six years. Whilst being at CAW I have lectured and completed my PGCE and I have also completed my TAQA L4 qualification and I now work as part of the IQA team. I enjoy working with the students and helping them progress with their qualification. When I am not working I am looking after my two small children who are one and three years old and, when time permits, I do try and get out on my horse for a much needed ride!



Strengthening Connections

Enhancing relationships at work

By Sarah Green
Leadership & Management Lecturer/Assessor
The College of Animal Welfare

In the dynamic environment of a veterinary practice, where every moment counts and every patient's well-being is top priority, fostering strong relationships among team members is paramount. These connections not only enrich our work experience but also contribute to a more cohesive and supportive practice culture.

The importance of connection

Building positive relationships within your practice holds significant benefits. Firstly, strong connections cultivate trust and camaraderie among team members, essential ingredients for effective collaboration and seamless patient care. When we trust and support each other, we can tackle challenges with confidence and unity.

Furthermore, nurturing relationships fosters a sense of belonging and shared purpose. When we feel connected to our colleagues, we are more likely to communicate openly, seek assistance when needed, and celebrate each other's successes. This sense of community strengthens morale and enhances our ability to provide exceptional care to our clients.

Practical Strategies for Strengthening Relationships

While the importance of building relationships is clear, it requires intentional effort and commitment from each team member. Here are some tailored strategies to help you strengthen connections within your practice:

- **Show Genuine Interest:** Take the time to learn about your colleagues' interests, both inside and outside of work. Whether it's sharing stories about our beloved pets or discussing our hobbies and passions, showing genuine interest in each other's lives fosters rapport and friendship.
- **Practice Active Listening:** When interacting with colleagues, practice active listening to ensure everyone feels heard and valued. Maintain eye contact, nod in acknowledgment, and offer empathy and support. By listening attentively, we demonstrate respect and strengthen our relationships.
- **Express Appreciation:** Don't underestimate the power of gratitude. Take the time to acknowledge and appreciate your colleagues' efforts and contributions. Whether it's a simple "thank you" or a heartfelt note of appreciation, expressing gratitude improves positivity and reinforces our sense of teamwork.
- **Be Approachable:** Create an environment where team members feel comfortable approaching each other with questions, concerns, or ideas. Keep communication channels open and encourage everyone to share their thoughts and opinions. A culture of approachability strengthens trust and collaboration.
- **Resolve Conflicts Constructively:** Conflicts may arise in any workplace, but how we handle them can either strengthen or strain relationships. Approach conflicts with a solution-oriented mindset, focusing on finding common ground and reaching a resolution that benefits everyone involved.

- **Participate in Team-Building Activities:** Take advantage of opportunities for team-building activities or social events. These occasions provide valuable opportunities for team members to bond outside of work tasks and strengthen interpersonal connections.

Not everyone at work needs to be your friend

At work, we've all seen how tense relationships can create conflict and negatively impact performance. Given that 70% of employees* say that work friends are crucial to their happiness on the job, learning how to better navigate these tensions is a sound investment of your time.

There's lots of research that explains why some relationships are easier than others. The thing about humans is that we're complex social creatures with our own values and embedded beliefs about how people should behave, interact, and communicate. We all have unconscious biases that determine how we think and feel about everything, from gender to race. Many of these biases have a significant impact on who we get along with and who we find difficult or annoying.

At the same time, we have an innate desire to be both liked and respected. When conflict occurs, our first instinct is to blame the other person. *If only everyone was like me, the world would be amazing.* (This is obviously not the case!)

The point is ... we all want to work with people we like. But not everyone is like us. If you find yourself not getting on with particular colleagues consider the following actions:

- **Be the grown up.** Don't succumb to childlike behaviours, like getting thoughtlessly defensive and ignoring that person out of spite. Rather than excluding them from a meeting in the future or sending a passive aggressive email, identify behaviours that will serve you (and them).
- **Pick your battles.** Some battles are not worth fighting, some are, especially when they're values-based. Getting along with difficult people is not the same as justifying or turning a blind eye to what is unacceptable, such as bullying or discrimination, so consider what is right and what is worth your time.

The key is understanding, empathy and compassion. View the situation from the other person's perspective and being curious rather than judgemental. Take the time to consider the feelings, insecurities, ideas and experiences of whoever it is you're clashing with. Maybe they ask all those annoying questions during a meeting to show they're interested or keen to help, or maybe they gossip about colleagues because they're dealing with their own insecurities. Work on the basis that everyone has things going on and deserves some patience, tolerance and understanding.

Most people don't come to work trying to be annoying. Consider what might be going on with them.

"We are not all in the same boat. But, we are all in the same storm. Some braving the elements in yachts, some in canoes, and some are even drowning. We can all help each other to stay above the water".

But remember, not everyone needs to be your friend. We can indeed work well with, and respect, people we don't like. Controversial, I know.

Building a Stronger Practice Together

As we strive to excel in our respective roles and achieve our professional goals, let's not forget the importance of fostering a supportive and inclusive work environment. By prioritising the cultivation of meaningful relationships with our colleagues, we not only enrich our own work experience but also contribute to the collective success of our team.

Commit to investing in our relationships at work, one conversation, one interaction, and one connection at a time. Together, we can build a stronger, more cohesive community where everyone feels valued, respected, and empowered to thrive.

*2017 study from OfficeVibe

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Remote invigilation – Guidance for anyone undertaking VetSkill exams

Sitting assessments can be an extremely stressful time for students. The desire to attain good grades and to qualify is nerve-racking enough, add into that a clinical, unfamiliar environment and for some this can be enough for the nerves to take hold and what would usually be obvious to a student can become a distant memory.

Educational providers also face challenges when scheduling examinations. Staffing, timetables and workloads can test even the most seasoned of exam administrators, and with Covid and Seasonal Flu doing the rounds this only adds to an already difficult task.

VetSkill have been working with Proctorio™ since 2021 to offer our providers an alternative to the traditional exam setting. With VetSkill, learners can be offered an inclusive proctored online exam experience that mimics a traditional in-person invigilated exam, providing the perfect balance of convenience and flexibility. In the last 12 months VetSkill have seen a 400% increase in learners taking their exams this way.

Automated recorded Proctoring means that the assessment is reviewed and invigilated following submission. Suspicion ratings, exam analytics and computer performance are fully documented allowing our invigilators to analyse recordings confidently. Proctorio operates browser-locking capabilities which prevent access to other web pages or material, audio and video recording and disables right-click, printing and re-entry to our exams.

Data protection is not a concern as our stored recordings are encrypted with end-to-end encryption and are only accessible by VetSkill's institution-approved individuals.

A learner choosing to sit a proctored exam will need a laptop or PC with webcam and to follow some guidelines which are specifically designed to ensure that the exam environment is appropriate for taking assessments.

A proctored session will commence with the learner confirming their identity by showing their passport or driving license to the camera before receiving a request to perform a scan of the room. **It is essential** that, during the room scan, every area of the room is recorded including all walls, total floor space, other furniture within the room and the desk area both above and below including the underside of the desk. This ensures that there are no prohibited items or other people within the exam environment. The room scan is not time-restricted so learners should be encouraged to take their time with this section as failure to show parts of the room will likely lead to a voided exam. VetSkill provide our stakeholders with guides for their learners which detail all rules of a proctored exam including equipment specification, prohibited items, behaviour guide and room scan requirements and should be shared well in advance of the exam.

Online exams with VetSkill and Proctorio offer an alternative to traditional exam sessions which can help to lessen the administrative burden and costs to providers while giving their learners a more comfortable and flexible option for sitting their exams. If you have any questions about remote invigilation you can contact VetSkill on info@vetskill.com.



Important information for The College of Animal Welfare students undergoing remote invigilation

If you choose to undertake a VetSkill exam by remote invigilation instead of coming into college to take it, you **MUST** read the remote invigilation guidance and undertake the training that is located in the exam information section on the VLE.

If you do not follow the instructions exactly your exam attempt may be void, meaning you could undertake the whole exam (even getting a passing grade) for it to come back as a voided attempt.

Common reasons for attempts being voided are:

- Not having photographic identification (passport or driving licence)
- Not scanning the room properly (for example not scanning under your desk)
- Having a door slightly open or being in an open plan area
- Getting up from your chair during the exam
- Having a tablecloth on your desk
- Having prohibited items on the desk (such as sheets of paper or headphones)

If you have any questions about undertaking a remote examination please speak to your course tutor.

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How can we be more eco-friendly in practice?

By Lucy Forman RVN DipAVN(SA) DipHECVN
Distance Learning Tutor, The College of Animal Welfare

In a 2019 British Veterinary Association (BVA) survey, it was found that 89% of members think that vets should play a more active role in sustainability in practice.

According to the Cambridge dictionary, sustainability is the quality of being able to continue over a period of time without using resources that cannot be replaced or causing damage to the environment.

So, what does this mean for us?

As veterinary professionals, we are constantly viewed by the public and, as such, have a social responsibility to be seen to be trying to function sustainably. To do this, we need to consider the bigger picture and aim to become more carbon friendly in every aspect of veterinary practice.

So, how can we do that?

If you are part of a corporate group, speak with your area manager or head office about your company policy on sustainability and see if you can get further information on the greener companies that can be used to purchase everyday essentials such as syringes, needles, cleaning products, etc.

The BVA have teamed up Vet Sustain and VDS Training to tackle the issues surrounding the increasing carbon footprint of veterinary professionals and supply a series of free webinars, carbon calculators and checklists to aid practices in re-thinking their current protocols and methods and adapting them to form a 'Greener Approach' on how the practice is run. Their website has advice on how practices can reduce, reuse and recycle their way to achieve accreditation in practice, which can be viewed by the public.



The Vet Sustain Greener Veterinary Practice Checklist (pictured above) can be [downloaded here](#).

Small steps lead to BIG changes

Try taking some of these small steps to help reduce the carbon footprint in your practice:

- Swap plastic toothbrushes for bamboo ones – we often use these to clean clipper blades. You can even write the month of use on the handle so you know when to swap it for a new one
- Source disposable products, such as syringes and cleaning products, from a greener company
- Swap laundry liquid for laundry powder or compressed laundry detergent sheets

- Use reusable tick lists and monitoring sheets to cut down on your paper use
- Use laser printers to remove the need for printer cartridges
- Use natural wood or bamboo washing up utensils instead of plastic ones
- Attend CPD on how to reduce your carbon footprint
- Use the cycle to work scheme or buddy up and car share if the practice is not within walking distance
- Utilise your council's food recycling scheme to create compost
- Invest in a crisp packet recycling scheme, such as [Terracycle](#) or take your empty packets to recycling points in supermarkets. You could even create a foil blanket for surgical patients out of clean, empty crisp packets!



Consider swapping plastic toothbrushes for bamboo ones, one of the small ways that you can make a difference.

What are the RCVS doing about this?

The Royal College of Veterinary Surgeons (RCVS) has added a new Environmental Sustainability Module and Award. The new module came into effect on 1 June 2023 and contains Core Standards and General Practice level requirements, which need to be met by all PSS practices at the relevant accreditation levels.

The RCVS has also started its own Environmental & Sustainability Working Party, of which the RCVS president, Susan Paterson, is the Chair, and has its own employee-led and very proactive Green Team.

So, on reflection... there is a lot that practices can be doing with all the widely available resources to help guide them through the necessary changes, and we all should be doing our bit to ensure that our industry remains viable for future generations of veterinary professionals.

Useful links

- [BVA – Working towards a greener profession](#)
- [Vet Sustain Greener Veterinary Practice Checklist](#)
- [Vet Sustain Resources](#)
- [The Bee-Friendly Practice Scheme](#)

Enjoying reading TP Times?

Don't forget to subscribe (if you haven't done already) to keep receiving copies FREE to your inbox!



Does your practice have equipment that is no longer needed?

The College of Animal Welfare would be very grateful of any donations to help with student training...

- Anaesthetic machines
- E/T tubes
- Anaesthetic circuits
- Out-of-date fluid bags
- Centrifuges
- Autoclaves (do not need to be working)
- Microscopes
- Drip pumps

If you have any equipment you think could help, please contact Frank Taylor (ftaylor@caw.ac.uk) or Alison Simpson (asimpson@caw.ac.uk).



Just for fun...

Answers to the fun questions can be found at the bottom of the page.

Prize competition Win a bandaging bundle from Millpledge!

To be in with a chance of winning this month's prize, a bandaging bundle kindly donated by Millpledge, simply solve the anagram below to give the name of a medical condition and enter the answer on our [competition entry page](#), by Friday 10 May 2024.

NO MAX PET HOUR

Entries will be drawn on Monday 13 May 2024. The winning entrant will be notified by email, good luck! Terms and conditions can be found on the [competition entry page](#).



True or False?

1. The term 'hypothyroidism' is used to describe a disorder caused by an excess of thyroid hormones. True or false?
2. Jaundice is a condition characterised by yellowing of the skin, eyes and mucous membranes caused by excess of bile products in the blood. True or false?
3. The mitral valve is the valve between the left chambers of the heart, through which the blood flows from the atrium to the ventricle. True or false?
4. Diabetes mellitus is a metabolic disorder caused by a lack of antidiuretic hormone. True or false?

Answers
What am I? 1. Neurophil, 2. Allergy, 3. Parasite, 4. Optic Nerve, 5. Kidney, 6. Insulin.
True or false, 1. False, 2. True, 3. True, 4. False

What am I?

1. I am a common type of white blood cell that engulfs and destroys bacteria and other foreign cells.
2. I am an abnormally high sensitivity to certain substances, such as pollens, foods, or microorganisms.
3. I am a living organism that lives inside, with, or close to another living creature (called a host). I use the host as a source of food, shelter, or for other requirements.
4. I am the nerve that connects the eye to the brain and transmits visual information; also called the second cranial nerve.
5. I am one of a pair of abdominal organs that filter waste from the blood and help maintain proper water and salt balance.
6. I am a hormone that is secreted by the pancreas that is essential for digestion, especially that of carbohydrates.

Mnemonic of the month

Some Say Marry Money, But My Brother
Says Big Brains Matter Most
(S)=Sensory (M)=Motor (B)=Both

- | | |
|------------------------|------------------------------|
| 1. Some(S)=Olfactory | 7. Brother(B)=Facial |
| 2. Say(S)=Optic | 8. Says(S)=Vestibulocochlear |
| 3. Marry(M)=Oculomotor | 9. Big(B)=Glossopharyngeal |
| 4. Money(M)=Trochlear | 10. Brains(B)=Vagus |
| 5. But(B)=Trigeminal | 11. Matter(M)=Accessory |
| 6. My(M)=Abducens | 12. Most(M)=Hypoglossal |

Do you struggle to remember the functions of the cranial nerves – which are sensory (S), motor (M) or both(B)?
This catchy mnemonic can help!



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→ **CLICK HERE TO BOOK**

NEW FOR 2024!

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Effective Communication and Feedback: Enhancing workplace interactions

Tues 21 May 2024, 9:30am-12:30pm



Empowering Growth: Coaching, mentoring and staff development

Thurs 6 June 2024, 9:30am-12:30pm



Harmonising the Workplace: Mastering conflict and managing stress

Tues 18 June 2024, 9:30am-12:30pm



Navigating Change: Strategies for effective change management

Thurs 25 July 2024, 9:30am-12:30pm



Project Management

Thurs 8 August 2024, 9:30am-12:30pm



Leading with Efficiency and Effectiveness: Navigating team dynamics

Thurs 22 August 2024, 9:30am-12:30pm



Operational Excellence: Management and objective setting

Thurs 26 September 2024, 9:30am-12:30pm



Impactful Briefings and Presentations

Thurs 24 October 2024, 9:30am-12:30pm



Self-Growth in a Professional World: A webinar on personal development

Weds 13 November 2024, 9:30am-12:30pm



Understanding and Managing Finances

Weds 11 December 2024, 9:30am-12:30pm



Mastering Meetings: Effective meeting management

Weds 15 January 2025, 9:30am-12:30pm



Decoding Problems: Effective techniques for problem solving

Weds 12 February 2025, 9:30am-12:30pm



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CPD & Events

11 April

Rabbits & Small Furrries Congress

A one day virtual event that explores the care of rabbits and small furrries in veterinary practice.

- Rabbit breeds – When appearance affects health and welfare
- Rabbits – Pain and Analgesia
- Rabbits and Furrries – Behaviour
- Small Rodent Pre, Peri and Post Anaesthesia Protocols
- Dealing with Rats and Mice in Practice

[BOOK A PLACE ONLINE](#)

2 May

Head Nurse Congress

Head Nurse Congress is an event solely focused on head veterinary nurses and practice managers – exploring all aspects of the roles; from the many different responsibilities, to the challenges that are faced on a daily basis.

You'll get the chance to listen to a variety of relevant lectures from expert industry speakers and gain valuable CPD.

[BOOK A PLACE ONLINE](#)

12 June

Behaviour Congress

A one day virtual event aimed at those working in veterinary practice looking to develop their knowledge of animal behaviour.

- The Emotional Experience: Changing perspectives on behaviour
- What has happened to all the Pandemic Puppies?
- Rabbits
- Cat Friendly Nurse Clinics
- An overview of the Dog Friendly Clinic Scheme

[BOOK A PLACE ONLINE](#)

3 July

Clinical Coach Congress

A one day virtual congress dedicated to supporting clinical coaches and those involved in veterinary nurse training. It is recognised by the Royal College of Veterinary Surgeons (RCVS) as clinical coach standardisation, meaning it is, not only, the ideal opportunity to learn from fellow clinical coaches and expert industry speakers, but it will also provide up to 7 hours of CPD.

[BOOK A PLACE ONLINE](#)

12 September

Advanced VN Congress

A one day virtual congress that explores advanced professional practice, focusing on advanced veterinary nursing skills and knowledge.

- PADS – What is knees and teeth syndrome?
- Advanced anaesthesia for the orthopaedic brachycephalic patient
- Feeding the inappetent patient
- Cats and cardiology
- Blood gas bootcamp

[BOOK A PLACE ONLINE](#)

16 October

Wildlife & Exotics Congress

A one day virtual event that explores the care of wildlife and exotic species in veterinary practice. If you are looking to develop your knowledge in this area, or are passionate the care of these animals and want to immerse yourself in talks to inspire you, this congress is for you.

- Avian Anaesthesia – Keeping it safe
- An introduction to monitoring anaesthesia in small furrries

- Hibernation: Let's dispel myths and legends to face it safely
- Nursing Care for Hedgehogs
- What's Up Doc? – Top Tips for Rabbit Patients

[BOOK A PLACE ONLINE](#)

6 November

VCA Congress

This one day virtual event is focused on those working in the veterinary care field – exploring all aspects of the roles; from the many different responsibilities, to the challenges that are faced on a daily basis. You'll get the chance to listen to a variety of relevant lectures from expert industry speakers and gain valuable CPD.

[BOOK A PLACE ONLINE](#)

5 December

Nutrition Congress

A one day virtual event that focuses on animal nutrition, taking a close look at different diets, strategies and nutritional requirements. This congress offers 7 hours of CPD and aims to increase your knowledge and confidence in a variety of nutritional topics.

[BOOK A PLACE ONLINE](#)

CAW alumni discount!

Have you studied with The College of Animal Welfare (CAW) before? If so, did you know you may be entitled to the CAW Alumni rate, meaning you **can attend any of the CAW one day congresses for just £75+VAT!**

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