

University of Glasgow

Academic Standards Committee - Friday 6 October 2017

**New Programme Proposal: BSc Veterinary Nursing / BSc (Hons)
Veterinary Nursing at Scotland's Rural College (SRUC)**

Robbie Mulholland, Clerk to the Joint Liaison Committee

SRUC (Scotland's Rural College)

Outline Planning Document

BSc Veterinary Nursing / BSc (Hons) Veterinary Nursing

Section 1: Core Data and Academic Issues

Proposed Development Team:

Kirsty Young (Head of Department)
Karen Martyniuk
Julie Parker
Alison McElrea
Pam Skinner
Suzanne Kelly
Emma Hudson
Julie McMorran

(This team are all based at the SRUC Barony Campus.)

Involvement and consultation with the wider Veterinary Nursing teams at Oatridge and Aberdeen campuses will be sought as the programme develops.

Representatives of the Royal College of Veterinary Surgeons (RVCS) and Veterinary Training Practices will also be involved in the development of the programme and its modules.

Proposed Academic Level & Exit Awards

BSc Veterinary Nursing (SCQF Level 9) 360 credits
(Including licence to practice and RCVS registration)

BSc (Hons) Veterinary Nursing (SCQF Level 10) 480 credits

Proposed Start Date

It is proposed that delivery of Year 1 will commence in September of Academic Year 2018/19.

Location of Delivery

Years 1-3 will be delivered from the SRUC Barony Campus with Year 4 delivery predicted from SRUC Edinburgh Campus. However, future development of the SRUC strategy will determine location.

Programme Duration

BSc Veterinary Nursing - normally three years full time study.

BSc (Hons) Veterinary Nursing - normally four years full time study. SRUC proposes that the final year will also be available part time (normally over two years) by distance learning.

Mode of Attendance

It is expected that the majority of students will study the programme on a full time basis although part time study may also be considered. Attendance for the general degree will be on campus or in Veterinary Training Practices for the work placements. The Honours year (year 4) will be available either on campus or part time by distance learning.

A significant portion of time (a minimum of 1800 hours is required prior to RCVS registration) will be spent on work placements within an approved veterinary training practice (VTP), provided by SRUC. The placements are normally within one VTP, however work experience within a different type of practice (general practice, hospital, specialist) may be included to widen the experience gained and meet student led learning expectations.

Proposed Validating Body

The University of Glasgow

Rationale

Veterinary Nursing is a profession in transition with a key milestone being reached in February 2015 when the new RCVS Royal Charter came into effect giving formal recognition to Veterinary Nursing as a profession. This move towards professional status has been supported by significant changes in the programmes available to candidates in order to achieve Registered Veterinary Nurse (RVN) status, with 19 Universities and Colleges (often with one or more subsidiary sites) in the UK now offering either Foundation or Honours Degree programmes in Veterinary Nursing. This includes Edinburgh Napier University which currently offers the only BSc Veterinary Nursing in Scotland. Employers recognise the status of degree qualified graduates and offer enhanced salaries over their diploma qualified colleagues. As a result of this it is important that SRUC is responsive to these changes and ensures that our graduates continue to retain a strong competitive standing within the industry.

This maturation of the profession requires graduates to be responsible for their professional practice. The degree programme will better equip graduates with these abilities by enhancing the development of their skills, particularly in reflection and critical thinking, which is challenging within the timescales of the current Higher National Diploma.

In addition to this the development of degree provision should:

- Enhance the learning experience for students by increasing the length and level of the veterinary nursing programme and therefore facilitating the development of deeper understanding of theoretical concepts, personal reflection and enhanced clinical skills.
- Develop a sustainable mode of delivery that incorporates RCVS registration rules and Qualification Benchmark standards while also meeting HMRC minimum wage regulations.
- To support and develop evidence-based practice within the Veterinary Nursing profession by maximising cooperative working between Education, Research and Consulting divisions. This will enhance scholarship and research opportunities to underpin the degree programme.
- To provide graduates with the skills and knowledge to access a wider range of career options with improved longer term career advancement.

- Continue to meet both student and employer demand through the provision of student training places, and therefore the number of RVNs entering the profession.
- Enable the SRUC Animal & Equine Department to provide a qualification pathway spanning the SCQF levels from level 4 to level 10.

Outline of Academic Aims and Objectives

1. To develop veterinary nurses' ability to:
 - a. apply their skills and knowledge in the provision of nursing care, enabling veterinary patients to achieve the best possible quality of life, whatever their condition, whilst ensuring that the welfare of the veterinary patient is not compromised.
 - b. play a significant role in promoting animal health and welfare by supporting and educating owners and members of the public.
 - c. critically analyse the care and welfare needs of veterinary patients in a range of circumstances and apply their skills, knowledge and experience to promote the highest standards possible.
2. To enable graduates the opportunity to be employed in a wide variety of both clinical and non-clinical settings. These include specialist nursing practice, teaching, research and commercial environments.
3. To ensure that our graduates are prepared and able to fulfil their professional responsibilities as Registered Veterinary Nurses (RVNs) bound by the RCVS Code of Professional Conduct.
4. To provide a student-centred learning ethos which stimulates students achieve their full intellectual potential and to develop independence of thought and an enquiring mind, and to encourage students to recognise their need for a programme of lifelong learning.
5. To develop graduates capable of undertaking research projects to develop and test evidence-based approaches to nursing care and welfare in the veterinary setting and promote their findings to the wider profession.

Relation to SRUC strategic plan

The development of this programme aligns closely to SRUC's ambition to provide a portfolio of provision that spans the SCQF levels. This will be the first degree level Veterinary Nursing provision offered at SRUC and will complement the existing and continuing Further Education programmes.

The programme conforms to the SRUC mission statement and education objectives and its development is included as an action in the Animal & Equine Department Business Plan.

Compatibility with Existing Portfolio of Programmes

This is a new Degree development which would completely replace the existing SQA Higher National Diploma (HND) in Veterinary Nursing programme.

There are opportunities for transition from Higher National Animal Care and Equine programmes to year one of the BSc Veterinary Nursing degree. Note that this must be into year one due to the RCVS requirements, and currently students are transitioning in this way to the HND programme. Degree level provision may also improve the opportunity for transition from the SRUC HN/BSc Applied Animal Science programmes.

There is potential for graduates to progress to the Masters programmes at University of Glasgow, particularly the new MSc Advanced Practice in Veterinary Nursing. A formalised articulation agreement will be sought. Alternatively graduates could progress to the MSc

Applied Animal Behaviour or MSc International Welfare, Ethics and Law programmes at the University of Edinburgh (delivered in partnership by SRUC.)

Proposed Outline Curriculum

The Degree curriculum will incorporate the QAA Benchmark Statement¹ and the RCVS Day One Competencies² and Day One Skills³ required for programme accreditation and graduate Veterinary Nursing registration. The programme consists entirely of core modules - there are no electives because of the need to meet RCVS requirements.

Year 1 (DRAFT)

Module	SCQF Credits	SCQF Level
Anatomy and Physiology	15	7
Nursing Care	15	7
Infection Control /One health	15	7
Maintaining the practice environment (reception/legislation)	15	7
Health and Welfare	15	7
Pharmacology	15	7
Introduction to clinical practice	15	7
Exotics and Wildlife	15	7

Year 2

Module	SCQF Credits	SCQF Level
Advanced Veterinary Nursing - Medical	15	8
Advanced Veterinary Nursing - Surgical	15	8
Diagnostic Techniques	15	8
Diagnostic Imaging	15	8
Anaesthesia and Analgesia	15	8
Small Animal Diseases and Conditions	15	8
Clinical Practice 1	30	8

Year 3

Module	SCQF Credits	SCQF Level
Clinical Practice 2	45	9
Clinical Practice 3	45	9
Research Skills & Data Analysis	15	9
Professional Responsibility	15	9

Year 4

Module	SCQF Credits	SCQF Level
Honours Project	45	10
Clinical Animal Behaviour and Welfare	15	10
Companion Animal Behaviour and Welfare	15	10
Animal Ethics	15	10

¹ [QAA Subject Benchmark Statement for Veterinary Nursing](#)

² [RCVS Day One Competencies for Veterinary Nurses](#)

³ [RCVS Day One Skills for Veterinary Nurses](#)

Physiology and psychology of welfare (sentience, suffering and wellbeing)	15	10
Critical Analysis of Care	15	10

As previously noted, in order to meet the Veterinary Nursing Registration Rules the programme will incorporate a significant proportion of time in an approved Veterinary Training Practice. These placements will be undertaken in Years 2 and 3 (equating to 120 credits).

Proposed use of existing SRUC modules and extent of shared delivery with other programmes

The use of existing modules is limited due to the specialist nature of the qualification, and only two have been identified (note that opportunities for shared delivery will be limited):

Research Skills and Data Analysis
Honours Project

Participating Teaching Groups and Student Support

It is anticipated that the programme will be supported primarily by the Animal and Equine Department, with input from the SRUC Research Division as appropriate.

Students will have access to all student support services that SRUC provide.

Proposed collaborative arrangements with other institutions and “programme ownership” arrangements

The programme will be owned, managed and delivered by SRUC. Programme ownership will be with the Animal & Equine department.

Proposed bridging/access arrangements

Access to the BSc Veterinary Nursing is limited to year one due to the licence to practice requirements of the qualification.

Entry to the veterinary nursing programme is dependant on the applicant’s ability to meet the Day One Skills and Competencies. Assessment must be made prior to acceptance on the programme to ensure that any adjustments proposed are reasonable and do not affect the integrity of the award. Reference should be made to the RCVS Disability Guidance on the Recruitment of Veterinary Nursing Students document⁴

Anticipated Employment Opportunities

Registered Veterinary Nurses (RVNs) are in high demand from first opinion and referral veterinary practices and hospitals including the University hospitals. This also provides opportunities for employment as specialist veterinary nurses e.g. critical care, oncology, medical, surgical, pharmacy, rehabilitation and exotics.

Senior roles in practice include Head Veterinary Nurse or Practice Manager and the recent growth in corporate practices has widened opportunities for RVNs to become practice partners and owners.

⁴ [RCVS Disability Guidance on the Recruitment of VN Students](#)

As the move towards evidence-based clinical practice grows there is an increasing demand for nurses to undertake research roles. Further career options include roles within the commercial sector and academic institutions.

Consistently 100% of graduates are employed as RVNs within veterinary practice.

Section 2: Resource Issues

Perceived market niche/target group

The BSc (Hons) is intended to replace the HND Veterinary Nursing, which consistently has high applicant levels and recruits over target. It is anticipated that these levels would be maintained, and possibly even increased since currently the better qualified applicants tend to select the degree provision at Napier University as their first choice.

Opportunities for graduates continue to grow, with a high demand for qualified RVNs. The degree programme would better equip graduates to meet the demands of increasing professional responsibility required of RVNs.

Competition

Key competition in Scotland is from Napier University, and there will also be some competition from RUK HEIs for degree level study. The City & Guilds Level 3 diploma Veterinary Nursing (a FE qualification) is delivered at SRUC Oatridge and Aberdeen campuses, plus College of Animal Welfare (Edinburgh), North Highland College (Thurso) and numerous colleges in the RUK. All receive consistently high levels of applications, with no indication that this will decrease.

Expected source and level of student funding

It is expected that the majority of students will initially be Scottish based and SAAS funded, though a proportion will be fee paying due to previous HE funding as it is a popular second qualification and career change choice. It would be important to develop the RUK and international markets as the degree becomes established.

Forecast of demand

Demand is expected to remain high (applications to HND have been in excess of 200 for the last three years, and this is similar to all Veterinary Nursing courses) with the challenge of maintaining placement levels to support the intake numbers being the main constraint. Attrition rates tend to be low, however it is recognised and anticipated that the uptake for the Honours years may initially be lower since the 'license to practice' award can be achieved at General degree level. As the Honours qualification becomes more established and the benefits become more apparent, it is expected that the uptake will rise.

	HND Year One	HND Year Two	BSc Year One	BSc Year Two	BSc Year Three	BSc Year Four	Total
2017/18	26	24					50
2018/19	-	24	28				52
2019/20	-	-	30	26			56
2020/21	-	-	30	28	24		82
2021/22	-	-	30	28	26	8	92
2022/23	-	-	32	28	26	8	94

Fee sharing/core funding arrangements

Not applicable.

Maximum/minimum intake level to run programme

Since recruitment levels have been consistently high it is not anticipated that there will be any challenge in meeting target numbers. It is expected that the minimum number accepted would be 20.

Maximum numbers would be determined primarily by training practice placement numbers and classroom size, therefore would currently be limited to 38.

Predicted income

On the basis of £8,274 of funding per FTE, anticipated income is projected as:

	BSc Year One (£)	BSc Year Two (£)	BSc Year Three (£)	BSc Year Four (£)	Total (£)
2018/19	231,672				231,672
2019/20	248,220	215,124			463,344
2020/21	248,220	231,672	198,576		678,468
2021/22	248,220	231,672	215,124	66,192	761,208
2022/23	264,768	231,672	215,124	66,192	777,756

Anticipated costs

Staff time: Contact teaching	Within the first two years of delivery there will be no additional requirements for staff since the degree will replace existing HN provision. In year three there will be some additional staff time required (0.5 FTE anticipated) although a significant proportion of time will be spent within vet practice placement during this year. For year four there may also be some additional staff time required to supervise student dissertations and for module delivery. Contact time in year 4 may be reduced through distance learning provision.
Staff time: Supervision/management/administration	Programme Leader for Veterinary Nursing post already exists, as does an Internal Verifier and 0.6FTE Administrator. On successful recruitment of more training practices some increase of these posts would be required. As described above, it is likely that some increase in staffing would be required for supervision of students however this would be built in to teaching staff recruitment.
Approximate costs of proposed major visits/tours/overseas placements	Visits would be integral to the course and already take place within the HND. A wider tour should also be included within the course, however it is expected that this will be budgeted to suit student finances. An overseas trip or placement is envisaged for future years; again this would be mainly financed by students/fundraising.
Requirement for obligatory split/small classes	There will be no requirements for split classes that are additional to the splits in the HND. These are for practical animal/theatre classes in first year and clinical skills labs in year two,

	and additionally in year three of the degree. Overall the number of splits and rotations will not increase until there are significantly more students.
New staff requirements	Initially no new staff required. As indicated above there would be a requirement for further staff once the first cohort reaches year three.
Staff retraining needs	Staff retraining has commenced, with several staff already completed degree and postgraduate study, however there is a requirement to upskill teaching team to MSc level (as stipulated by RCVS) and HE teacher training would be beneficial. Estimated costs of the upskilling would be in the region of £20,000 over a two to five year period.
Support staff time	The programme would utilise existing resources, though extending library opening times would be preferable (requiring additional resource). It is envisaged that University of Glasgow facilities at Dumfries could also be accessed.
Classroom requirements	Existing classroom resources will be used, however this will limit the cohort size to a maximum of 38. Should organisational strategy support campus development it would be hoped that larger cohorts could be accommodated.
Use of IT & library facilities/new purchases	Existing resources are available, with good access to veterinary nursing and veterinary journals and textbooks. Additional resources would build on this excellent base. Also envisage that University of Glasgow facilities at Dumfries could be made available to students.
Laboratory requirements	Existing laboratory meets qualification demands, though some investment in modernised equipment would be advantageous (~£2000)
Other new equipment requirements	Excellent facilities already exist, however some investment in newer equipment would ensure that it meets current practices. Additional equipment to support numbers undertaking practical classes and clinical skills labs (mannequins/simulators) would not only be better for the students, but also be best practice from an animal welfare point of view. (~£15,000-£20,000)
Other start up costs/special advertising costs	Little or no additional start-up or marketing costs required.
Other recurrent requirements	No other recurrent requirements