

Career Development

Once qualified, veterinary nurses will find a rewarding career ahead of them.

Nurses may choose to develop an interest in different aspects of animal health, such as behaviour, alternative therapy or may choose to further develop their skills in medical or surgical nursing by studying the Advanced Diploma.

Continuing Professional Development (CPD) is mandatory for registered veterinary nurses (RVNs) with 45 hours CPD being required by the RCVS over a three year period, an average of 15 hours per year.

Veterinary nurses may choose to embark on a career in nursing and work in large veterinary hospitals or universities. They may also take on a veterinary practice management role or become a veterinary drugs company representative.

Many RVNs become NVQ assessors and are responsible for training student veterinary nurses in practice. They may also elect to follow a career in education and become college tutors and lecturers thus teaching the next generation of veterinary nurses.

Membership Benefits

Becoming a member of the BVNA is a good way to start your career in veterinary nursing. BVNA members enjoy a wealth of benefits including;

- Monthly 'Veterinary Nursing Journal' (VNJ)
- Employment register service
- Discounted publications with BSAVA and Elsevier
- Legal helpline
- Industrial Relations Service
- Discount on Congress and CPD courses
- Discount when attending regional meetings
- Bursaries
- Discount on various insurance schemes, merchandise and AA roadside assistance plus driving lessons

You don't have to be a student or qualified veterinary nurse to join the BVNA. By becoming an Associate member you can also take advantage of all the benefits available.

BVNA membership can be applied for online or you can download an application form via the BVNA website www.bvna.org.uk. Alternatively you can contact the BVNA office on 01279 408644 and request an application form.



A Career In Veterinary Nursing



Contacts

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What is Veterinary Nursing?

Veterinary nursing is a rewarding career that offers variety and daily contact with animals and their owners.

Registered or Listed Veterinary Nurses (RVN/VN) work alongside Veterinary Surgeons to provide a high standard of care for sick and injured animals.

As a qualified RVN/VN, you will be responsible for the welfare, comfort and recovery of animals that may have undergone trauma, surgery or are receiving treatment for medical conditions. You will be trained to a high level to enable you to work in all aspects of the veterinary practice environment from reception through to the operating theatre.

After qualifying, nurses can work in a variety of practices from small or large high street practices to universities and hospitals.

Veterinary nurses can also work with a wide variety of species, ranging from domestic pets and exotic species to horses and wildlife.

Veterinary Nurse Entry Requirements

- You must be employed full time or part time in a Royal College of Veterinary Surgeon (RCVS) approved training practice (TP) or on a recognised veterinary nursing degree course. A list of TP's or universities can be obtained from the RCVS website www.rcvs.org.uk

- You must have a minimum of 5 GCSEs at grade C or higher or 5 Scottish Standards at grade 1-3, including Mathematics, English Language and a Science subject or hold an Animal Nursing Assistant (ANA) or Veterinary Care Assistant (VCA) qualification (with Key Skills Level 2 in Application of Number & Communication). Alternative qualifications of a comparable or higher standard may be accepted, these would be checked on initial enrolment with the RCVS.

Veterinary Nurse Training

There are several routes available for people wishing to train as a VN.

NVQ Level 2 and 3 in Veterinary Nursing – This is the most common route to train as a VN. Training is taken over a two year period (4 years part time). Students are employed in a TP and attend a VRQ (Vocationally Related Qualification) course at a college on either day or block release. A list of colleges can be obtained from the RCVS website www.rcvs.org.uk

You can currently choose to study either small animal or equine veterinary nursing via this route.

Assessment is by means of a portfolio of evidence which is prepared by the student nurse over the period of the course and a written examination at the end of year one, with a further written and practical examination taken at the end of year two.

Alternatively, you can undertake a Veterinary Nursing Foundation or BSc Honours Degree. Training takes between three and four years depending on the type of course you choose.

Examination for the VN Degree varies depending on the course provider, but will include written and practical exams and a collection of work-based evidence.



Looking for a Position

Veterinary Nursing is a popular career choice to people of all ages. There is no age limit on when you can become a veterinary nurse and there are many excellent RVNs who didn't enter the profession until later in life.

It can be difficult securing a position in a training practice (TP). People may find the lack of student places available and the fierce competition for them frustrating at times.

Many veterinary practices choose existing staff members for student placements and so you may have to accept a ward assistant or receptionist role to enable you to get a little experience before you are successful in finding a student position.



Volunteering and work experience may be available and this will allow you to demonstrate your commitment to a prospective employer and enhance your CV. Similarly a related academic qualification such as the ANA or VCA will give you an advantage when applying for a student position.

If you are interested in becoming a veterinary nurse why not join the BVNA as an Associate Member? You can take advantage of the membership benefits, including the monthly VNJ, which carries a wealth of information about veterinary nursing. It also has a classified section which is free of charge to members and may be used to find a vacancy.