

## Veterinary studies

UK degrees in veterinary science or qualifications in veterinary nursing are acknowledged as among the best in the world. Studied under strict regulation and control by the Royal College of Veterinary Surgeons (RCVS), they will prepare you to work anywhere in the world.

### Checklist: Why study veterinary studies in the United Kingdom?

- The quality of both practical and theoretical teaching is very high and is regularly monitored by the RCVS to ensure that standards are maintained.
- Your UK training will be accepted for employment in most countries in the world subject to local regulations/requirements.
- You can choose from a wide variety of specialisms at postgraduate level.

## 1 What can I study?

### *Training as a Veterinary surgeon*

#### *Undergraduate degrees*

To train to be a veterinary surgeon you will need to go to university and take a veterinary degree. The universities in the UK offering veterinary degrees approved by the RCVS are Bristol, Cambridge, Edinburgh, Glasgow, Liverpool and London (the Royal Veterinary College). The degree courses are five years in length (six years at some schools). They are all validated by the RCVS, although the titles of the degrees are slightly different :

- University of Bristol – Bachelor of Veterinary Science (BVSc)
- University of Liverpool – Bachelor of Veterinary Science (BVSc)
- Royal Veterinary College, University of London – Bachelor of Veterinary Medicine (BVetMed)
- University of Edinburgh – Bachelor of Veterinary Medicine and Surgery (BVM&S)
- University of Glasgow – Bachelor of Veterinary Medicine and Surgery (BVMS)
- University of Cambridge – Bachelor of Veterinary Medicine (VetMB).



## Requirements after graduation

### RCVS

Once qualified, veterinary surgeons are not limited to solely working in practice. There is a multitude of career opportunities open to graduates from pathology and research to public health. Every practising veterinary surgeon must register and be a member of RCVS and fulfil their professional obligations.

### Professional Development Phase (PDP)

The Professional Development Phase covers the new veterinary graduate's first year or so in practice when they are continuing to develop their professional and clinical skills. RCVS has defined a set of "Year One Competences" and developed an on-line password protected database which enables the new graduate to record their clinical skills and measure their development in a structured way.

### Continuing Professional Development (CPD)

All practising veterinary surgeons must maintain and continue to develop their professional knowledge and skills, in order to make continuous improvements to the standard of service they provide to their patients and clients. Currently the recommended **minimum** CPD is 105 hours over three years with an average of 35 hours per year.

## *Postgraduate qualifications for veterinary surgeons*

### *Postgraduate degrees*

All the veterinary schools offer postgraduate taught courses and research degrees and details can be found on the veterinary schools' websites. Postgraduate positions such as residencies and postgraduate scholarships are also advertised in The Veterinary Record which can be accessed online at [www.bvapublications.com](http://www.bvapublications.com)

Depending on course content, RCVS registration may be required. The veterinary school will advise a postgraduate student if this is the case.

### **RCVS postgraduate modular certificate**

RCVS is introducing a postgraduate modular certificate and the new modules will be phased in during 2007 and onwards. The existing RCVS postgraduate certificates are being phased out and November 2007 will be the last opportunity for enrolment on the 'old' RCVS certificates. Candidates enrolled on the old certificates at that time will be able to continue with their enrolment and take their examinations against the old scheme at any stage during their five year enrolment period.



The new **modular postgraduate certificate** aims to :-

- offer a certificate that is broken down into manageable modules, so that the individual can retain credits as they are achieved, even if their interests or practice area subsequently changes
- offer candidates the option to select modules that suit their particular interests whilst still working towards a full certificate
- offer a qualification that is appropriate, accessible and attainable for veterinarians working in a wide range of practice areas
- enable individuals who don't want to work towards a full qualification to take individual modules that can be credited and provide clear evidence of their participation in worthwhile CPD.

## **Structure of the modular postgraduate certificate**

The modular structure is designed to be compatible with the Quality Assurance Agency's national framework for higher level qualifications, and equates to a university postgraduate certificate. The certificate itself is made up of 60 credits (which equates to about 600 notional study hours), and is divided into three groups.

To receive the full Certificate in Advanced Veterinary Practice (CertAVP) it will be necessary to complete the A-Professional Key Skills (A-PKS.1) module (15 credits), the B-Clinical Key Skills (B-CKS.0) module and at least one other B module (total of 15 credits), together with either three C modules or a combination of B and C modules (30 credits).

The level of the new modular certificates is very much on a par with the existing ones, but a key difference between the new and old systems is that modular certificates will be somewhat broader, covering some key professional and clinical skills which were not explicitly included in the 'old' certificate qualifications. The system will also provide a much more flexible framework for lifelong learning for practising veterinarians.

Candidates will have more choice to study a greater breadth of subjects, in more manageable sizes, and over a longer period if they so chose. They will also be rewarded for their efforts if they choose to study for individual modules rather than the complete certificate.

In addition, studying for a module will be an excellent way to fulfil the [College's CPD requirements](#).

The inclusion of modules covering essential professional and clinical skills is designed to ensure that topics which are of importance to all areas of practice - including welfare and ethics, biosecurity, and evidence-based approaches to medicine - are covered by everyone achieving the qualification, leading to greater consistency across all certificates.

## **Short courses**

Details of short courses for continuing professional development can be found in *The Veterinary Record* and *In Practice*, journals published by the British Veterinary Association, and also on their website at

<http://www.bva.co.uk/events/>

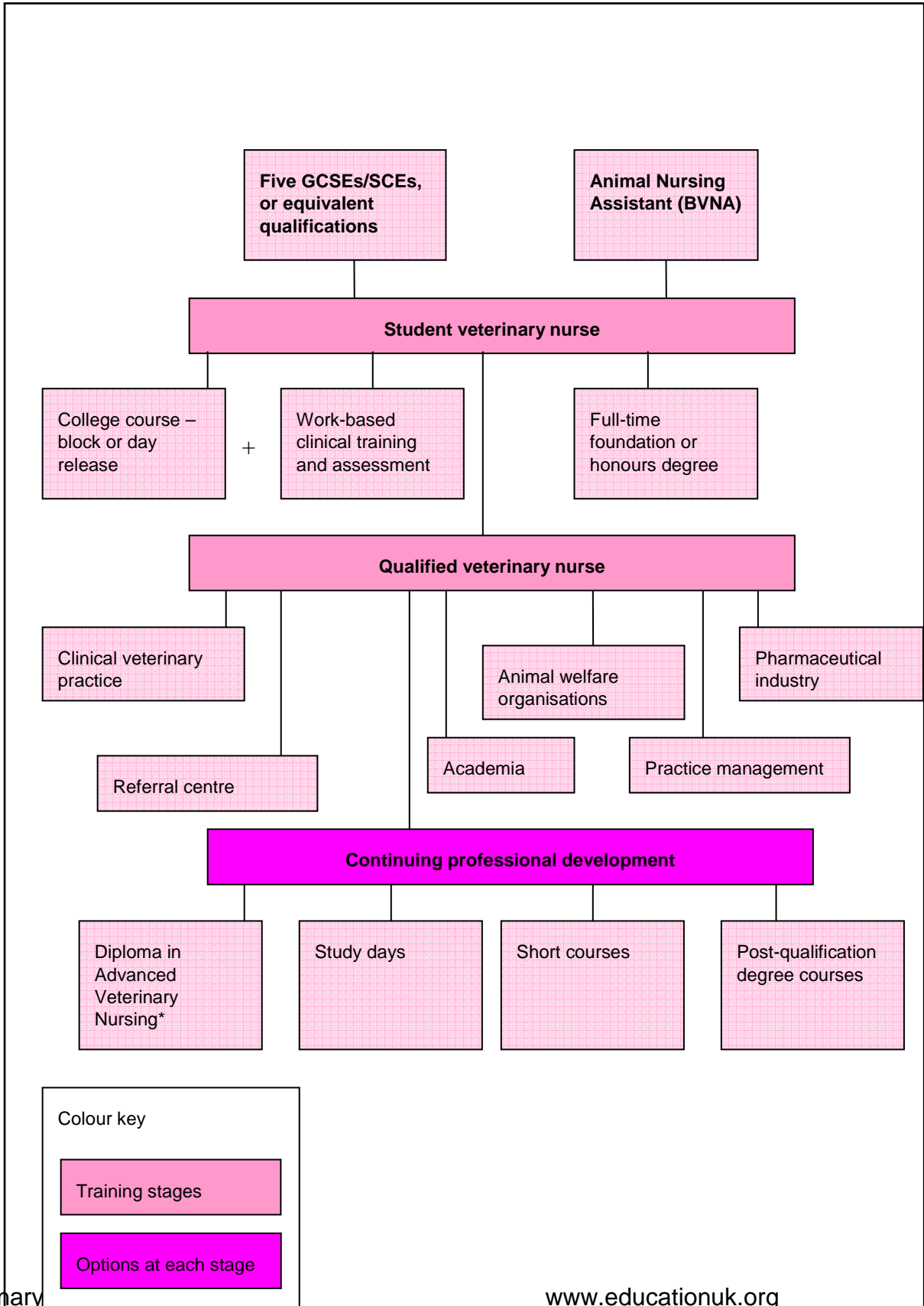
## **Training as Veterinary nurse**

There are two routes to qualify as a veterinary nurse. Candidates may either undertake vocational qualifications (NVQ and VRQ awards in veterinary nursing at levels 2 and 3) or may undertake an RCVS-approved course of higher education. Candidates who opt for the vocational training route must be employed as a student veterinary nurse within an RCVS approved Training Practice (TP).

Veterinary nurse education encompasses a significant element of on-the-job clinical training. Vocational students undertake this whilst employed as student veterinary nurses within their training practice. Higher education students are required to undertake at least 70 weeks of clinical placement within a training practice during their programme of study. Some programmes incorporate a "sandwich" year, during which candidates gain experience as paid employees of a training practice.

Entrants for veterinary nurse training must have a minimum of five A, B or C passes at GCSE (or 1, 2 or 3 passes at Scottish Standard Grades), including English language, mathematics and a science subject. Alternatively, the British Veterinary Nursing Association's Animal Nursing Assistant (ANA) qualification is also acceptable as an entry qualification ([www.bvna.org.uk](http://www.bvna.org.uk)).

The RCVS regulates standards in veterinary nurse training. For further information visit its website [www.rcvs.org.uk](http://www.rcvs.org.uk).





\*Diploma in Advanced Veterinary Nursing has two options; medical and surgical

## **Alternative courses in animal health**

If you want to work with animals, but don't want to train as a veterinary surgeon or a veterinary nurse, there are alternative courses available. There are career-based courses offered at all levels (National/Scottish Vocational Qualification, National Diploma/Certificate, Higher National Diploma) in, for example, Equine Studies, Animal Sciences and Veterinary Health Sciences (for more information on career-based training refer to *Choosing your career-based training course* in this series).

There are also first degree courses in, for example, Equine Science and Veterinary Pathogenesis. You can find all these courses on the British Council website [www.educationuk.org](http://www.educationuk.org).

### **Checklist: Choosing the right course**

- Before making your choice, look at each veterinary school's website to get a taste of its culture; location may also be important to you.
- For an objective view of the standard of the department, look up the Teaching Quality Assessment [www.gaa.ac.uk/revreps/reviewreports.htm](http://www.gaa.ac.uk/revreps/reviewreports.htm) to see how the department has scored. See *Quality Issues* in this series for more information.
- If you wish to take a postgraduate course, you can compare research departments by looking up research assessment exercise results at [www.hero.ac.uk/rae/index.htm](http://www.hero.ac.uk/rae/index.htm) See *Quality Issues* in this series for more information.
- Be aware that it is often a requirement of postgraduate students to be a member of the RCVS if the diagnosis or treatment of animals is involved in your studies.



## 2 Entrance

The table below outlines the entrance requirements and application procedures for undergraduate and postgraduate courses in veterinary medicine. Further information can be found at [www.rcvs.org.uk/visitors/](http://www.rcvs.org.uk/visitors/) (section on 'Veterinary Careers').

Stage of study	What you would need	How to apply	What else you should know
Undergraduate	A-levels – minimum of two As and a B Scottish Highers – AAABB. Degree – upper-second class honours degree in a related subject	Through the Universities and Colleges Admissions Service (UCAS)	This is a very competitive field, with far more applicants than places. Only four choices are allowed, and the closing date is 15 October of each year (earlier than for other courses).
Postgraduate RCVS Certificates and Diplomas	You should have been qualified for at least two years.	To the RCVS by 1 November of the year you intend to enrol. 1 November 2007 is the last enrolment date	You would almost certainly need to be a member of the RCVS to pursue this course of study
RCVS postgraduate modular certificate	You should have completed your Professional Development Phase	To the RCVS	You would almost certainly need to be a member of the RCVS to pursue this course of study
Postgraduate degrees, diplomas and doctorates studied at university veterinary schools	A first degree in veterinary science or a related subject	Directly to the institution	Some courses will admit you without membership of the RCVS, but only if they do not involve the diagnosis and treatment of animals

## 3 How can I register as a professional?

You must be registered with the RCVS before you can work as a veterinary surgeon in the UK and before you can undergo any training where you would be involved in the diagnosis and treatment of animals.

### Does my overseas degree make me eligible for membership of the RCVS?

It may do. There are a number of overseas degrees which are approved by RCVS: in Australia, New Zealand and South Africa. Graduates from North American veterinary schools accredited by the American Veterinary Medical Association can also apply to become members of RCVS. Holders of many European degrees are eligible for registration if they are also EU citizens.

If your degree does not fall within any of these categories, you must take the Statutory Membership Examination. This consists of written papers and clinical, oral and practical examinations in the horse, small companion and production animals and veterinary public health. Candidates must take all parts of the examination in the same year and must pass all subjects to pass the whole examination.

The examination is held in the UK in May/June/July each year. You must apply to sit the examination by the examination closing date – 14 February for the 2007 examination. Go to [www.rcvs.org.uk/vet\\_surgeons/members/other.html](http://www.rcvs.org.uk/vet_surgeons/members/other.html) for information and application forms. There is an examination fee of £1,250.



## Would a United Kingdom qualification be recognised in other countries?

A qualification from the RCVS prepares you to practise virtually everywhere in the world. However, you should always check your eligibility in the countries in which you intend to work.

If you are interested in working in the United States of America, you should note that of the UK veterinary schools, only Edinburgh, Glasgow and London have American Veterinary Medical Association (AVMA) accreditation at present. AVMA accreditation removes a major obstacle to graduates from these universities working in the USA but there are still state examinations to take in order to achieve local registration.

## 4 Next steps

### Checklist: Your next steps

- 1 If you are interested in undergraduate study, look at the websites of the veterinary schools.
- 2 Look at the Teaching Quality Assessment report [www.qaa.ac.uk/revreps/reviewreports.htm](http://www.qaa.ac.uk/revreps/reviewreports.htm) for each school, but bear in mind the high standard of every school and the high grades you will be expected to gain to stand a chance of being accepted.
- 3 If you are interested in postgraduate study, check your eligibility for membership of the RCVS – if your degree is not recognised, you will have to take the Statutory Membership Examination before you can do any course where you would be involved in the diagnosis and treatment of animals. (Refer to ‘How can I register as a professional?’) You will not need RCVS membership to do a university postgraduate course that is purely academic and has no clinical content.
- 4 For veterinary nursing first look at the information on the British Veterinary Nursing Association website, [www.bvna.org.uk](http://www.bvna.org.uk) and the RCVS website, [www.rcvs.org.uk](http://www.rcvs.org.uk) and then look for courses on [www.educationuk.org](http://www.educationuk.org).

## 5 Where can I find more information?

### British Council education information

Website [www.educationuk.org](http://www.educationuk.org)

For further information, you can find details of your nearest office at [www.britishcouncil.org/home-contact-worldwide.htm](http://www.britishcouncil.org/home-contact-worldwide.htm) which includes links to all our country web pages and a worldwide address book giving contact details for all offices.

### Education UK Scotland

Website [www.educationukscotland.org](http://www.educationukscotland.org)

### Universities and Colleges Admissions Service (UCAS)

PO Box 28  
Cheltenham  
Gloucestershire GL52 3LZ  
Telephone +44 (0) 870 1122211  
Fax +44 (0) 1242 544961  
Email [enquiries@ucas.ac.uk](mailto:enquiries@ucas.ac.uk)  
Website [www.ucas.com](http://www.ucas.com)

### British Veterinary Association

7 Mansfield Street  
London W1G 9NQ  
Telephone +44 (0) 20 7636 6541  
Fax +44 (0) 20 7436 2970  
Email [bvahg@bva.co.uk](mailto:bvahg@bva.co.uk)  
Website [www.bva.co.uk](http://www.bva.co.uk)

### British Veterinary Nursing Association

Suite 11, Shenwal House  
South Road  
Harlow  
Essex CM20 2BD  
Telephone +44 (0) 1279 450 567  
Fax +44 (0) 1279 420 866  
Email [bvna@bvnaoffice.co.uk](mailto:bvna@bvnaoffice.co.uk)  
Website [www.bvna.org.uk](http://www.bvna.org.uk)

### **The Royal College of Veterinary Surgeons**

Belgravia House  
62-64 Horseferry Road  
London SW1P 2AF

Telephone +44 (0) 20 7222 2001  
Education department +44 (0) 20 7202 0704  
Fax +44 (0) 20 7222 2004  
Email [education@rcvs.org.uk](mailto:education@rcvs.org.uk)  
Website [www.rcvs.org.uk](http://www.rcvs.org.uk)

### **University Veterinary Schools in the UK**

#### **BRISTOL**

Veterinary Admissions Clerk  
University of Bristol, Senate House  
Bristol BS8 1TH  
Tel: +44(0)117 928 9000  
Website: [www.vetschool.bris.ac.uk/](http://www.vetschool.bris.ac.uk/)

#### **CAMBRIDGE**

The Department Secretary  
Department of Clinical Veterinary Medicine  
University of Cambridge, Madingley Road  
Cambridge CB2 0ES  
Tel: +44(0)1223 337600  
Website: [www.vet.cam.ac.uk/](http://www.vet.cam.ac.uk/)

The Cambridge Intercollegiate Applications Office  
Kellet Lodge, Tennis Court Road  
Cambridge CB2 1QJ  
Tel: +44(0)1223 333308

#### **EDINBURGH**

Admissions Officer  
Faculty of Veterinary Medicine  
Royal (Dick) School of Veterinary Studies  
University of Edinburgh, Summerhall  
Edinburgh, EH9 1QH  
Tel: +44(0)131 650 6130  
Website: [www.vet.ed.ac.uk/](http://www.vet.ed.ac.uk/)

#### **GLASGOW**

Admissions Officer  
University of Glasgow Veterinary School  
464 Bearsden Road, Bearsden Road  
Glasgow, G61 1QH  
Tel: +44(0)141 330 5700  
Website: [www.gla.ac.uk/faculties/vet/index.html](http://www.gla.ac.uk/faculties/vet/index.html)

#### **LIVERPOOL**

The Admissions Sub-Dean  
Faculty of Veterinary Science  
University of Liverpool  
Liverpool, L69 7ZJ  
Tel: +44(0)151 794 2000  
Website: [www.liv.ac.uk/vets/](http://www.liv.ac.uk/vets/)

#### **LONDON**

The Head of Registry  
The Royal Veterinary College  
Royal College Street  
London, NW1 0TU  
Tel: +44(0)20 7468 5000  
Website: [www.rvc.ac.uk/](http://www.rvc.ac.uk/)

#### **NOTTINGHAM - subject to RCVS approval**

The School of Veterinary Medicine and Science  
The University of Nottingham  
Sutton Bonington Campus  
Sutton Bonington  
Leicestershire, LE12 5RD  
Tel: +44(0)115 951 6417  
Website: [www.nottingham.ac.uk/vet](http://www.nottingham.ac.uk/vet)

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