Date: 19-10-2026

BSc (Hons) Veterinary Nursing with Small Animal Rehabilitation (with placement)

UCAS code	D310
Institution code	H12
Duration	4 years (full-time) including a one-year work placement.
Start date	September 2027
Accredited by	Royal College of Veterinary Surgeons (RCVS)
Location	Harper Adams University campus (and location of work placement)

Registered Veterinary Nurses (RVN) perform a varied and integral role within the veterinary team. Completing this award and meeting the required assessment criteria will allow graduates to apply to enter the register of veterinary nurses held by the Royal College of Veterinary Surgeons (RCVS), the regulatory body.

On entry to the course, you will enrol with the RCVS as a Student Veterinary Nurse (SVN). During your placement periods within a veterinary practice, you will develop the practical skills you will require as an RVN.

The course will provide you with the practical, theoretical and technical skills required of an RVN. This will include use of evidence based veterinary nursing, leading to the completion of a dissertation in the final year. The Day One Skills and Day One Competencies required by the RCVS will be covered, in addition to advancing understanding and developing skills above and beyond this. You will be taught in interprofessional, specialist facilities. Teaching approaches will be varied to suit the subjects and allow you to develop independence and take responsibility for your own learning. This will support your development to become a reflective practitioner. Assessments will align with professional body (RCVS) requirements and utilise a range of assessment types.

Students undertaking the Veterinary Nursing with Companion Animal Behaviour pathway will study diagnosis and treatment of behavioural problems, whereas students on the Veterinary Nursing with Small Animal Rehabilitation pathway will study rehabilitation of the veterinary inpatient. Those undertaking the honours degree in Veterinary Nursing will study leadership, business skills and consulting for veterinary nurses.

A-level entry requirements

- **Entry requirements for 2027 entry are not currently available. Please contact Admissions for advice**

Accreditation

Harper Adams' courses are approved by the Royal College of Veterinary Surgeons and the requirements for gaining the RCVS Veterinary Nursing Licence to Practice are written into the course structure, so you will not only have the skills and rights of a registered veterinary nurse but also those skills provided by an honours degree in science. Graduates in Veterinary Nursing will receive the Licence to Practice at graduation and will be able to register with the RCVS as a qualified veterinary nurse.

Careers

Veterinary nursing is a career with lots of job satisfaction and there is a strong demand for qualified veterinary nurses. Although primarily a companion animal qualification, the degree offers modules for those interested in other species, increasing the job opportunities available upon graduating. Accounting and management skills boost career development for degree students. The pharmaceuticals industry employs trained veterinary nurses. The degree also opens the door to wider opportunities concerning the health and welfare of animals.

Employability

Currently the demand for qualified veterinary nurses (RVN) exceeds the supply. Our graduates usually find jobs readily and we often have employers looking for graduates we cannot supply. Harper Adams degree nurses have a good reputation in the sector, and we aim to keep that reputation.

What will I study?

Year 1		Year 2		Year 3	Year 4	
Anatomy and Physiology for Veterinary Nurses (A4009HF)	20	Applied Professional Practice (A5014HF)	20	Placement year	Veterinary Nursing Dissertation and Academic Skills (HF-VN)	20
The Veterinary Professional in Clinical Practice (A4010HF)	20	Diagnostic Techniques for Veterinary Nurses (A5017HF)	20		Collaborative Problem Solving in the Veterinary Industry (HF-VN)	20
Academic and Professional Development for Student Veterinary Nurses (A4011HF)	10	Medical Nursing with Medicines (A5021HF)	20		Rehabilitation of the Veterinary Inpatient (HF-VN)	20
Companion Animal Management (A4012HF)	20	Research Skills and Evidence Based Veterinary Nursing (A5025HF)	10		Introduction to Clinical Specialisms in Veterinary Nursing (HF-VN)	20
Clinical and Communication Skills for Veterinary Nurses (A4014HF)	20	Requirements for Professional Registration - Phase 2 (A5029HF)	0		Requirements for Professional Registration - Phase 3 (HF-VN3)	0
Nursing Care of the Veterinary Patient (A4015HF)	20	Anaesthesia and Theatre Practices (A5007HF)	20		Optional Modules (HF-VN)	
Introduction to Evidence Based Veterinary Nursing and Digital Skills (A4016HF)	20	Musculoskeletal Dysfunction (HF-VN)	20		**Options**	
Professional Requirements for Registration - Phase 1 (A4013HF)	0	**Electives**			Equine Nursing and Health (HF-VN)	10
		Feline Friendly Practice (A5018HF)	10		Exotic Animal Nursing and Health (HF-VN)	10
		Wildlife Care (A5028HF)	10		Complementary Therapy (HF-VN)	10
					Farm Animal Practice for Veterinary Nurses (HF-VN)	10

Anatomy and Physiology for Veterinary Nurses

Year of study 1
Code A4009HF
Credits 20
Core/option Core

It is essential that veterinary nurses have an understanding and appreciation of the normal functioning and anatomical processes of their patients. This allows you to rationalise nursing decisions made based on the changes to normal anatomy during disease processes. This module will introduce you to important anatomical terms and develop your understanding of the structure and functioning of mammalian anatomy and physiology in relation to veterinary nursing. It will aid in developing your knowledge of body structures and physiological processes in a healthy animal as well as an introduction to the clinical signs that manifest in abnormally functioning anatomy and concurrent disease. An understanding of the normal physiology will be assisted by reference to what is observed in the clinical case; by applying the physiology, this will in turn provide support for future level 4 and 5 veterinary nursing modules.

The Veterinary Professional in Clinical Practice

Year of study 1
Code A4010HF
Credits 20
Core/option Core

his module will prepare you for working in veterinary practice as an RCVS-enrolled Student Veterinary Nurse (SVN), and upon qualification, a Registered Veterinary Nurse, (RVN). You will gain an understanding about the different roles working within practice and the foundations required to ensure that a practice functions efficiently, whilst safe and legal.

In working to develop yourself as a professional, you will learn about working as a regulated veterinary professional to include professional and legal boundaries and the importance of reflective practice in self-development.

Working as a veterinary professional is deeply rewarding, but it can also be incredibly stressful. This module will help prepare you for the physical and mental challenges you may face during the course, and your wider career, and will provide you with a toolkit to help safeguard your own wellbeing and that of your colleagues.

Having a sound knowledge of the above, you will be well prepared for the practicalities of your first block in clinical placement working as an SVN.

Academic and Professional Development for Student Veterinary Nurses

Year of study 1
Code A4011HF
Credits 10
Core/option Core

This module supports the development of your personal, academic, employability and self-management skills for the first year of your undergraduate studies. This module supports learning in all other modules.

The module will be delivered during the first term of the first year to students in undergraduate Veterinary Nursing streams. The main rationale for a first-year module of this type is to ensure all students are fully equipped for higher education (HE) and to provide space in the curriculum in which to develop relevant skills to aid progression within and out with technically oriented modules. The key themes addressed by this module include transition into Higher Education (HE) and beyond the first year, approaches to learning, independent study, effective communication for veterinary professionals, reading and reviewing literature, referencing convention and using feedback for learning.

Companion Animal Management

Year of study 1
Code A4012HF
Credits 20
Core/option Core

An understanding of companion animal management practices is fundamental when working as a veterinary nurse. This module will provide you with a base-level understanding that will enable you to take a holistic approach when dealing with your clients and their animal's needs. You will be able to promote good health and welfare for all your patients; canine, feline and a range of exotic species.

The module will provide you with knowledge of relevant companion animal management practices with emphasis placed on environmental requirements, nutritional needs, and animal management.

Clinical and Communication Skills for Veterinary Nurses

Year of study 1
Code A4014HF
Credits 20
Core/option Core

The modern-day Registered Veterinary Nurse (RVN) requires a range of skills to perform the role. A large part of the job involves communicating with members of the public, often at times of stress when they are concerned about their pets. This module will introduce you to the principles of communication and how to manage potentially difficult conversations.

You will also require a range of practical skills. This module will focus on the practical elements you are most likely to be involved with during the early part of your journey as a Student Veterinary Nurse (SVN). These skills will be developed both in subsequent modules and during your time on placement in a veterinary practice.

Nursing Care of the Veterinary Patient

Year of study 1
Code A4015HF
Credits 20
Core/option Core

This module aims to prepare you for life in the veterinary practice, particularly when dealing with hospitalised veterinary patients and their owners.

In practice, nursing care is delivered to a range of species and conditions and the veterinary nurse must be able to identify the nursing care required. The veterinary nurse must also have the capacity to adapt their nursing care to the individual needs of the presenting patient and client, in general care and emergency situations.

This module will provide you with the underpinning knowledge and principles of many general nursing and specialised nursing care roles, so this can be applied in a practical setting.

This module will underpin all the modules at level 5 and 6 that are specific to veterinary nursing as well equipping you with relevant knowledge for your clinical placements.

Introduction to Evidence Based Veterinary Nursing and Digital Skills

Year of study 1
Code A4016HF
Credits 20
Core/option Core

Evidence Based Veterinary Medicine is the use of the best available evidence in making clinical decisions and is the cornerstone in the progression of veterinary care. Veterinary Professionals have a duty to monitor clinical outcomes and improve practice to better the outcomes for the animal under their care.

This module will introduce you to the concept of Evidence Based Veterinary Nursing (EBVN) and you will develop skills in finding, evaluating and processing current evidence that are essential in the pursuit of EBVN, following on from the 'Academic & Professional Development' module.

Digital skills involve competency in a range of digital applications and processes that will be required regularly throughout your studies (and potentially your future career). This module will support you in identifying and developing these essential skills. You will need to apply these skills in the completion of the module assessment.

Teamwork is a key element to working in a Veterinary Practice. This module will utilise teamwork throughout to allow you to consider the skills required and how challenges in teamwork can be addressed.

Professional Requirements for Registration - Phase 1

Year of study 1
Code A4013HF
Credits 0
Core/option Core

Registered Veterinary Nurses (RVN) perform a varied and integral role within the veterinary team. Completing this module will allow you to begin meeting the criteria for application to enter the register of veterinary nurses held by the Royal College of Veterinary Surgeons (RCVS), the regulatory body upon completion of your degree. On entry to the course, you will enrol with the RCVS as a Student Veterinary Nurse (SVN). During your placement periods within a veterinary practice, you will develop the practical skills you will require as an RVN.

Applied Professional Practice

Year of study 2
Code A5014HF
Credits 20
Core/option Core

Registered Veterinary Nurses are recognised professionals and regulated by the Royal College of Veterinary Surgeons (RCVS). As such, they are expected to adhere to the Code of Professional Conduct for Veterinary Nurses and demonstrate fitness to practise in both their working and private lives. This module will explore the different facets of fitness to practise and how veterinary professionals can maintain this and contribute towards personal and practice quality improvement. This module builds on knowledge of professional requirements delivered in the Level 4 module 'The Veterinary Professional in Clinical Practice'. It will further explore and analyse the professional, legal and ethical issues veterinary nurses may experience. It is intended to assist you in recognising conflicts which may occur whilst practising and to develop skills to manage such situations and guide your decision-making.

Feline Friendly Practice

Year of study 2
Code A5018HF
Credits 10
Core/option Core

The health, welfare and behaviour of cats can be negatively impacted by poor environmental factors, including incorrect resource provision and basic care within the home and other establishments. Such negatives can be reversed and prevented by ensuring the cat's individual needs are provided for. Educating cat owners is therefore crucial to the cat's wellbeing and daily stress levels.

This module aims to deliver the needs of cats within many environments and the importance of educating the public to reduce the incidence of inappropriate feline behaviours.

Diagnostic Techniques for Veterinary Nurses

Year of study 2
Code A5017HF
Credits 20
Core/option Core

This module introduces the common methods of diagnostic testing and imaging techniques seen in general practice and outlines the responsibilities of the veterinary nurse in terms of health and safety, patient preparation and care, preparing the environment and maintaining and using equipment.

In this module, you will gain an understanding of how the different methods work to aid patient diagnosis and care, and how to manage any potential health and safety implications associated with this. Patient, personnel and environmental factors are explored and applied to a range of diagnostic testing and imaging techniques. Case studies and practical tutorials let you apply your knowledge in preparing and managing

these cases to provide you the knowledge you need in advance of your placement year.

Wildlife Care

Year of study 2
Code A5028HF
Credits 10
Core/option Core

The importance of protecting all species, and the role of humans in contributing to both their injuries and care, is highlighted in this module. The involvement of the veterinary community, Government, charities and the human population is explored, as they all have a significant influence on wildlife care. Current legislation that protects species with a focus on UK law is also appraised and applied.

Practical care including the nursing requirements of wildlife casualties as well as rehabilitation, release and long-term captivity are addressed. The module also emphasises the ethical and animal welfare issues surrounding conservation and the provision of wildlife care.

Medical Nursing with Medicines

Year of study 2
Code A5021HF
Credits 20
Core/option Core

In practice, veterinary nurses are required to nurse a range of patients with varying conditions. Good knowledge of these conditions and the treatments utilised is essential to enable appropriate nursing care to be delivered to these patients. This module will further develop your understanding of a range of medical and emergency conditions introduced in 'Nursing Care of the Veterinary Patient' and the required nursing techniques needed to enable appropriate care of these patients. Alongside this, you will gain an understanding of the Veterinary medicine industry and its regulation and the principles of pharmacology to equip you with the knowledge to understand the effect of medicines on your patients and how to explain this to owners.

Research Skills and Evidence Based Veterinary Nursing

Year of study 2
Code A5025HF
Credits 10
Core/option Core

Following on from the Level 4 modules this module will help you further develop the skills required to practice EBVN including using current evidence to support nursing care decisions as well as how to create your own evidence.

For assessment, you will undertake a short review of the literature to answer a practice-based query and make recommendations. Alongside this you will, in groups, develop a study design proposal for a piece of primary research.

The skills developed in this module will aim to prepare you for your final year dissertation, as well as further postgraduate study and your future professional career.

Requirements for Professional Registration - Phase 2

Year of study 2
Code A5029HF
Credits 0
Core/option Core

Registered Veterinary Nurses (RVN) perform a varied and integral role within the veterinary team. Completion of this module will allow you to continue to meet criteria for application to enter the register of veterinary nurses held by the Royal College of Veterinary Surgeons (RCVS), the regulatory body, upon completion of your degree.

During the first year, you enrolled with the RCVS as a Student Veterinary Nurse (SVN) and began working towards the Nursing Progress Log (NPL), and the Day One Competences, Skills and Professional Behaviours for Veterinary Nurses. This module will build on these, whilst also preparing you for the sandwich placement and completion of the Objective Structured Clinical Examination (OSCE) in the final year.

Anaesthesia and Theatre Practices

Year of study 2
Code A5007HF
Credits 20
Core/option Core

An important role of the veterinary nurse in practice is working with the veterinary surgeon in the management of anaesthetic and surgical cases. The veterinary nurse will be responsible for implementing anaesthetic protocols, monitoring patients during anaesthesia and recovery, preparing the patient, environment and equipment for surgery and assisting the veterinary surgeon during surgery. Veterinary nurses are also permitted to carry out some minor surgeries under Schedule 3 of the Veterinary Surgeons Act 1966.

This module will provide you with the underpinning knowledge required for this role. It will act as the foundation upon which clinical case experience can be built during your future placement and following qualifications.

Musculoskeletal Dysfunction

Year of study 2
Code HF-VN
Credits 20
Core/option Core

Physical therapy techniques are commonly instigated during the treatment of musculoskeletal and neurological diseases in canine and feline patients. This rehabilitation begins within the veterinary practice, and many veterinary nurse roles involve the delivery of this treatment under the remit of Schedule 3 in the Veterinary Surgeons Act (1966). The veterinary nurse must have a thorough understanding of the underlying pathology of the cases they will be providing treatment and nursing care to, and how these pathologies manifest themselves in changes to structure and locomotion. It is important that the veterinary nurse is knowledgeable of the presenting signs and pathological changes that occur with these clinical cases and how these cases are commonly diagnosed and treated by the veterinary team.

Placement year

Year of study 3
Core/option Core

Read our dedicated Placement Learning pages for information on the many benefits of the placement year.

Veterinary Nursing Dissertation and Academic Skills

Year of study 4
Code HF-VN
Credits 20
Core/option Core

Initially, this module will aim to support your return to studies following your placement year and strengthen the academic skills required for success at level 6.

Following this you will, with support, develop, plan, and undertake your own research project. You will be the driving force of the project and as such will need to work proactively, utilising skills and knowledge developed during your studies, alongside support available, to manage your project effectively and address any challenges encountered.

Your research project will aim to address a research gap related to the veterinary profession and/or your course-specific stream You will document your work in the form of a professional/academic research report, and this will form the assessment for the module.

Collaborative Problem Solving in the Veterinary Industry

Year of study 4
Code HF-VN
Credits 20
Core/option Core

The veterinary landscape is constantly evolving and the context and challenges within practice develop over time. Registered Veterinary Nurses are core members of the Veterinary team and are in an ideal position to contribute to seeking solutions to the challenges faced. This module will take a holistic view of modern-day veterinary practice, seek to identify problems or challenges that future RVNs may encounter, and allow you to work together with your peers, to seek solutions. Alongside this, you will develop your reflective practice and build upon the skills developed at earlier levels, thus enabling you to begin your career as a competent reflective practitioner.

Rehabilitation of the Veterinary Inpatient

Year of study 4
Code HF-VN
Credits 20
Core/option Core

Physical therapy is a rapidly growing area of small animal veterinary practice, with veterinary surgeons recognising the benefits of implementing rehabilitation programmes into the care of their patients. Rehabilitation begins within the veterinary practice, and many veterinary nurse roles include the delivery of treatment, under veterinary direction, and patient discharge clinics requiring them to instruct/guide owners on continuing this care within the home environment.

This module is designed to introduce therapeutic modalities that are commonly used within a veterinary practice setting. It offers a deeper knowledge and understanding on the principles behind modalities, their clinical application and the current evidence base behind their use.

Introduction to Clinical Specialisms in Veterinary Nursing

Year of study 4
Code HF-VN
Credits 20
Core/option Core

Modules at level four and five of the Veterinary Nursing programmes predominately focus on the delivery of Royal College of Veterinary Surgeons (RCVS) Day One Competences and Day One Skills. This module will allow the expansion of skills and knowledge in the areas of anaesthesia, critical care and surgical techniques, and consider new techniques as they are developed within the profession.

Delivery of such skills has the intention of preparing the soon to be registered veterinary nurse with a deeper knowledge of key subject areas allowing for smoother transition into the workplace as a professional person. New graduates should have an awareness of postgraduate additional qualifications, post-nominals and the ability to specialise.

Requirements for Professional Registration - Phase 3

Year of study 4
Code HF-VN3
Credits 0
Core/option Core

Registered Veterinary Nurses (RVN) perform a varied and integral role within the veterinary team. Completion of this module will allow you to meet the criteria for application to enter the register of veterinary nurses held by the Royal College of Veterinary Surgeons (RCVS), the regulatory body, upon completion of your degree.

During the first year two years of study, you enrolled with the RCVS as a Student Veterinary Nurse (SVN), logged placement hours in the Record of Training, and worked towards completion of the Nursing Progress Log (NPL), including the Day One Competences, Skills and Professional Behaviours for Veterinary Nurses. This module will build on these, whilst also culminating in the completion of the Objective Structured Clinical Examination (OSCE).

Optional Modules

Year of study 4
Code HF-VN
Core/option Core

Choose one in term one and another in term two. Further details below.

Equine Nursing and Health

Year of study 4
Code HF-VN
Credits 10
Core/option Option

The equine industry in the UK is both vibrant and valuable, contributing £8bn a year to the economy. With around 1m horses, the sector is the second largest rural employer after agriculture.

There are 30 equine practices with hospital status in the UK and as such the role of the Registered Veterinary Nurse in equine practice is advancing, with more scope for autonomy within the role, to maximise efficiency in practice. This module is intended to support your ability to apply concepts acquired with companion animals to equines and to gain the specific knowledge and skills required to support veterinary nursing of the equine patient.

Exotic Animal Nursing and Health

Year of study 4
Code HF-VN
Credits 10
Core/option Option

The number of the general public opting to own an exotic animal as a pet is increasing. Exotic pets are considered by veterinary professionals to be any animal that is not a domestic species, although many species are firmly established as popular pet choices. With the ownership of such animals increasing, more of these species are being brought into veterinary practices for treatment.

The veterinary nurse needs to understand the conditions that these animals present with, along with

species-specific husbandry to allow nursing of these patients and provision of advice to owners. This module will consider the general health of a variety of exotic animals and the common medical and surgical conditions they can present with and the nurse's role in their care. Knowledge gained on animal husbandry from earlier modules will be consolidated and expanded on to include veterinary-specific care and treatment.

Complementary Therapy

Year of study 4
Code HF-VN
Credits 10
Core/option Option

Complementary therapies present a rapidly growing area of the veterinary industry. The use of many such therapies is now being utilised in a multi-modal approach to care by the veterinary team. Veterinary nurses play a vital role when it comes to discussing treatments and therapies with clients. This requires a clear understanding of the concepts to provide accurate advice.

This module will allow you to develop a clear appreciation of the range of complementary therapies that could be encountered within a veterinary practice environment. Offering an understanding of the clinical application of the therapies provides insight into the intended benefits of each.

Farm Animal Practice for Veterinary Nurses

Year of study 4
Code HF-VN
Credits 10
Core/option Option

Veterinary nurses are equipped with a wide range of skills that can be applied to the care of farm animals. Veterinary nurses may work in mixed practice or undertake a veterinary technician role in large animal practice, this being an increasingly important and recognised role. Veterinary nurses working alongside large animal veterinarians may be expected to communicate knowledgeably with farmers, dispense medicines, perform in-house laboratory testing, arrange disease testing, handle animals and collect samples, along with assisting with large animal surgery, monitoring anaesthesia, neonatal nursing and herd health planning.

This module aims to prepare you with sufficient knowledge of production animal systems, disease and testing to engage with large animal practice and develop your role within it.