



BSc / BSc (Hons) Veterinary Nursing with Companion Animal Behaviour

UCAS code	D313
Institution code	H12
Duration	4 years (full-time) including a one-year work placement. A three year programme is available for applicants with at least two years, full-time relevant work experience.
Start date	September 2021
Accredited by	Royal College of Veterinary Surgeons (RCVS)
Location	Harper Adams University campus (and location of work placement)*

The course

Registered Veterinary Nurses (RVNs) work alongside veterinary surgeons in order to provide a high standard of care for animals. Veterinary Nurses normally work within a veterinary surgery or veterinary hospital and are involved in a wide range of care and treatment.

There are increasing employment opportunities within veterinary nursing and the animal health industry.

Because of the vocational nature of the course, the content is a balance between practical work (vital to gain the necessary experience to become a qualified nurse) and the intellectual skills needed for a degree. You will learn practical skills at Harper Adams via short block release completed during vacations and during the work placement year.

Students on the **Veterinary Nursing with Companion Animal Behaviour** pathway will study diagnosis and treatment of behavioural problems.

Work Experience

Due to the potential difficulties in gaining work experience in a veterinary practice as a result of COVID-19, for 2021 entry, where an applicant cannot get 4 weeks work experience in a veterinary practice, 2 weeks of this can now be undertaken in an animal related setting as an alternative. (At least one week of experience in a practice must be completed before an applicant is considered for an offer) The validity period of experience has also been extended to 3 years, so for applicants for September 2021, we will consider experience gained since September 2018.

Duration

4 years (full-time) including a one-year work placement. A three year programme is available for applicants with at least two years, full-time relevant work experience. Please contact [Admissions](#) for further information on this option.

A-level entry requirements

- Offers tend to be in the region of **96 - 112** UCAS points
- A2 Biology grade **C** (or equivalent) required
- Students should typically be studying **3 subjects at A2 level** to be considered
- Minimum of **5 GCSE's at grade A-C/4** to include Maths, English Language and Science.
- All applicants must have at least two weeks recent experience in a veterinary practice before they can be considered for an offer. It is the responsibility of the student to provide the evidence of the experience when requested. This evidence must include a reference from each practice attended. A total of at least 4 weeks is required overall to meet the work experience element of the entry requirements.
- Overseas applicants please check our [English Language Requirements](#)
- If the practical assessment of the course is taken this must be passed in addition to getting the required grade in A level Biology
- All suitable applicants are expected to attend an interview which will form part of the selection process
- More information about the work experience required for this course can be found by clicking the link below
[Find out more about work experience](#)
- We have developed a range of measures and initiatives to give everyone the best chance to access our undergraduate degree programmes. The main feature of **Access to Harper** is our contextualised offer scheme. A contextualised offer is an offer which is reduced, by one grade or more from the standard entry requirement and is made to those applicants who may have experienced personal circumstances which put them at a disadvantage during their education, such as attending a low achieving school, living in an area of low participation in Higher Education or being a Care Leaver. The aim of this is to make the University more accessible for those applicants who may not have previously thought that they were eligible to apply. We have also introduced reduced entry requirements for those applicants who are over 21 years of age and further initiatives to make the application process easier for those applicants who need it.

To check if you qualify please visit the [Access to Harper](#) page.

Note: Entry Requirements are for guidance only, please check the UCAS website or contact Admissions for further information.

Work placement

To obtain the nursing qualification a minimum of 1800 hours is spent working in a registered veterinary nurse training practice, both as short block release and during the sandwich year. This hands-on experience complements the applied animal health, nursing, business and welfare sciences studied at Harper Adams.

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.

Teaching and learning

What you study

Students on veterinary nursing courses share a common curriculum for the first two years, studying the same modules, before spending their third year on placement. The main focus of the first three years of the

course is to equip students with the day one skills and competences required by the Royal College of Veterinary Surgeons (RCVS) in order to practice as a Registered Veterinary Nurse (RVN). Subjects will include veterinary physiology, professional skills of the veterinary nurse, companion animal management, anaesthesia and surgery, medical nursing, diagnostic imaging and disease diagnosis.

In the final year all veterinary nursing courses will share a number of common subjects such as anaesthesia, critical care and surgical techniques.

The specific Honours pathways will then allow students to specialise in their chosen field of study.

Students on the **Veterinary Nursing with Companion Animal Behaviour** pathway will study diagnosis and treatment of behavioural problems.

For students on the honours degree courses completion of an Honours Research Project will allow them the opportunity to more fully explore an area of veterinary nursing that is of particular interest.

* During the Covid-19 Pandemic the University is delivering blended learning. Government guidance is being constantly reviewed to establish the learning events which can be delivered face to face. Please refer to our [frequently asked questions](#) for further details.

Careers

Veterinary nursing is a career with lots of job satisfaction and there is a strong demand for registered veterinary nurses. Although the majority of RVNs work in general practice there are increasing opportunities for specialisation into different areas, such as patient rehabilitation and companion animal behaviour. Although primarily a companion animal qualification, the degree offers modules for those interested in other species, increasing the job opportunities available upon graduating.

The pharmaceuticals industry employs trained veterinary nurses. The degree also opens the door to wider opportunities concerning the health and welfare of animals.

What will I study?

Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4
Companion Animal Management (A4013C17) 15	Anaesthesia and Surgery (A5018C17) 15	Placement year	Anaesthesia, Critical Care and Surgical Techniques (A6004C17) 15
Fundamentals of Physiology (A4007C17) 15	Animal Medicines (A5017C17) 15		Career Progression (A6009C17) 15
Infection Control in the Veterinary Practice (A4014C17) 15	Clinical Research Methods (A5019C17) 15		Diagnosis and Treatment of Behavioural Problems (A6013-BL) 30
Introduction to Animal Health (A4008C17) 15	Principles and Application of Diagnostic Imaging (A5020C17) 15		Honours Research Project (HRPROJC17) 30
Principles of Veterinary Nursing (A4016C17) 15	Medical Nursing (A5021C17) 15		Options
Professional Skills of the Veterinary Nurse (A4017C17) 15	Nursing Support for Disease Diagnosis (A5023C17) 15		Companion Animal Life Care (A6011C17) 15
Veterinary Physiology (A4019C17) 15	Principles of Animal Behaviour and Welfare (A5008C17) 15		Complementary Therapies (A6012C17) 15
Working as a Veterinary Professional (A4020C17) 15	Professional Practise (A5024C17) 15		Equine Nursing and Health (A6015C17) 15
			Exotic Animal Nursing and Health (A6016C17) 15

Companion Animal Management

Year of study 1
Code A4013C17
Credits 15
Core/option Core
Module contact [Mrs Jennifer Sadler](#)

An understanding of companion animal management practices is essential for working within the animal industry to promote good health and welfare for companion, collection and experimental animals.

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

The module will underpin several modules at Levels 5 and 6 including Companion Animal Studies, and Applied Companion Animal Health, Welfare and Behaviour.

Fundamentals of Physiology

Year of study 1
Code A4007C17
Credits 15
Core/option Core
Module contact [Jim Huntington](#)

This module introduces important anatomical terms and describes the concepts required to understand the processes involved in the functioning of organ systems and the maintenance of homeostasis in vertebrate species, including humans, food producing animals, companion animals and other species addressed within the programmes this module has been validated for. A broad knowledge of normal body structure and functioning provided by this module will be invaluable for students studying modules within the animal related programmes such as *Companion Animal Studies*, *Principles of Animal Health*, and *Animal Disease*

Sciences. For those studying food related programmes the module will be invaluable for the study of Well-being Through the Lifecycle and later modules such as *Advanced Aspects of Nutrition*. This module is designed to be a prerequisite (for some courses) to either *Veterinary Physiology* or *Applied Anatomy and Physiology*.

Infection Control in the Veterinary Practice

Year of study 1
Code A4014C17
Credits 15
Core/option Core
Module contact [Nina Tudor](#)

Maintaining veterinary practice standards in relation to cleanliness and hygiene is an important role of the Veterinary Nurse. All areas of the practice, along with all equipment used for animal treatment need to be clean to prevent disease transmission.

This module will deliver knowledge on the principles of disinfection and sterilisation allowing for application in the working environment. Also covered within will be protocols and policies in relation to maintaining asepsis in the theatre environment and hygiene in all other practice areas.

Introduction to Animal Health

Year of study 1
Code A4008C17
Credits 15
Core/option Core
Module contact [Mrs Helen Cartlidge](#)

Knowledge and understanding of key topics related to animal health, such as causes of disease, how the body responds to disease and preventative health care, are essential for all persons working with animals. This module aims to introduce students to these key topics creating a foundation of knowledge in animal health that can be built on in subsequent modules (follow on modules will vary depending on the individual course being studied).

Principles of Veterinary Nursing

Year of study 1
Code A4016C17
Credits 15
Core/option Core
Module contact [Miss Caroline Bromley](#)

The veterinary nurse has many roles to fulfil in the execution of their daily responsibilities towards patient care. It is imperative that Veterinary Nurses understand the underpinning reasons to general nursing care and can apply this in a practical setting. Nursing care is delivered to a range of species and conditions and the Veterinary Nurse must be aware of when care should be adapted to the patient and the presenting condition.

This module will deliver the underpinning principles of the many daily general nursing and specialised nursing care roles required by Veterinary Nurses.

This module will underpin all of the modules at level 5 and 6 that are specific to veterinary nursing.

Professional Skills of the Veterinary Nurse

Year of study 1
Code A4017C17
Credits 15
Core/option Core

It is essential that veterinary nurses develop their professional skills throughout training. A large part of the veterinary nurse's role in practice is client care, this may include explaining treatments during admit and discharge appointments, demonstrating the care a patient requires to owners, giving preventative advice, and supporting owners in difficult situations such as euthanasia. It is therefore essential the veterinary nurse understands the human/animal relationship and the factors that affect it in order to provide appropriate care to both the patient and owner. The ability to communicate both professionally to colleagues and owners is essential. It is vital veterinary nurses have the knowledge of different methods of communication available so they can adapt quickly to situations they may face in practice.

The veterinary nurse will often be required to assist with procedures which may involve appropriately restraining the patient, not only to ensure the procedure can be performed but also to maintain safety of the patient, members of staff and owners.

This module will facilitate students applying the knowledge gained in other modules to practical situations, preparing them for placement.

Veterinary Physiology

Year of study 1
Code A4019C17
Credits 15
Core/option Core
Module contact [Bethan Pinhey](#)

Please contact the course manager for details of this module.

Working as a Veterinary Professional

Year of study 1
Code A4020C17
Credits 15
Core/option Core
Module contact [Suzanne Edwards](#)

This Module will incorporate Harper Adams University's professional scholarship programme (PSP). The module is designed to enable students to develop the required skills of a student on a higher education programme whilst developing knowledge in core subject areas around the individual's professional practise. It is essential that student's working in a clinical veterinary environment can demonstrate a sound understanding of professional expectations and limitations, and that they can apply knowledge to ensure they are working in a safe and legal environment.

Anaesthesia and Surgery

Year of study 2
Code A5018C17
Credits 15
Core/option Core
Module contact [Elizabeth Gilbert](#)

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 often be required to communicate with owners before and after procedures and will frequently 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 the underpinning knowledge required for this role. It will act as the foundation upon which clinical case experience can be built during future placement and following qualification.

Animal Medicines

Year of study 2
Code A5017C17
Credits 15
Core/option Core

Pharmaceutical agents are used in many different ways in animal health and veterinary medicine, including treatment and control of disease, anaesthesia and pain management, and reproductive management. This module will introduce and discuss the legislative control of veterinary medicines and the principles of pharmacokinetics and pharmacodynamics. This module will also build on the knowledge gained in previous physiology modules to explore the different ways that drugs can affect an animal's physiological function, and treat disease states.

Clinical Research Methods

Year of study 2
Code A5019C17
Credits 15
Core/option Core
Module contact [Mrs Helen Cartlidge](#)

Evidence based veterinary medicine (EBVM) is an area of development within the veterinary sector with greater emphasis now being placed on evidence based patient care. In view of this research skills are important to enable the critical appraisal of published research, and for the development of appropriate study designs to fulfil research objectives.

The skills gained within this module will be valuable to a career within the veterinary profession as well as being essential for the completion of the level 6 research project in the final year.

Principles and Application of Diagnostic Imaging

Year of study 2
Code A5020C17
Credits 15
Core/option Core
Module contact [Suzanne Edwards](#)

This module introduces the different methods of diagnostic imaging that can be used in the veterinary environment 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.

Students will gain an understanding of how the different methods of diagnostic imaging 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 imaging techniques.

Case studies and practical tutorials let students apply their knowledge in preparing and managing diagnostic imaging cases from the veterinary nurse's perspective. Clinical placement allows application of underpinning knowledge and the practical based learning achieved in the university environment.

Medical Nursing

Year of study 2
Code A5021C17
Credits 15
Core/option Core
Module contact [Mrs Helen Cartlidge](#)

In practice, veterinary nurses will be required to nurse patients with a range of conditions. Good knowledge of these medical conditions and the techniques utilised in their treatment is essential to providing appropriate care to patients. This module will develop students understanding of medical conditions introduced in Principles of Veterinary Nursing and Introduction to animal health in the first year and introduce a number key nursing techniques that are commonly implemented in the care of such patients.

Nursing Support for Disease Diagnosis

Year of study 2
Code A5023C17
Credits 15
Core/option Core
Module contact [Susan Howarth](#)

The veterinary nurse has an essential role in providing care and support for patient undergoing diagnostic laboratory based investigations. Veterinary nurses assist the veterinary surgeon in the diagnosis of disease and this module builds on previous material to explore relevant laboratory practice. This module will provide the underpinning knowledge required for these roles.

This module builds on and consolidates the knowledge gained of veterinary nursing in earlier modules and also knowledge and understanding of the pathogens and laboratory diagnostic techniques explored in Introduction to Animal Health and Infection Control in the Veterinary Practice, to consider the biological samples that can be utilised in disease diagnoses.

Principles of Animal Behaviour and Welfare

Year of study 2
Code A5008C17
Credits 15
Core/option Core

Their complex behaviour is one of the main factors that distinguish the Animalia from the other Kingdoms of Life. This module aims to explore the richness and diversity of the behaviour we see in the animal kingdom, considering the various factors that have influenced its evolution. Although there will be an emphasis on the more complex behaviour patterns seen in the higher animals, this module will consider the behaviour of animals in general, and will not focus on just the domesticated species. This diverse approach will help in the understanding of the general principles which underpin the development of the various patterns of behaviour we observe in animals.

Animal welfare is of major concern to those working in the animal industry as well as the general public. In this module, students are encouraged to consider the issues that affect the welfare of many groups of animals such as farm, companion, zoo and research animals. The physiological and behavioural changes which occur when welfare is compromised will be studied and how these may be used to assess an animal's welfare status. The philosophical and ethical considerations of how we use animals will be discussed and an overview is given of the legislation which governs animal welfare across a range of species.

Professional Practise

Year of study 2
Code A5024C17
Credits 15
Core/option Core
Module contact [Suzanne Edwards](#)

Registered Veterinary Nurses are recognised professionals and regulated by the Royal College of Veterinary Surgeons (RCVS). As such, they are expected to adhere to a code of professional conduct and demonstrate fitness to practise in both their working and private lives.

This module takes forward the knowledge on professional requirements delivered in the Level 4 module Working as a Veterinary Professional. It will further explore and critically analyse the professional, legal and ethical issues which veterinary nurses could experience. It is intended to assist individuals to recognise conflicts which may occur whilst practising and to develop skills to manage such situations and guide their decision making.

Good communication skills are essential for the veterinary nurse. Throughout their careers veterinary nurses can expect to deal with a range of educational, complex, difficult and controversial situations. There is the need for these to be dealt with in a logical, sensitive and respectful manner whilst working within professional and legal boundaries. Building on the level 4 module Professional Skills of the Veterinary Nurse where models, types and methods of communication were introduced, this module takes forward these concepts and applies them to a range of situations within the veterinary environment.

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.

Anaesthesia, Critical Care and Surgical Techniques

Year of study 4
Code A6004C17
Credits 15
Core/option Core
Module contact [Elizabeth Gilbert](#)

Modules at level four and five of the veterinary nursing programmes predominately focus on the delivery of RCVS day one competencies and skills. This module will allow 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.

Career Progression

Year of study 4
Code A6009C17
Credits 15
Core/option Core
Module contact [Jane Thomas](#)

Gaining competence in clinical skills is an essential requirement to progress onto and enter the RCVS register of Veterinary Nurses. This module will develop the clinical skills delivered throughout the veterinary nursing programme to date to the level required by the RCVS. Focus will continue on the possible areas of specialism related, but not always directly focused on the veterinary nursing role giving students an insight

of progression into areas of work they may wish to pursue as their career develops.

Diagnosis and Treatment of Behavioural Problems

Year of study 4
Code A6013-BL
Credits 30
Core/option Core
Module contact [Susan Howarth](#)

Domesticated animals can develop behaviours that will be considered by their owners to be problematic. In many cases these "problem behaviours" will be normal behaviours inappropriately expressed. There are many techniques that have been developed over recent years to help the animal behaviourist to treat these conditions and minimise any welfare compromise to the animal and inconvenience to the owner.

This module explores the behavioural states of domestic animals that commonly contribute to behavioural problems and evaluates the range of techniques that can be used to treat them. Consideration of behavioural modification techniques are considered in detail in order to prepare the student to use these techniques when treating behavioural cases. It is vital that students have a reliable understanding and knowledge of the drugs commonly utilised in clinical animal behaviour and these will be discussed in detail with particular reference to inappropriate application and the potential health and safety and legal and moral issues associated with their use. Other techniques used in clinical animal behaviour such as pheromonal, dietary and herbal interventions are also considered in terms of their efficacy, safety and the ethics of their use in order to ensure students are aware of their appropriate and safe use.

Honours Research Project

Year of study 4
Code HRPROJC17
Credits 30
Core/option Core

To qualify for an honours degree a student must demonstrate the capacity for sustained, independent and high quality work. One of the most important vehicles for the demonstration of this capacity, and for developing the necessary skills, is the individual Honours Research Project. Each student will therefore be required to complete such a project under the general supervision of a member of staff and present the results in a project report and in a *viva voce* exam, with two tutors, which will also test to a high level, skills of communication and rational argument. This major exercise represents one-quarter of the final year studies and will therefore have an important influence on the classification of award.

Companion Animal Life Care

Year of study 4
Code A6011C17
Credits 15
Core/option Option
Module contact [Susan Howarth](#)

Veterinary Nurses have a current and potentially expanding role in the preventative health care of companion animals from birth to old age. This module looks primarily at areas where the veterinary nurse can influence the health of dogs and cats by giving appropriate advice and guidance to owners. Many nurses are becoming involved in a range of life stage nurse clinics which cover topics such as parasite control, vaccination, puppy development, nutrition for different life stages and disease conditions and obesity control.

The module will focus on parasite control and nutrition of companion animals. The content and exam format of this module, with registration with the professional body AMTRA, provides the opportunity for a qualified veterinary nurse to become a C-SQP and thus provide POM-VPS and NFA VPS medicines, with the appropriate guidance, to animal owners.

Complementary Therapies

Year of study 4
Code A6012C17
Credits 15
Core/option Option
Module contact [Jane Thomas](#)

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 surgeon. Veterinary Nurses play a vital role when it comes to discussing treatments and therapies with clients. This requires a clear understanding of the concepts in order to provide accurate advice. Application of the therapies provides insight into the intended benefits of each.

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

Equine Nursing and Health

Year of study 4
Code A6015C17
Credits 15
Core/option Option
Module contact [Mrs Victoria Goatman](#)

It is estimated that there are just under 1 million horses in the UK with the equine sectors economic value increasing to 4.3 billion of consumer spending. Veterinary nursing in the equine sector is important and the role of the veterinary nurse in this sector is growing. There are now a small number of specialised equine veterinary nurses (EVN's). This module is intended to support the 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.

- Evaluate the role of management and husbandry in the prevention and control of major equine diseases and disorders.
- Apply the principles of veterinary nursing and care to the equine.
- Appreciate the special needs and challenges of anaesthesia in horses and the equine surgical patient.
- Produce preventative medicine plans, or disease control plans for a variety of disease challenges.

Exotic Animal Nursing and Health

Year of study 4
Code A6016C17
Credits 15
Core/option Option
Module contact [Jane Thomas](#)

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 such as a cat, dog, horse, sheep or pig. 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 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 such as companion animal management will be consolidated and expanded on to include veterinary specific care and treatment.