



Grad Cert Advanced Veterinary Nursing (Behaviour)

Duration 1 year (part time)

Start date September 2027

Accredited by [Royal College of Veterinary Surgeons](#) (RCVS)

Location Online/blended learning and [Harper Adams University campus](#)

This certificate will allow nurses to develop and advance their skills to enable them to assess the impact of external factors and wider environmental influences on the behaviour of veterinary patients.

You will devise appropriate programmes for the prevention of problematic behaviour, utilising the highest professional standards, skills and knowledge to improve the health and welfare of patients.

You will be able to evaluate personal effectiveness and effectively and accurately communicate with peers and clients when supporting patients that require behavioural interventions.

During your studies, you will demonstrate the development of the skills of critical reading, critical thinking and purposeful writing to devise programmes that will improve behavioural outcomes for patients.

The development of the new RCVS post-registration framework has allowed for the creation of accessible, flexible and focused areas of study, allowing veterinary nurses to further their academic skills alongside their professional skills.

A-level entry requirements

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

Accreditation



This course is accredited by the Royal College of Veterinary Surgeons.

How will I be taught?

Delivery will be by a combination of distance learning and optional study days where guest speakers, seminars and practical classes support the modules. A range of distance learning methods will be used, including study notes, email and Harper Adams' interactive virtual learning environment 'The Learning Hub'. Access to a computer and broadband internet is essential.

Modules will be assessed by a range of methods, including assignments end of module examination, and

practical exams. Support in assessment skills is available for those who have not sat an examination recently.

What will I study?

Graduate Certificate

Year 1	
Evidence-based Nursing (A5003HF)	20
Graduate Applied Behaviour for Veterinary Practice (A6004HF)	20
Graduate Interventions for Behavioural Problems (A6005HF)	20

Evidence-based Nursing

Year of study 1
Code A5003HF
Credits 20
Core/option Core
Module contact [Susan Howarth](#)

This module encourages students to develop transferable research skills, including analysis, problem-solving, and communication. These skills will help the student gain an appreciation of research and the ability to access information from a variety of sources. Students will acquire the skills to be able to evaluate literature and to apply relevant and valid research to their current practice.

Students who successfully complete this module will be able to:

- Create a literature review using a variety of sources to produce a research-based report that demonstrates accepted conventions of academic writing.
- Evaluate the validity and relevance of literature in relation to veterinary nursing practice.
- Evaluate and challenge current practice in the light of relevant research evidence.

Graduate Applied Behaviour for Veterinary Practice

Year of study 1
Code A6004HF
Credits 20
Core/option Core
Module contact [Susan Howarth](#)

With pet animal ownership on the increase, there is a growing demand for behavioural advice and support from the veterinary team. Reduction of stress and fear for patients in the practice environment also improves patient outcomes, owner compliance and safety. This module builds and explores the underlying theories and practical approaches commonly used to train and modify behaviour in animals. It is vital for veterinary nurses to have a strong understanding of methods available whilst having an awareness of the implications of these choices for animals in their care and the impact of providing advice to owners.

Students who successfully complete this module will be able to:

- Appraise the theory of animal behaviour and learning.
- Recognise and report on the key behavioural states seen or reported in veterinary practice.
- Evaluate the impact of training techniques and advice with regards to efficacy and potential ethical weaknesses.
- Evaluate and communicate strategies that can be implemented in the practice environment to encourage positive behavioural outcomes.

Graduate Interventions for Behavioural Problems

Year of study 1
Code A6005HF
Credits 20
Core/option Core
Module contact [Susan Howarth](#)

Companion 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 manage and 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 and interventions that can be used to treat them. A range of behavioural modification techniques are considered to provide veterinary nurses with an understanding of when techniques and advice can be given in practice and when referral to a behaviourist may be advisable. 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 reference to inappropriate application and the potential health and safety, 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 be aware of their appropriate and safe use.

Students who successfully complete this module will be able to:

- Evaluate contributing factors for a range of common behavioural problems to include fears, aggression, stereotypies and anxiety related behaviours, pain and medical conditions.
- Understand, apply and evaluate the range of techniques used to treat common behavioural challenges.
- Evaluate the effectiveness of behavioural modification, set goals and respond appropriately.
- Analyse a range of pheromonal, dietary and herbal interventions used in clinical animal behaviour, explain how they differ from psychopharmacological interventions and evaluate the safety, efficacy and reliability of common examples.
- Evaluate the modes of action, appropriate application and constraints of the major classes of drugs used in clinical animal behaviour.