

Veterinary Nursing Careers Crib Sheet for Ambassadors

This crib sheet is intended to help VN School Ambassadors create school talks and sessions and to be used as a summary guide for reference during a session. It should not be distributed as a leaflet.

Standard Entry Requirements for VN training

- You must be at least 16 years old to start training as a VN
- To train as a VN, you must be enrolled as an SVN with the RCVS, have an RCVS enrolment number and date to allow legal completion of certain tasks within practice (schedule 3 procedures for example)
- Disabilities and health issues – You must be able to meet Day One skills and competencies for veterinary nurses ([visit **https://www.rcvs.org.uk/setting-standards/accrediting-primary-qualifications/accrediting-veterinary-nursing-qualifications/**](https://www.rcvs.org.uk/setting-standards/accrediting-primary-qualifications/accrediting-veterinary-nursing-qualifications/) and scroll to the bottom for downloads to find out what these are)

Further Education

- One option to become a VN is to complete a Level 3 Diploma
- For most courses, you will need a minimum of 5 GCSEs at grade C/level 4 and above and must include Maths, English and Science
- Scottish National 5s – 5 at grade A to C (or standard grades at grades 1-3)
- Training can be started after GCSEs or A-Levels (or after a Level 2 Diploma in Animal Management or VCA for example, if someone has relevant GCSEs/grades)
- You may be able to 'earn while you learn' if training is completed as an apprenticeship or employed student
- There is a minimum of 1,800 hours of placement training that must be completed
- During training, typically four days a week is spent at a veterinary practice (needs to be an RCVS approved Training Practice) and one day a week at college doing theoretical work
- Some courses are full-time with block release practice placement
- For part-time courses, the usual process is to gain employment in practice and then apply to college
- Part time courses are a great vocational route for those who wish to get hands-on straight

away, but can be tiring juggling college work with a full-time role and completing training

- Part time courses usually take two to three years
- Some practices pay for the training fees, but if you are over 18 this is less likely to be the case. However, some students are potentially eligible for an 'Advanced Learner Loan' to help fund their studies
- After completing the Level 3 Diploma and entering the register, you can study for additional qualifications including a degree in veterinary nursing

For information on further education institutions offering Veterinary Nursing:

www.rcvs.org.uk/document-library/list-of-rcvs-accredited-further-education-qualifications-in/

Link to list of Training Practices:

www.rcvs.org.uk/lifelong-learning/students/veterinary-nursing-students/approved-training-practices/

Higher Education

- There are several different higher education qualifications that are accredited by the RCVS, ranging from a Level 4 Diploma, Level 5 FdSc or Level 6 BSc/BSc Hons. The length of these courses vary between two to four years
- They normally require A-Levels/highers: you can check individual institutions for entry criteria
- Alternatively, after GCSEs you can complete a Level 3 qualification in Animal Care/Animal Management (or similar) and apply to a university to complete a Foundation Degree (FdSc)
- A lot of universities offering the BSc route, which is usually completed in conjunction with another subject (animal behaviour, bio-veterinary science, rehabilitation etc)
- Subjects are covered in more depth than the Level 3 Diploma and critical thinking is encouraged. There is more time spent on theory compared to an apprenticeship
- Minimum of 1,800 hours placement training is done as one full placement year, day-release or several shorter placement blocks throughout the programme
- Moving to a different area for your course gives you the opportunity to live away from home and experience university student life
- You can apply for a student loan for financial help
- It is rare for a SVN placement student to be salaried by practice
- If you complete the FdSc there may be the opportunity to continue studying and achieve a BSc (Hons). Students joining the register after completing the FdSc can work as an RVN while studying for the BSc if they wish

For information on HE institutions offering veterinary nursing:

www.rcvs.org.uk/document-library/list-of-rcvs-accredited-higher-education-qualifications-in/

Work Experience before starting the course

- It is recommended (in some cases compulsory) to complete various work experiences prior to application to a course or employment in a practice
- For an 'advantage', it is also desirable to complete your work experience with as many species as possible
- Courses normally require a minimum of two weeks in a veterinary practice, but this will differ between employers/colleges and university

Advice on gaining a job or work placement

- Develop a good quality CV
- Gain as much work experience as possible in practice. Some areas you might cover in your work experience are kennels, cattery, livery yard, stables, farms, lambing, calving, abattoir, animal physiotherapy, hydrotherapy, aviary and exotic pet shop
- Try to get references that you can submit alongside an application and keep a log of your experience so you can discuss them at future interviews
- Develop relationship with your practice by speaking to nurses and asking them questions
- Read as many veterinary publications and magazines as you can

Day-to-Day Tasks (refer to Wordcloud resource for prompts)

Salary

Tends to start at £18-20k for qualified veterinary nurses and mostly increases with experience/qualifications/practice type/type of role

Continuing Professional Development

- RVNs must undertake 15 hours of CPD per year
- CPD could be funded as part of employment package or undertaken through free courses, webinars and other work-based CPD opportunities
- Undertaking CPD gives you the chance to continually expand your skills in a multitude of disciplines including minor surgery, dentistry, pet bereavement, medicine and nutrition
- There are opportunities for development in niche area/s
- You can also complete further qualifications and specialise in certain areas

Additional job opportunities:

- Head/deputy head nurse
- Surgical/theatre nurse
- Medical (consulting) nurse
- Practice manager
- Animal behaviour
- Hydrotherapy/physiotherapy
- Teaching/Lecturer
- Sales representative – veterinary drugs or pet food
- Research
- Laboratory work
- Educational quality assurance roles
- Pet insurance claims assessor

Additional training and qualifications may be required for many of these roles.

Further useful links

RCVS, veterinary careers:

<https://animalowners.rcvs.org.uk/veterinary-careers/>

BVNA

<https://bvna.org.uk/careers/>