

Introduction

1. Veterinary nursing students represent the future of the veterinary nursing profession and as such, are expected to conduct their studies according to the standards expected of the profession. The Royal College of Veterinary Surgeons (RCVS) sets and monitors these standards and publishes appropriate guidelines. In addition, it stipulates the procedures to be followed where individuals fall short of expectations. Veterinary nursing students are also subject to the guidelines and procedures set by Aberystwyth University during the duration of the FdSc Veterinary Nursing programme.
2. There are four major, complementary standards set by the RCVS to which veterinary nursing students must conform, namely the 'Day One Competences', the 'Day One Skills', the 'Professional Behaviours and Attributes' and 'Fitness to Practise'. The first three relate to the knowledge, skills and attributes that students must demonstrate on graduation. The RCVS defines competence as 'the ability to perform the roles and tasks required by one's job to the expected standard'. Fitness to Practise refers to the manner in which students demonstrate that they can practise their profession properly, in both their professional and private lives.
3. Aberystwyth University (AU) also has a Fitness to Practise policy, which has a protocol applying to all relevant courses as well as programme-specific procedures. This document outlines the procedures specific to the FdSc Veterinary Nursing programme, which is aligned to the three RCVS standards and the AU policy.

Guiding Documents

4. Students are required to familiarise themselves with the following documents, which will be used by the AVS in implementing Fitness to Practise policies.
 - i. RCVS:
 - [Day One Competences](#)
 - [Day One Skills](#)

- [Professional Behaviours and Attributes](#)
- [Fitness to Practise](#)

ii. AU:

- [Aberystwyth University Fitness to Practise](#)

5. [The RCVS Code of Professional Conduct for Veterinary Nurses](#) outlines the ‘professional responsibilities of veterinary nurses, who are expected to ensure the health and welfare of animals committed to their care and to fulfil their professional responsibilities, by maintaining five principles of practice’:
1. Professional competence
 2. Honesty and integrity
 3. Independence and impartiality
 4. Client confidentiality and trust
 5. Professional accountability

AVS Procedure

6. There is no complete list of behaviours that may result in a concern regarding a student’s fitness to practise, however the policy may be implemented in any of the following cases:
- i. Where an animal is deemed to be at risk
 - ii. Where the health and safety of the student, colleagues or the public were deemed to be at risk
 - iii. Where the behaviour of the student (in education or in private life) is deemed to bring the profession into disrepute
 - iv. A serious or repeated concern about the student’s ability to practise after graduation
7. Where a member of AVS staff, or anyone else, is made aware of concerns relating to a student’s fitness to practise, the matter will be formally discussed with the Head of School, or delegated nominee, who will decide on one of the following options:
- i. No further action to be taken

- ii. A meeting to be held with the student and a programme of remedial action implemented
 - iii. The matter to be referred to the AU Registry for potential investigation under its Fitness to Practise policy.
- 8. The Head of School or delegated nominee will keep a record of the incident, including any material provided by the staff member, notes of any meetings and reasons for the decision reached of further action, if any.
- 9. The Head of School or delegated nominee may consult with the personnel from the AU Registry, Faculty staff, training practice staff or anyone else that might assist in reaching a decision and/or progressing the matter.
- 10. If a meeting is to be held between the student and the Head of School or delegated nominee, the student will be informed in writing and invited to attend. The student will also be invited to bring a fellow student or student representative.
- 11. If the matter is to be referred for investigation by the AU Registry, the student will be informed of the matter either by the Head of School or relevant AU staff member involved in Fitness to Practise administration. The composition of the Fitness to Practise panel has the option to include an external professional specialist, for FdSc Veterinary Nursing students, this would be a registered veterinary nurse (RVN) or veterinary surgeons (MRCVS UK practising) familiar with the RCVS policy on Fitness to Practise.
- 12. Depending on the outcome of the investigation, the RCVS veterinary nursing department will be notified.