Skills England

Standard Draft Preview

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Standard in development
L2: Veterinary Care Assistant
Version 2.0

Title of occupation

Veterinary Care Assistant

UOS reference number

ST1446

Core and options

No

Level of occupation

Level 2

Occupational maps data

Route: Agriculture, environmental and animal care
Pathway: Animal Care and Management
Cluster: Animal care and welfare assistant

Typical duration of apprenticeship

12 months

Resubmission

No

Would your proposed apprenticeship standard replace and existing framework?

No

Does professional recognition exist for the occupation?

No

Regulated occupation

Is this a statutory regulated occupation?

No

Occupational summary

This occupation is found in a veterinary practice, hospital or within welfare centres who have on-site veterinary facilities.
The size and type of the employer can vary from small independent to larger national practices, animal charities, and welfare organisations. Practices can be primary care or referral, and could provide species specific, or mixed species veterinary care.

The broad purpose of the occupation is to support with the provision of the health and welfare needs of patients and assist with veterinary treatments and procedures.

Typical tasks may include assisting and supporting with patient monitoring and providing care, preparing and maintaining the veterinary environment and relevant equipment, and

liaising with external stakeholders.

Veterinary care assistants need a flexible approach and may have to work out of hours or assist with emergency care. Their working hours can include weekends and unsociable hours due to the 24/7 nature of veterinary care.

In their daily work, an employee in this occupation interacts with all members of the veterinary team. This will include interaction with receptionists, practice managers and support staff.
They will work under the direction of registered veterinary nurses and registered veterinary surgeons to prioritise the health and welfare requirements of a variety of patients with diverse needs. They may work with members of the public and external partners such as paraprofessionals, animal charities, rehabilitators and other veterinary practices.

When undertaking their duties they will make decisions within their scope of practice and role whilst adhering to legal, ethical, and professional practice.

Typical job titles

Patient care assistant (pca) **Veterinary care assistant**

Veterinary care support (vcs)

Are there any statutory / regulatory or other typical entry requirements?

No

Occupation duties

DUTY	KSBS
Duty 1 Maintain biosecurity throughout the veterinary environment.	K1 S1
Duty 2 Apply the basic principles of veterinary anatomy and physiology.	K2
Duty 3 Assist in the provision of general medical care to patients under the direction of registered veterinary professionals.	K3 K4 K5 K6 K7 S2 S3 B1 B4
Duty 4 Support with the care of patients pre, peri and post-surgery, including examinations, procedures and treatments.	K8 K9 S4 S5 S6
Duty 5 Support with patient-centric handling and movement throughout veterinary care activities.	K10 S7
Duty 6 Maintain patient records as per data protection requirements and veterinary practice policy.	K11 S8
Duty 7 Follow emergency veterinary care procedure for patients.	K12 K13
Duty 8 Follow current legislation, standard operating procedures, and workplace policies relevant to veterinary practice.	K14 S9 B3 B5
Duty 9 Adopt sustainable practices.	K15 S10
Duty 10 Work independently and in a multidisciplinary team within scope of practice.	K16 S11 B2

Duty 11 Communicate appropriately with animal guardian, clients and the multidisciplinary team.	K17 K18 S12 S13 S14
Duty 12 Support with the management of veterinary medicinal products in line with current legislation.	K19 S15
Duty 13 Support with end-of-life care processes.	K20
Duty 14 Prepare, maintain and store veterinary practice equipment and consumables.	K21 S16
Duty 15 Prepare, maintain and support with the use of common diagnostic equipment.	K22

KSBs

Knowledge

K1: The principles of biosecurity and infection control within the veterinary environment.

K2: Structure and function of all major body systems, including cells and tissues, body cavities, musculoskeletal, respiratory, circulatory, lymphatic, digestive, excretory, integument, nervous, endocrine and reproductive.

K3: Species-specific care and husbandry including breed characteristics and the five domains; nutrition, environment, health, behaviour and mental health.

K4: Normal and abnormal species-specific behaviour, in relation to health, disease, pain, life stage and nursing care.

K5: The importance of monitoring and recording health and welfare in patients, including pain management, body condition scoring, wound management and preventative health care.

K6: Common conditions and disorders and the application of anatomy and physiology.

K7: Commonly used veterinary terminology and abbreviations.

K8: Admission and discharge processes.

K9: Species-specific care of patients undergoing surgery, examinations, procedures and treatments, including support of routine sedation and anaesthesia, recovery protocols and handovers.

K10: Species specific moving and handling techniques relevant to the situation to promote a stress-free experience.

K11: The organisation's policies and procedures for record keeping in line with relevant legislation.

K12: Legal requirements for the provision of animal first aid emergency treatment.

K13: The triage process for commonly occurring first aid emergencies.

K14: Current legislation, standard operating procedures, and workplace policies to maintain health and safety, promote own well-being, animal welfare, ethical practice and environmental protection.

K15: Awareness of sustainable approaches within the workplace and how individuals can contribute.

K16: The scope of professional and personal limitations, roles and responsibilities within the multidisciplinary team and how to escalate concerns.

K17: Communication styles, methods and modalities within the team and how to contribute to multidisciplinary team working.

K18: Communication methods and styles for dealing with animal guardians and clients in a variety of situations, and when to refer to senior members of the team.

K19: Awareness of current veterinary medicines legislation and working within the dispensary area.

K20: Processes for end-of-life care.

K21: Processes for preparing, cleaning, disinfecting, sterilising, setting up, maintaining and storing veterinary practice equipment and consumables.

K22: Basic diagnostic equipment including laboratory and imaging.

Skills

S1: Maintain and apply biosecurity measures within the veterinary environment.

S2: Assist with species-specific husbandry requirements.

S3: Assess, record and report normal and abnormal species-specific behaviour, health and welfare.

S4: Assist with the admission or discharge of patients.

S5: Assist with the care of patients pre, peri and post operatively.

S6: Assist with the care of patients undergoing examinations, procedures or treatments.

S7: Handle and move patients according to their species and situation.

S8: Assist with the maintenance of records in accordance with the organisation's policy and relevant legislation.

S9: Work in a way that, promotes animal welfare, protects the environment and maintains health and safety.

S10: Promote sustainable practices in the workplace.

S11: Work within professional and personal limitations and scope of the veterinary care assistant role.

S12: Collaborate and work within the veterinary team.

S13: Apply different communication styles and methods when working within a multidisciplinary team.

S14: Apply different communication styles and methods when dealing with animal guardians and clients in a variety of situations.

S15: Assist within the dispensary area in line with current legislation.

S16: Prepare, clean, disinfect, sterilise, set up, maintain and store veterinary practice equipment and consumables.

Behaviours

B1: Animal welfare-focused, showing respect and empathy for animals in their care.

B2: Takes ownership of work and has a willingness to learn.

B3: Foster safe working practices to ensure safety of self and others.

B4: Has a strong work ethic and conducts themselves in a professional and ethical manner.

B5: Works co-operatively and collaboratively, embracing equity, diversity, civility and inclusion.

Qualifications

English and maths

English and maths qualifications must be completed in line with the apprenticeship funding rules.

Does the apprenticeship need to include any mandated qualifications in addition to the above-mentioned English and maths qualifications?

No

Consultation

The consultation took place in June 2025 for approximately 2 weeks.

The trailblazer group included a range of stakeholders from national employers, representatives for independent veterinary practices, charities, providers and awarding/end point assessment organisations.
This group of representatives has included multi-species and species specific such as equine as their input has been invaluable to ensure that the standard remains accessible and relevant to all across the diverse veterinary settings across the profession.

Overall, the feedback was very positive.

The feedback received was reviewed and actioned where appropriate. Some examples of feedback are:

- Duty 2: we added the word basic to add clarity.
- K3: 'Species-specific is very broad. This should be clarified.' Action – This was purposefully kept broad so that it can be delivered across different organisations with different species. No action.
- Updated some of the wording across the corresponding knowledge and skills to ensure they fully aligned.

The feedback received supported that stakeholders are keen to see this new apprenticeship in place.

Progression routes

ST0343 Veterinary nurse - v1.1 (retired) L3

Learners could progress onto the level 3 Veterinary nurse apprenticeship or a regulated qualification such as a level 3 diplomas in veterinary nursing.

Supporting uploads

Mandatory qualification uploads

Mandated degree evidence uploads

Professional body confirmation uploads

Subject sector area

3.3 Animal care and veterinary science