

RCVS Professional Behaviours for Veterinary Nurses

These behaviours will be developed during the course of a student's veterinary nurse's training in accordance with the RCVS Day One Competences and Skills for Veterinary Nurses.

1. Be fully conversant with, and adhere to the *RCVS Code of Professional Conduct*

2. Understand the professional, ethical and legal responsibilities of the veterinary nurse in relation to patients, clients, society and the environment

This includes recording and reflecting on professional experience and taking measures to improve performance and competence

Practise in accordance with the RCVS Code of Professional Conduct

Professional competence

Honesty and integrity

Independence and impartiality

Client confidentiality and trust

Professional accountability

Use professional standards of practice to self-assess performance

15. Demonstrate that they recognise, and work within, personal and professional limits, and know how to seek professional advice, assistance and support when necessary

16. Demonstrate a commitment to lifelong learning and professional development, both personal and as a member of a profession actively engaged in work-based learning. This includes recording and reflecting on professional experience, both in the academic and practice setting, and taking measures to improve performance, competence and confidence.

Recognise and work within personal limits

Seek advice, assistance and support when necessary

Manage time effectively

Identify one's own professional development needs by engaging in, and on, practice and lifelong learning

Develop a professional development plan (personal, professional and organisational needs)

Contribute to creating a climate conducive to learning

Skills scale

Professional behaviours and attitudes descriptors	Practice Level 1	Practice Level 2	Practice Level 3	Practice Level 4	Level 5
RELIABLE and ADAPTABLE APPLICATION OF KNOWLEDGE and SKILLS	Struggles with confidence or competence to complete simple nursing tasks. Doesn't adapt well to changing situations.	Able to carry out simple tasks but often lacks the knowledge and confidence to complete tasks competently. Slow to adapt to changing situations.	Often completes tasks competently but lacks the confidence to do this in a consistent way without guidance. Sometimes struggles with changing situations.	Is confident and competent to complete the required nursing tasks and has the ability to apply theory to practice. Adapts well to changing situations.	Comprehensive knowledge and skills often exceeding requirements for level of study. Adapts well to changing situations and often takes the lead.

WORKS WITHIN LEGAL and ETHICAL LIMITS	Does not understand or appreciate the requirement for supervision and does not take instruction well. Unaware of own limitations in work.	Sometimes has difficulty following instructions or working under supervision. Limited knowledge of the RCVS Code of Professional Conduct.	Usually follows procedures and works as instructed. Usually adheres to the RCVS Code of Professional Conduct.	Always conforms to approved procedures. Adheres to the RCVS Code of Professional Conduct and understands their professional responsibilities.	Uses and adapts approved procedures. Fully aware of the RCVS Code of Professional Conduct and promotes understanding within the veterinary team.
DEMONSTRATES INITIATIVE and ABILITY TO SELF REFLECT	Needs constant prompting and guidance. Lacks confidence or ability to self-reflect.	Hesitant to do things on their own. Often needs encouragement to develop suitable improvement strategies.	Developing confidence to work without guidance and needs little prompting to reflect and consider required improvements.	Confident in their abilities but can recognise their own limitations and implement appropriate improvement strategies as required.	Promotes self-reflection within the veterinary team and encourages personal and professional development.
ABILITY TO ORGANISE OWN TIME and WORK	Unable to plan or organise own work and often not adhering to scheduled shifts, or does not make themselves available when needed.	Limited ability to plan or organise own work but completes tasks as requested.	Able to plan and organise own work with assistance, but is not always mindful of wider team requirements.	Able to plan and organise their own time and work. A proactive and supportive member of the team who can be relied upon.	Promotes effective time management techniques to assist the smooth running of the practice.

COMMUNICATION SKILLS	Struggles to communicate effectively, both verbally and in writing, and tends to avoid communicating with clients and colleagues.	Attempts to communicate effectively but often requires prompting to ensure the correct message is conveyed.	Demonstrates adequate and timely communication which requires little prompting.	Communicates effectively and efficiently, both verbally and in writing, and actively contributes to discussions, acting as an advocate for their patients.	Promotes alternative and diverse communication strategies within the veterinary team.
ATTITUDE to FEEDBACK and GUIDANCE	Struggles to accept and action constructive feedback in a meaningful way.	Accepts constructive feedback but is slow to show improvement.	Accepts constructive feedback and considers improvements, whilst not always addressing the matter.	Accepts and addresses constructive feedback in a meaningful way.	Always shows positive and proactive responses to guidance and feedback.
DEMONSTRATES PROFESSIONAL ACCOUNTABILITY	Appears to be unable to take ownership for actions and does not understand the need to admit to mistakes.	Struggles to take ownership for actions and requires support and guidance to understand accountability.	Shows increasing ability to take responsibility. Recognises mistakes but does not always address these appropriately.	Takes responsibility and ownership for their actions. Recognises areas for improvement and addresses this accordingly.	Readily accepts responsibility and encourages promotion of accountability within the veterinary team.
CONSIDERATION OF PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT	Seems unmotivated to learn or participate in clinical discussions and does not appear to reflect on their own practice.	Asks questions when prompted, but interest is generally focused on limited areas of practice, with little awareness of reflective requirements.	Actively questions areas of practice but struggles to reflect on their own capabilities in these areas.	Shows an intelligent interest in their personal and professional development. Asks good, relevant questions, and utilises the opportunity to reflect on their own practice.	Participates in all opportunities to improve practice. Reflects on their own work, implementing suggested outcomes where appropriate.
MAINTAINS A PROFESSIONAL and CLINICAL APPEARANCE	Does not follow practice protocol with regard to appearance. Struggles with their personal hygiene or maintaining a professional image.	Occasionally untidy in appearance or professional image. Sometimes adheres to the practice protocol with regard to appearance.	Usually tidy in appearance, professional image. Mostly adheres to the practice protocol with regard to appearance.	Always adheres to practice protocols with regard to appearance and consistently maintains a professional image.	Always presents a professional appearance acting as a professional role model.

UNDERSTANDING AND AWARENESS OF OWN WELLBEING	No understanding of the impact of emotional factors on themselves and does not appear to recognise signs of mental and physical stressors.	Little understanding of the impact of emotional factors on themselves. Can recognise basic signs of mental and physical stressors, but is unsure of how to address these.	Some understanding of the impact of emotional factors on themselves. Can recognise common signs of mental and physical stressors, but requires guidance to be able to address these.	Understands how emotional factors may impact upon themselves. Can recognise signs of mental and physical stressors and be aware of how to mitigate these and where to seek further guidance.	Consideration of the impact of emotional factors on themselves and others and promotion of an inclusive environment with reference to support mechanisms for the veterinary team.
ABILITY TO WORK AS PART OF THE VETERINARY TEAM	Does not appreciate the roles and responsibilities of the veterinary team and does not understand the remit of the SVN or their own limitations.	Little appreciation of the roles and responsibilities of the veterinary team, but has some awareness of the remit of the SVN.	Some appreciation of the roles and responsibilities of the veterinary team, with a good awareness of the remit of the SVN and how they contribute to the veterinary team.	Appreciates the roles and responsibilities of the veterinary team and understands and values their contribution to it.	Promotes the roles and responsibilities of all members of the veterinary team, acting as an advocate for the veterinary nursing profession.