

Unit 11: Understand the Principles of Animal Nursing

Unit code:	M/600/9404
QCF Level 3:	BTEC National
Credit value:	10
Guided learning hours:	60

● Aim and purpose

This unit aims to provide learners with an understanding of the principles of animal nursing and how these can be put into practice. This unit is primarily aimed at learners within a centre-based setting looking to progress into the sector or to further education and training.

The aim of this unit is to provide the learner with the knowledge and skills to carry out routine patient care and follow procedures within veterinary practice.

The learner will also gain knowledge of relevant legislation and be able to advise practice clients regarding the use of dispensed medications.

● Unit introduction

Veterinary nurses need a wide variety of skills and knowledge, from practical animal handling, knowledge of illnesses, medication and patient monitoring to customer care and dealing with bereavement. This unit provides an overview of the full range of requirements for the veterinary nurse role, giving learners an insight into the profession.

The unit focuses on nursing techniques and equipment, surgery design, the roles and responsibilities of those involved in the veterinary practice and effective customer care. Learners will be involved in a range of practical simulations, taught sessions and industry visits.

On completion of the unit learners will be able to carry out basic nursing techniques, evaluate specific equipment and surgery designs and deal with clients effectively in a variety of situations.

Learners will investigate the legislation governing veterinary practices and veterinary nurses in order to understand the role of a veterinary nurse and other practice employees in relation to this legislation.

Throughout the unit learners will be made aware of safe practices relating to staff, clients and animal welfare, as well as the impact the practice may have on the environment.

● Learning outcomes

On completion of this unit a learner should:

- 1 Be able to care for an in-patient
- 2 Understand veterinary practice procedures and equipment
- 3 Understand veterinary practice design and layout
- 4 Understand the principles of client care in veterinary practice.

Unit content

1 Be able to care for an in-patient

In-patients: health checks (eyes, ears, mucus membranes, body condition, anus, genitals); signs of health; signs of ill-health; neonates; geriatrics; post-operative patients

Monitoring techniques: temperature, pulse, respiration (TPR); record keeping; first aid and bandaging techniques; administering medication (oral, topical, aural, anal)

Skills and techniques: handling and restraint for veterinary procedures (companion animals, equine, exotics and large animals, consultation, administering medication, vaccination, anaesthesia); handling and restraint equipment (collar, lead, crush cage, towel, personal protective equipment PPE); health and safety; risk assessment

2 Understand veterinary practice procedures and equipment

Veterinary procedures: isolation and barrier nursing; anaesthesia; laboratory procedures; nursing of medical disorders (eg catheterisation, obstetric and paediatric nursing); assisted feeding techniques, fluid therapy; surgical procedures and theatre practice, radiography, sterilising

Nursing equipment: x-ray; magnetic resonance imaging (MRI); microscope; anaesthetic equipment; health and safety; current relevant legislation

Staff roles and responsibilities: veterinary surgeons, veterinary nurses, practice managers and office staff, lay staff; training and career development; record keeping and administrative practices including reception duties (eg surgery bookings, vaccination reminders, appointments, consent forms, sales, stock control); regulatory bodies – Royal College for Veterinary Surgeons (RCVS), British Veterinary Nursing Association (BVNA), British Veterinary Association (BVA), British Small Animal Veterinary Association (BSAVA)

Legislation: health and safety legislation eg Control of Substances Hazardous to Health (COSHH) Regulations 1998, Health and Safety at Work Act 1974, Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations (1995); veterinary legislation Data Protection Act 1998, Medicines Act 1968, Misuse of Drugs Act 1971, Protection of Animals Act 1911, Anaesthetics Act 1964, Animals (Scientific Procedures) Act 1986, Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981, Veterinary Surgeons Act 1966 including Schedule 3

3 Understand veterinary practice design and layout

Design requirements: reception, consulting room, theatre, prep-room, dispensary, isolation, kennel/cattery, nurses room, x-ray room, disabled access, office, storage space; appropriate layout, building eg small animal hospital, converted and purpose built practice, specialist practices, approved training centres; efficiency of use and visual impressions; access and location; aspects of surgery design and layout which relate to the recovery of a patient

Surgery maintenance: health and safety considerations; maintenance for hygiene reasons including ventilation; radiation considerations and isolation facilities; waste disposal including clinical waste and cadavers; chemicals, medicines and sharps; cleaning and disinfection including the effect the surgery may have on the environment

4 Understand the principles of client care in veterinary practice

Customer care: clientele and advice; admittance and release procedures; veterinary referral; routine and emergency situation techniques; euthanasia management and client counselling; nursing clinics; dealing with complaints; professionalism; personnel conduct; appropriate communication methods including body language, tone of voice; health and safety

Assessment and grading criteria

In order to pass this unit, the evidence that the learner presents for assessment needs to demonstrate that they can meet all the learning outcomes for the unit. The assessment criteria for a pass grade describe the level of achievement required to pass this unit.

Assessment and grading criteria		
To achieve a pass grade the evidence must show that the learner is able to:	To achieve a merit grade the evidence must show that, in addition to the pass criteria, the learner is able to:	To achieve a distinction grade the evidence must show that, in addition to the pass and merit criteria, the learner is able to:
P1 carry out general health checks on an in-patient	M1 describe the health and safety considerations when handling and restraining animals for veterinary procedures	D1 compare the in-patient care of neonates and geriatrics
P2 carry out in-patient monitoring techniques [IE]		
P3 handle and restrain animals for veterinary procedures in a way that complies with relevant legislation and minimises stress and injury		
P4 evaluate the use of specific equipment for veterinary practice procedures	M2 describe the procedures for providing fluid therapy and barrier nursing	D2 compare values and responsibilities of staff in given animal care practices
P5 explain the roles of staff in a veterinary practice		
P6 explain current relevant legislation for veterinary practices		
P7 design a veterinary practice to include health and safety factors [CT]	M3 compare specified types of veterinary practice	
P8 evaluate features of veterinary practice design and layout with regard to patient care and recovery		
P9 discuss the impact of veterinary practices on the environment		

Assessment and grading criteria		
To achieve a pass grade the evidence must show that the learner is able to:	To achieve a merit grade the evidence must show that, in addition to the pass criteria, the learner is able to:	To achieve a distinction grade the evidence must show that, in addition to the pass and merit criteria, the learner is able to:
<p>P10 discuss the different situations which may occur between veterinary practice staff and clients</p>	<p>M4 explain the importance of good customer care in the veterinary practice.</p>	<p>D3 evaluate the impact of body language and tone of voice when dealing with clients.</p>
<p>P11 evaluate how to deal with different situations involving veterinary practice clients and their pets. [SM]</p>		

PLTS: This summary references where applicable, in the square brackets, the elements of the personal, learning and thinking skills applicable in the pass criteria. It identifies opportunities for learners to demonstrate effective application of the referenced elements of the skills.

Key	IE – independent enquirers	RL – reflective learners	SM – self-managers
	CT – creative thinkers	TW – team workers	EP – effective participators

Essential guidance for tutors

Delivery

Delivery of this unit will be through practical and written assessments, visits to suitable animal collections and will link to work experience placements.

Tutors could use a wide range of delivery techniques, including lectures, discussions, seminar presentations, site visits, supervised practical sessions, internet and library-based research and personal and/or industrial experience. Delivery should stimulate, motivate, educate and enthuse learners.

Work placements at veterinary surgeries and/or other animal nursing environments should be monitored regularly to ensure the quality of the learning experience. It would be beneficial if learners and supervisors were made aware of the requirements of this unit before any work-related activities, so that naturally occurring evidence can be collected at the time. For example, learners may have the opportunity to use basic animal nursing skills and they should be encouraged to ask for observation records and/or witness statements as evidence of this.

Whatever delivery methods are used, it is essential that tutors stress the importance of animal welfare, accurate nursing techniques and the need to manage resources.

Health and safety issues relating to working close to chemicals, and hazardous substances and equipment must be reinforced regularly, and risk assessments must be undertaken before practical activities and visits take place.

Tutors should consider integrating the delivery, private study and assessment for this unit with other relevant units and assessment instruments learners are taking as part of their programme of study.

Outline learning plan

The outline learning plan has been included in this unit as guidance and can be used in conjunction with the programme of suggested assignments.

The outline learning plan gives **an indication of the volume of learning it would take the average learner** to achieve the learning outcomes. It is **indicative and is one way of achieving the credit value**.

Learning time should address all learning (including assessment) relevant to the learning outcomes, regardless of where, when and how the learning has taken place.

Topic and suggested assignments/activities and/assessment
Introduction and overview of unit.
Theory session: health checking of in-patients.
Practical application of health checking.
Theory session: monitoring the in-patient.
Practical application of monitoring techniques.
Discussion of how techniques vary depending on the life stage of the patient.
Assignment 1: Dealing with In-patients (P1, P2, D1)
Theory session: handling and restraining.
Undertake practical handling and restraining.
Assignment 2: Care of Specific Patients (M1, P3)

Demonstration to develop learner understanding of routine veterinary procedures.
Theory session: emergency veterinary procedures.
Discussion of specialist veterinary equipment.
Assignment 3: Using Veterinary Equipment (P4, M2)
Discussion of staff roles and responsibilities in a veterinary practice.
Guest speaker to discuss staff roles in a veterinary practice with learners.
Assignment 4: Veterinary Practice – Roles and Responsibilities (P5, P6, D2)
Research organisations which relate to the veterinary practice.
Theory session: legislation relating to the veterinary practice.
Assignment 5: Practice Design and Layout (P7, P8, P9, M3)
Visit veterinary surgeries to examine layout and design.
Discussion of veterinary surgery design and its effect on patient recovery.
Investigate the effect of practice design on maintenance and the environment.
Assignment 6: Customer Care (P10, P11, M4, D3)
Discuss and demonstrate effective customer care.
Evaluate the effect of customer care on the practice.

Assessment

For P1 and P2, learners must care for a specified in-patient correctly. The scenario should be identified by the tutor to ensure fairness of complexity for all learners.

For P1, learners must carry out detailed health checks and assess all areas listed in the unit content. Evidence may be in the form of a witness testimony or authenticated video.

For P3, learners must demonstrate correct handling and restraining techniques on a minimum of three animals. The tutor should specify the situations ensuring the level of complexity is the same for all learners. Evidence of assessment may be a witness testimony, video evidence or annotated diagrams.

For P4, learners are required to evaluate the veterinary equipment and procedures used in specified situations. The tutor should specify the situations which must include surgical nursing, anaesthesia and radiography. Evidence could be a written report, presentation or group discussion.

For P5, learners must explain fully the roles of all veterinary staff employed in a specified veterinary practice. The tutor should specify the situations ensuring the level of complexity is the same for all learners. Learners should include legal requirements and regulating bodies. Evidence could be a case study, presentation or written report.

P6 requires learners to explain the current legislation relevant to veterinary practices. Learners must cover all the unit content. Evidence may be a presentation, completion of a table, group research or a group discussion. Any group evidence must make explicit each individual's contribution.

P7 involves learners designing their own veterinary practice and explaining how their practice aids the recovery of the in-patient. The practice must be designed for a specific situation, which will be identified by the tutor. The design must clearly show the layout, ensuring all rooms listed in the unit content are covered. Learners should also explain the features which maximise patient recovery and meet legal requirements. It is expected that learners will produce a diagram of their design and then either annotate or present the additional information.

For P8, learners need to evaluate the features of a veterinary surgery design and layout with regard to patient care and recovery. Where possible, learners should comment on a practice they have visited directly or explain how their own design (P7) promotes patient recovery and care.

For P9, learners are required to discuss the impact of a veterinary practice on the environment. Where possible learners should comment on a practice they have visited directly or explain how their own design (P7) promotes sustainability and environmental considerations.

P10 requires learners to identify the range of situations which may occur in the veterinary practice involving staff and clients. Each of these situations should then be discussed with detailed explanations of how the situations can best be dealt with. Evidence can be provided in the form of a role play, group discussion or completed table.

P11 requires learners to evaluate how to deal with the different situations which may occur in the veterinary practice involving staff and clients identified in P10. Evidence can be provided in the form of a role play, group discussion or completed table.

For M1, learners should describe the health and safety considerations when handling and restraining animals for veterinary procedures. The evidence should link directly to P3.

For M2, learners should describe the procedures for providing fluid therapy and barrier nursing correctly. Evidence may take the form of a pictorial presentation, practical simulation or written report.

For M3, learners should compare a minimum of two different types of veterinary practice in relation to efficiency of work space, energy efficiency and their effect on the environment. Evidence could be a poster, a detailed table, a presentation or a written report.

For M4, learners should explain the importance of good customer care in the veterinary practice, including the consequences of poor customer care. The evidence could be a group discussion or written report.

For D1, learners are required to compare the in-patient care of neonates and geriatrics. Learners should cover handling and restraining as well as monitoring techniques and administering medication. Evidence could be in the form of written reports, cases studies or practice protocols.

For D2, learners need to compare the roles and responsibilities of staff in two different training practices. Evidence could be in the form of group discussions or a written report.

For D3, learners are required to evaluate how body language and tone of voice can affect communication with clients in the veterinary practice. Evidence could be in the form of simulations, demonstrations or written reports.

Programme of suggested assignments

The following table shows a programme of suggested assignments that cover the pass, merit and distinction criteria in the grading grid. This is for guidance and it is recommended that centres either write their own assignments or adapt any Edexcel assignments to meet local needs and resources.

Criteria covered	Assignment title	Scenario	Assessment method
P1, P2, D1	Dealing with In-patients	While working in a veterinary practice you are required to demonstrate correct handling, health checking and monitoring of a selected in-patient. All findings must be recorded and the importance of these findings explained. You should also explain why these techniques may vary when caring for neonates and geriatrics.	Witness testimonies and practical observations. Video evidence.
P3, M1	Care of Specific Patients	Identify the key signs of ill health. in three species For one of these animals you must select one illness and fully describe the signs and symptoms of the disease. You must also compare and contrast the different care required for neonates and geriatric animals.	Observation records. Witness statements. Recorded Q&A session.
P4, M2	Using Veterinary Equipment	Working in a veterinary practice requires the ability to use specialised equipment. You are required to evaluate the use of a specific piece of equipment, as specified by your tutor.	Annotated diagram. Written report. Presentation.
P5, P6, D2	Veterinary Practice – Roles and Responsibilities	Using a specified veterinary practice, identify the roles and responsibilities of the employees and then create a job description suitable for a veterinary nurse.	Written report.
P7, P8, P9, M3	Practice Design and Layout	Based on a given scenario design the layout of the veterinary practice, to include the features which impact on the environment and also an evaluation of the features which affect patient care and recovery.	Annotated diagram. Written report.
P10, P11, M4, D3	Customer Care	A vital aspect of working in a veterinary practice is dealing with clients. Discuss the range of situations which may occur between veterinary staff and clients and evaluate how to deal with each situation effectively.	Simulation. Role play. Group discussion. Written report.

Links to National Occupational Standards, other BTEC units, other BTEC qualifications and other relevant units and qualifications

This unit forms part of the BTEC land-based sector suite. This unit has particular links with:

Level 2	Level 3
Contribute to the Nursing of Animals	Element AC17.1 Assist in the sale of medicines and treatments for animals Element AC17.2 Provide information to customers seeking advice about symptoms and over-the-counter medications
Undertake Work-related Experience in the Land-based Sector	Understand and Promote Animal Health
	Undertake Animal Handling and Safe Working
	Undertake and Review Work-related Experience in the Land-based Sector
	Business Management in the Land-based Sector

Essential resources

Tutors delivering this unit should be qualified and experienced veterinary nurses.

Ideally they should have recent industrial experience within veterinary nursing or show evidence of regular contact with veterinary nursing and/or technical updating.

Learners will need access to medical and surgical instruments and general veterinary equipment as well as theatre equipment, diagnostic equipment and facilities.

Sufficient library resources should be available, including a biological dictionary, a veterinary dictionary and a variety of textbooks on healthcare, animal handling, medical and surgical nursing, practice management, theatre practice, anaesthesia, radiography, pharmacology and veterinary practice. Multiple copies of veterinary nursing textbooks would be useful plus a range of British Small Animal Veterinary Association manuals. Technical books must be up to date.

Employer engagement and vocational contexts

This unit gives an overview of animal nursing and the veterinary practice and will give learners an insight into a career in veterinary nursing and practice management.

Centres are encouraged to create and develop links with local veterinary practices and this should involve guest speakers from a range of practices as well as visits to practices to give learners the opportunity to evaluate differences between practices.

Where possible, learners should witness practical applications of the procedures and equipment listed in the unit content.

Indicative reading for learners

Textbooks

Lane D and Cooper B – *Veterinary Nursing, 3rd Edition* (Butterworth-Heinemann, 2003)
ISBN 9780750655255

Moore M – *Manual of Veterinary Nursing* (British Small Animal Veterinary Association, 1999)
ISBN 9780905214504

Journals

Practice Nurse

Veterinary Nursing

Veterinary Record

Websites

British Small Animal Veterinary Association www.bsava.com

British Veterinary Association www.bva.co.uk

Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs www.defra.gov.uk

Royal College of Veterinary Surgeons www.rcvs.org.uk

Delivery of personal, learning and thinking skills (PLTS)

The following table identifies the PLTS opportunities that have been included within the assessment criteria of this unit:

Skill	When learners are ...
Independent enquirers	exploring different in-patient care techniques
Creative thinkers	planning and designing the layout of the practice
Self-managers	taking into account people's emotional state when dealing with clients.

Although PLTS opportunities are identified within this unit as an inherent part of the assessment criteria, there are further opportunities to develop a range of PLTS through various approaches to teaching and learning.

Skill	When learners are ...
Independent enquirers	researching the care of neonates and geriatric animals discussing euthanasia of animals
Team workers	discussing staff roles and responsibilities working together to handle, restrain and monitor animals
Self-managers	meeting deadlines set for assignment work
Effective participators	participating in group discussions on the use of equipment and the signs of ill health.

● Functional Skills – Level 2

Skill	When learners are ...
ICT – Find and select information	
Select and use a variety of sources of information independently for a complex task	using the internet to research appropriate monitoring techniques using the internet to research the roles of organisations relating to the veterinary practice
ICT – Develop, present and communicate information	
Enter, develop and format information independently to suit its meaning and purpose including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • text and tables • images • numbers • records 	producing a job description producing written assessments using ICT
Mathematics	
Select and apply a range of skills to find solutions	measuring temperature, pulse and respiration
Draw conclusions and provide mathematical justifications	comparing temperature, pulse and respiration results to the norm and commenting on differences
English	
Speaking and listening – make a range of contributions to discussions and make effective presentations in a wide range of contexts	taking part in group discussions on euthanasia
Reading – compare, select, read and understand texts and use them to gather information, ideas, arguments and opinions	reading and summarising information on the use of veterinary equipment
Writing – write documents, including extended writing pieces, communicating information, ideas and opinions, effectively and persuasively	completing written assignments on the care of in-patients and staff roles and responsibilities evaluating the use of specialist equipment.