

FITNESS TO PRACTISE GUIDANCE

Registered veterinary nurses (RVN) must have the skills, knowledge, character and health to practise their profession safely and effectively and student veterinary nurses (SVN) will be expected to work towards this goal from day one of their training.

RVNs are regulated by the Royal College of Veterinary Surgeons (RCVS). Central Qualifications (CQ) would expect the training provider to address any fitness to practise concerns in their learners.

Fitness to practise may involve issues outside of professional or clinical performance. The conduct of an RVN or SVN outside of their working environment may involve fitness to practise where it could affect the protection of the public, animal welfare or undermine public confidence in the profession.

Learners on veterinary nursing courses have to complete their training within a classroom environment and a work placement where they are required to demonstrate development in certain professional behaviours and attitudes. The RCVS have developed a framework which indicates the minimum level (4) which they expect the learner to achieve by the time they apply to register as a veterinary nurse. This framework is designed to help develop and encourage the learner in order that they are ready to enter the register as a professional and it can be used to help address issues during a learner's training, or at least to start a conversation and to commend good behaviour. You will find this framework on the CSL and it will require collaboration between the training provider and the placement location provider in order to complete this with the learner.

If an RVN's or SVN's fitness to practise is impaired (i.e. negatively affected) it means there are concerns about their ability to practise safely and effectively. This may mean that they should not practise at all.

The RCVS have developed a Fitness to Practise Guide for educators and student veterinary nurses, which CQ would expect all training providers to follow. <https://www.rcvs.org.uk/news-and-views/publications/fitness-to-practise-a-guide-for-uk-providers-of-veterinary/>

As a minimum, training providers must have a Fitness to Practise Policy with the following areas detailed:

- What is Fitness to Practise?
- Fitness to Practise concerns (e.g. protection of the public, compliance with relevant legislation, the reputation of the profession etc.)
- How Fitness to Practise concerns are managed
- Information made available to students (principles, behaviours, concerns)
- Procedures in place for managing investigations (SVN support, fair processing, notifying RCVS and CQ of any criminal conviction that may affect registration as a qualified VN, this includes any convictions which occur whilst the SVN is on programme)

The Code of Professional Conduct for Veterinary Nurses can be found using the link below: <https://www.rcvs.org.uk/setting-standards/advice-and-guidance/code-of-professional-conduct-for-veterinary-nurses/>

In any instance, or for clarification, you can always chat with one of the team at CQ.

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