

# Nottingham Trent University

## Course Specification

### Basic Course Information

1	Awarding Institution:	Nottingham Trent University
2	School/Campus:	School of Animal, Rural & Environmental Sciences / Brackenhurst Campus
3	Final Award, Course Title and Modes of Study:	FdSc Veterinary Nursing Full time
4	Normal Duration:	Full Time (3 years)
5	UCAS code:	D312

### 6 Overview and general educational aims of the course

The FdSc Veterinary Nursing course will provide you with grounding in essential veterinary nursing skills enabling you to take a problem solving approach to the care of healthy and sick animals. We have a purpose built, simulated practice with adjoining animal unit containing a wide variety of species.

The core of the syllabus follows the standards set by the Royal College of Veterinary Surgeons (RCVS); this is to ensure that when you have successfully completed the assessments and online Nursing Progress Log (NPL), you will be eligible to enlist as a qualified veterinary nurse. Registration with the RCVS enables you to undertake the veterinary care and treatment of animals as stipulated in the Veterinary Surgeons Act 1966 Schedule 3.

The course covers essential scientific principles including anatomy and physiology, behaviour, health and disease, nutrition and pharmacology. The course develops your essential practical nursing skills, ensuring a high standard of communication and handling skills.

As well as the underpinning knowledge provided by the University, you will gain practical experience at a veterinary practice. It is here that you will complete your RCVS Day One Competencies and Skills (DOC and DOS). We will help and support you during this time with tutorials.

The course will help you to develop a range of transferable skills to prepare you for employment or further study. It will foster a spirit of independent learning, enquiry and

continuing professional development. The course is vocational in nature with strong links to veterinary training practices and will provide a registerable qualification in veterinary nursing.

A combination of theoretical and practical studies ensures that both your knowledge and understanding along with your technical skills are developed throughout the course.

You will also have the opportunity to attend Continuing Professional Development (CPD) days throughout the course as well as the NTU VN Congress with visiting speakers lecturing on a variety of topics.

There will be fieldtrips to visit specialist veterinary practices to gain insight into the role of the RVN.

In summary, the course aims to:

- Produce qualified veterinary nurses with the necessary knowledge, skills and attributes to take up responsible positions within the animal industry;
- Provide opportunities to develop a problem-solving approach to the welfare and care of healthy and sick animals;
- Develop students' understanding of the fundamental principles of animal anatomy and physiology;
- Develop students' vocational skills in order to enable them to meet the RCVS requirements to become a qualified veterinary nurse;
- Provide opportunities for students to develop transferable skills that will support personal, academic, career development and continuing professional development;
- Attract high calibre students irrespective of race, background, gender or physical ability from the UK or overseas.

## 7 **Course outcomes**

Course outcomes describe what you should know and be able to do by the end of your course if you take advantage of the opportunities for learning that we provide.

**Knowledge and understanding.** By the end of the course you should be able to:

- Demonstrate awareness of the roles of self and others within a clinical environment **(B, GA)**;
- Apply knowledge and understanding of subjects underpinning veterinary nursing, to a holistic approach to patient care, using evidence based practice **(B, GA)**;
- Collect, organise, analyse, evaluate and interpret information and communicate findings in a coherent manner **(B,GA)**;
- Demonstrate knowledge of relevant ethical and legal obligations and practise veterinary nursing in accordance with the Code of Professional Conduct **(B)**;
- Apply knowledge of health and safety to manage and control risk in the workplace **(B)**;

**Skills, qualities and attributes.** By the end of the course you should be able to:

- Demonstrate competence in essential veterinary nursing skills **(B)** ;
- Apply a problem-solving approach to holistic veterinary nursing care **(B)**;
- Effectively communicate a sense of care, responsibility and empathy to patients and their owners respecting client diversity **(B, GA)**;
- Demonstrate a professional attitude and a high standard of professional behaviour, communication and team work **(B, GA)**;
- Enhance professional practice through reflection on personal performance and demonstrate the application of reflection in your continual professional development **(B, GA)**.

**(B)** indicates those outcomes that take into account relevant QAA benchmarks Veterinary Nursing

**(GA)** indicates the qualities and skills expected of NTU graduates

## 8 Teaching and Learning Methods

In the majority of modules, your teaching and learning is centred on lectures and practical classes, supported by group exercises, seminars and simulation. Group exercises are focused around problem solving and generally support the academic content of lectures. Seminars are more student-led than lectures and will help you to develop your communication and collaborative working skills. Lectures, group work and seminars all help to develop your subject knowledge and understanding.

Practical classes emphasise acquiring competence in a range of fundamental laboratory and communication techniques relevant to veterinary nursing, including the ability to safely handle a wide range of animal species. Simulation and role playing will be important in developing effective communication styles needed in veterinary practice.

You will spend a minimum of 2100 hours in a veterinary training practice learning the practical aspects of the role that have been taught in theory at the University. The work-based nursing progress log (NPL) will assess this practical learning and will be an integral part of the course.

The course emphasises independent learning as an outcome and it is structured to facilitate greater learner autonomy by the final year. In the first year particular attention is paid to support teaching and learning, whilst during the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> year there is far greater emphasis on independent learning and practical application. At all levels of the course you will be encouraged to undertake independent reading to supplement and consolidate what is being taught.

The Brackenhurst campus features a purpose built animal unit containing representatives from all five vertebrate groups. You will benefit from access to the unit for practical handling classes and observational studies on topics such as behaviour and nutrition. The building also contains the simulated veterinary practice where you will carry out role play and simulation exercises. The unit contains: reception area, consultation room, dispensary, laboratory area, X-ray and dark room facilities, hospitalisation kennels, preparation area, sterilisation area and an operating theatre.

The delivery of the course is enhanced by the use of external professional staff, either as visiting speakers or through visits to a range of animal establishments. This ensures that your learning is continuously enhanced through exposure to real world perspectives and will help you to contextualise your learning.

## 9 **Assessment Methods**

The course uses a variety of assessment techniques to ensure that you can demonstrate the range of learning outcomes. Subject knowledge and understanding are mainly tested through assignments, reports, projects, presentations and unseen tests/examinations. These also assess a range of transferable skills, including confidence in written and oral communication.

Knowledge acquisition at levels 4 and 5 is assessed by a combination of practical and written assessments and unseen written tests, but at each level there are individual assignments and reports to encourage independent thought.

Additionally you will complete the Veterinary Nursing DOS NPL. This is used to develop essential veterinary nursing DOC within the workplace.

As well as formal assessments, the course includes a number of formative and diagnostic assessments – through these staff will provide you with more informal feedback on your progress and development.

The course embeds the RCVS Veterinary Nursing standards into the FdSc to enable you to become a qualified Veterinary Nurse. For you to be eligible to achieve these standards you need to pass the DOS in Veterinary Nursing (equivalent to NVQ level 3). This will take 2100 hours of work experience in an approved training practice (TP) which allows you to gain experience and skills, evidenced in your NPL.

It is only qualified veterinary nurses that may register on the RCVS List of veterinary nurses which then entitles them by law to undertake a range of veterinary treatments and procedures on animals under veterinary direction (Schedule 3 of the Veterinary Surgeons Act 1966 or commonly called Schedule 3 work). Only registered nurses are entitled to use the post-nominal letters 'RVN'. When you successfully graduate with the FdSc Veterinary Nursing qualification you will be eligible to register as a VN.

There is a fall-back award of FdSc Animal Health Studies if for any reason you do not achieve the RCVS required elements. No element of assessment or module grade can be compensated for the FdSc VN course as they relate to the RCVS elements of assessment.

<b>Award</b>	<b>Standard</b>	<b>Standard</b>	<b>Standard</b>
FdSc Veterinary Nursing	>2100 hours work placement in TP	Complete 100% NPL	Achieve a Low Third and over in NTU assessments

## 10 Course structure and curriculum

The course is studied on a full-time (3 years) basis.

The RCVS DOC forms the core of the modules with extra subjects included to enhance that knowledge. As well as developing subject specific knowledge, understanding and skills the course is designed to help you to develop key transferable skills that will be important to you as you prepare for employment work or further study.

You are required to complete a minimum of 2100 hours work placement in a veterinary training practice. We will help you to arrange work at a chosen practice for time periods of between 5 and 44 weeks to enable you to complete your NPL. If you do not complete your NPL you will not be able to become a registered qualified veterinary nurse.

<b>Timing</b>	<b>Placement in TP</b>
Year 1: March – April	222 hours (approx. 6 weeks based on a 37 hour week)
Between years 1 and 2: June – September	370 hours (approx. 10 weeks)
Year 3: June – May	1628 hours (approx. 44 weeks)
<b>Total hours</b>	<b>2200 hours</b>

Once you have successfully completed the FdSc course, you have the opportunity to continue to BSc (Honours) Veterinary Nursing Science Top up course.

## **FdSc Veterinary Nursing**

### **Level 4 (year 1)**

Practice Administration and Communication Skills (20 credit points)

Applied Functional Anatomy (20 credit points)

Essential Veterinary Nursing Skills (80 credit points)

### **Level 5 (year 2)**

Application of Veterinary Nursing Care (80 credit points)

Theatre Practice and Diagnostic Aids (40 credit points)

### **Year 3**

Learning in the work place to achieve the requirements below:

#### Industry Placement Award

You will undertake the industry placement and be eligible for a Placement Diploma in Professional Skills award if you:

- a) Satisfactorily complete at least 2100 hours of supervised work experience;
- b) Receive satisfactory reports from the placement tutor and/or workplace supervisor in respect of the competencies or learning outcomes or experience gained;
- c) Completed a satisfactory NPL;
- d) Successfully pass the scenario based practical skills assessment.

It is essential for you to achieve this award as the NPL and time spent in practice is a mandatory requirement by the RCVS.

#### **Interim Awards**

If you do not progress to the final stage you may receive a Higher Certificate in Animal Health Studies.

## **11 Admission to the course**

### **Entry requirements**

For current information regarding all entry requirements for this course, please see the course information web page.

## **12 Support for Learning**

The combination of an idyllic rural setting and friendly dedicated staff results in an atmosphere which generations of students have come to appreciate. We are proud of the excellent support and guidance that we offer students throughout their time with us.

There is an induction programme (including IT and library use and an introduction to the animal and veterinary nursing unit) which provides all the essential information about the course and the support we provide for your learning. During induction you will receive a detailed course handbook and this will be followed by individual information packs for each of the modules which you will study. All of this information is also accessible online via the University's Virtual Learning Portal (NOW).

Ongoing support is provided through the tutorial system. You will be allocated a personal tutor who will monitor your progress on an individual basis and provide academic and pastoral support. Support for students on the course is acknowledged as excellent by both students and external examiners.

Personal development planning is a structured and supported process which will encourage you to reflect upon your own learning, performance and/or achievement and plan for your personal, educational and career development. Tutorial sessions at both levels will provide you with opportunities to engage with this process.

The library and other learning resources (animal & veterinary nursing unit, laboratories, IT) are continually reviewed and updated to ensure that they are fit for purpose. Library and IT support is provided during tutorial sessions at both levels, and additional study guides are available in the library.

The University Central Student Support Services offer a range of general, specialist and professional support services for students, and have a centre based at the Brackenhurst campus. Additional learning support is available for students with specific learning needs such as dyslexia.

Specialist careers advice is provided by the University Careers Service, and is also incorporated into tutorials at levels 4 and 5. Guest speakers, visits and the work placements also utilise the expertise of employers. In addition, industrial advisory committee meetings give you the chance to liaise with staff in relevant careers and provide valuable opportunities for you to meet employers and identify the skills which industry needs.

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**13 Graduate destinations/ employability**

Potential employers were asked to contribute to the development of the course outcomes and content at its inception and the team has contacts with industry representatives with whom they consult on a regular basis.

Veterinary Nurse graduates are well-placed for entry into a variety of careers within the animal industry. Potential areas for employment particularly include work in veterinary practices, hospitals and universities. In addition to these there are opportunities in wildlife

parks, zoological collections, welfare organisations, governmental departments and feed companies, as well as work as behaviour consultants or animal trainers. Alternatively, you may decide to use your degree as a progression route to further study, often onto the final year of a BSc honours course. Lastly, should you decide to change direction at the end of your studies, your skills as a science graduate would qualify you for entry into a variety of alternative professions.

Regular consultation with employers ensures the continued relevance of the curriculum to employment opportunities. Industrial liaison committee meetings are one way in which such consultation is carried out, and also provide valuable opportunities for to meet employers and identify the skills which industry needs.

#### 14 **Course standards and quality**

There are well established systems for managing the quality of the curriculum within the School.

- Induction questionnaires, mid-year reviews, end-of-year reviews, module feedback questionnaires and School end-of-year questionnaires are all used to gather feedback from you on your learning experiences.
- An external examiner submits an annual report on the standards and quality of the course.
- Termly course committee meetings, attended by student representatives and academic staff, provide an opportunity for you to raise any issues relating to the course.

The outcomes of all the above inform an annual course standards and quality report, which includes an action plan for the following year. The action plan provides a focus for the course team and the School, and is monitored through the course committee to ensure that the action loops are closed and there are no outstanding issues. In this way, you are updated on the actions taken in response to issues raised previously and have the opportunity to feed back to staff on the impact of any changes made.

In addition to these formal systems, tutorials provide a more informal means of gathering student feedback and enable staff to address issues as soon as they arise.

Industrial advisory committee meetings have an important role in the enhancement of standards and quality. The involvement of employers in this way ensures that course

development is grounded in reality and reflects a balance between academic and vocational themes.

The subject benchmarks of the Quality Assurance Agency have been incorporated into the course's learning outcomes.

As part of the University's quality management and enhancement processes all Schools are reviewed as part of a 6-year School review cycle. This took place in June 2015 and the outcome was extremely positive.

The RCVS will re-accredit NTU as a veterinary nursing centre every 5 years. This took place in September 2015.

#### 15 **Assessment regulations**

This course is subject to the University's Common Assessment Regulations (located in its [Academic Standards and Quality Handbook](#)). Any course-specific assessment features are described below:

The award classification is calculated using 80% of the aggregate mark for Level 5 and 20% contribution from the aggregate grade at Level 4.

#### 16 **Additional Information**

Collaborative partner(s):	Royal College of Veterinary Surgeons (RCVS)
Course referenced to national QAA Benchmark Statements:	Veterinary Nursing and Foundation Degree.
Course recognised by:	RCVS
Date this course specification approved:	September 2015
Any additional information:	