

Graduate Day-1 Competencies

Companion Animal Veterinary Nursing

(Diploma Level 6)

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Overall Notes

The Day One Competencies in this document list the set of related knowledge, and attitudes that enables an individual to practice as a Companion Animal Veterinary Nurse in a range of situations and/or contexts. The graduate demonstrating these competencies should have adequate knowledge, understanding and technical skills to meet each *Performance Standard*, in each of the *Graduate Competencies* listed below. An indicative curriculum has been developed as a guide for programmes but has not been included in this consultation as it is the Performance Standards that will be regulated and therefore require feedback. An indication of the content in each Performance Standard has been provided to assist with interpretation of these.

Legislative Limits & Scope of Practice

The term *companion animal veterinary nurse (VN)* describes a veterinary professional who holds a formal qualification with that title. In the course of their work, they should act with professional accountability, and have certain autonomy to make care decisions for their patients within the legislative limits allowed in New Zealand. Most VNs work under the direction of, or in collaboration with, a veterinarian in the provision of animal healthcare. This includes but is not limited to support personnel in animal facilities, veterinary clinics, farms, or any other area where animal husbandry, management, and healthcare are provided.

Using this Document

These competencies are written with a primary structure aimed at a graduate of the diploma in veterinary nursing. Each competency that follows is introduced using a section called *About this competency* which describes it in brief and clear terms for the benefit of the end user. The *Performance Standard* in each competency describes what the VN must be able to do as a new graduate and are broad to allow flexibility for regulatory enforcement of educational standards.

These competencies represent a graduate at the start of their career. Competence is a relative term and increasing levels of competence will be expected throughout the professional's career. New graduates are likely to need more time to perform some functions without supervision and guidance, and therefore support and direction from more senior colleagues should always be available.

Graduate Competency 1 - Clinical Governance

About This Competency

The companion animal veterinary nurse can competently apply knowledge of clinical governance to ensure a high standard of animal welfare in the safe and effective delivery of animal healthcare.

Performance Standard	Indication of content
1. Apply knowledge of clinical governance to veterinary practice	A. Relevance and value of clinical governance to veterinary practice, optimal patient outcomes, and a positive professional identity
2. Apply knowledge of clinical effectiveness in the context of clinical governance	A. Principles of patient-centred care that is inclusive of clients B. Principles of reflective practice C. Evaluation of scientific evidence D. Principles of evidence-based practice E. Basic principles of clinical auditing
3. Apply knowledge of quality improvement processes in the context of clinical governance	A. Importance of developing a quality and safety culture in the clinical environment B. Principles of quality improvement processes and risk management
4. Apply knowledge of the engaged effective workforce, organisational systems, and clinical processes	A. Roles and responsibilities of the veterinary team B. Teamwork and communication C. Professionalism of animal healthcare careers D. Training and education
5. Apply knowledge of the importance of community, consumer, and client engagement	A. Relationship-centred care and client engagement

Graduate Competency 2 - Professional Practice

About This Competency

The companion animal veterinary nurse can competently apply knowledge of professional practice to ensure a high standard of animal welfare in the safe and effective delivery of animal healthcare.

Performance Standard	Indication of content
1. Apply knowledge of professional identity	A. Professional identity
2. Apply knowledge of professional conduct, standards, and success in the workplace	A. Professional standards and conduct B. Professional presentation C. Skills for the workplace D. Personal success
3. Apply knowledge of legislative guidelines, organisational systems, and clinical processes	A. Practice in compliance with industry legislation and standards B. Practice in compliance with Health and Safety at Work Act 2015 and industry standards C. Practice in compliance with medical recordkeeping legislation and industry standards D. Practice in compliance with clinical waste management legislation and industry standards
4. Apply knowledge of sustainable veterinary communities	A. Concepts of environmental, economic, and social (personal and professional) sustainability and their interconnectedness B. Consideration of future-focused industry aims C. Principles of social sustainability, self-care, and management of compassion fatigue D. Concepts of environmental and economic sustainability related to the delivery of animal healthcare
5. Demonstrate the ability to apply the principles of Te Tiriti o Waitangi to veterinary nursing practice	A. Principles of Te Tiriti o Waitangi B. Application to veterinary nursing practice

Graduate Competency 3 - Anatomy & Physiology

About This Competency

The companion animal veterinary nurse can competently apply knowledge of basic animal anatomy & physiology to ensure a high standard of animal welfare in the safe and effective delivery of animal healthcare. Must include cats, dogs, equine and ruminants.

Performance Standard	Indication of content
1. Identify and describe basic anatomy physiology of animal species	A. Animal Cells B. Anatomical components and functions C. Homeostasis D. Directional terms
2. Apply knowledge of basic anatomy and physiology to management of animals	A. Variations of anatomical structures and functions for relevant animal species in terms of their management

Graduate Competency 4 - Microbiology & Infection Control

About This Competency

The companion animal veterinary nurse can competently apply knowledge of microbiology and infection control to ensure a high standard of animal welfare in the safe and effective delivery of animal healthcare. Must include cats, dogs, equine and ruminants.

Performance Standard	Indication of content
1. Apply knowledge of fundamentals of veterinary microbiology	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A. Knowledge of pathogens relative to animal health and infection control B. Modes of contamination, identifying risks associated with exposure to body fluids, infectious agents, fomites, vectors, zoonoses, and nosocomial infections. C. Mechanisms by which microorganisms cause disease, common immunological methods and chemotherapeutic methods used to combat these mechanisms, including evaluation of the importance of antimicrobial drug resistance, and anthelmintic resistance.
2. Apply knowledge of effective infection control principles in an animal husbandry, animal management, or animal healthcare setting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A. Knowledge and application of infection control in an animal husbandry, animal management, or animal healthcare setting B. Knowledge and application of indications and use of disinfectants.
3. Apply knowledge of effective isolation procedures for infectious animals	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A. Knowledge and application of standard isolation precautions for infectious patients B. Knowledge of transmission-based isolation precautions for infectious patients
4. Apply knowledge of effective antisepsis principles in an animal healthcare setting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A. Knowledge and application of asepsis in an animal healthcare setting

Graduate Competency 5 - Animal Learning & Communication

About This Competency

The companion animal veterinary nurse can competently apply knowledge of animal learning and communication to ensure a high standard of animal welfare in the safe and effective delivery of animal healthcare. Must include cats, dogs, equine and ruminants.

Performance Standard	Indication of content
1. Apply knowledge of animal communication, and learning	A. External factors that influence an animal's behaviour B. Internal factors that influence an animal's behaviour C. Animal pain and distress D. Animal communication E. Animal learning

Graduate Competency 6 - Pharmacology

About This Competency

The companion animal veterinary nurse can competently apply knowledge of pharmacology to ensure a high standard of animal welfare in the safe and effective delivery of animal healthcare. Must include cats, dogs, equine and ruminants.

Performance Standard	Indication of content
1. Demonstrate knowledge of pharmacology	<ul style="list-style-type: none">A. Legislation and standards relating to medicating animalsB. Pharmacodynamics and pharmacokinetics for a range of medicationsC. Dispensing medicationsD. Client communication in relation to dispensing.E. Pharmacy management - stock/inventory control, disposal of medications.
2. Apply knowledge of pharmacology to nursing animal patients	<ul style="list-style-type: none">A. Dispense medicationsB. Administer medicationC. Monitoring clinical signs of patients receiving medication

Graduate Competency 7 - Companion Animals and Their Care

About This Competency

The companion animal veterinary nurse can competently apply knowledge of the care of animals to ensure a high standard of animal welfare in the safe and effective delivery of animal healthcare.

Performance Standard	Indication of content
1. Demonstrate knowledge of a range of animals/species*	A. Domestic animals B. Identification of animals
2. Apply knowledge of optimal housing and environment for a range of species*	A. Domestic environment B. Facilities C. Transportation RANGE for each includes but is not limited to social needs of animals, environmental enrichment, welfare, and safety needs, following animal welfare legislation.

*Refer to qualification for species.

Graduate Competency 8 - Companion Animal Behaviour, Handling & Restraint

About This Competency

The companion animal veterinary nurse can competently apply knowledge of animal behaviour and training to ensure a high standard of animal welfare in the safe and effective delivery of animal healthcare.

Performance Standard	Indication of content
1. Apply knowledge of low stress/fear free animal handling and restraint techniques	A. Knowledge of animal communication, behaviour and learning is applied to provide optimal low stress handling B. Low stress handling techniques to optimise health & safety, and animal welfare C. Pros and cons of restraint aids in terms of health and safety and animal welfare
2. Apply knowledge about preventing and addressing behaviour problems	A. Preventing behaviour problems B. Addressing behavioural problems

Graduate Competency 9 - Companion Animal First Aid, Trauma Care

About This Competency

The companion animal veterinary nurse can competently apply knowledge of emergency and trauma care to ensure a high standard of animal welfare in the safe and effective delivery of animal healthcare. All aspects of this competency may be simulated.

Performance Standard	Indication of content
1. Apply first aid outside of a clinical environment	A. Basic life support B. Telephone first aid
2. Apply emergency processes in a clinical environment	A. Knowledge of common animal emergencies B. Emergency processes C. Working as a team in an emergency D. Knowledge of advanced life support

Graduate Competency 10 - Companion Animal Disease and Immunology

About This Competency

The companion animal veterinary nurse can competently apply knowledge of animal diseases and immunology to ensure a high standard of animal welfare in the safe and effective delivery of animal healthcare.

NB: Practical diagnostic tests including collection of samples, testing and interpretation are in the diagnostics competency. The diagnostic tests used and why are included in this competency.

Performance Standard	Indication of content
1. Apply knowledge of medical conditions of the body systems	A. Apply knowledge of anatomy and physiology to pathogenic processes of diseases B. Response to exotic, emerging and notifiable diseases
2. Apply knowledge of parasitic diseases	A. Apply knowledge of anatomy and physiology to pathogenic processes of parasitic disease B. Treatment, control, and prevention of common endo and ectoparasites within New Zealand
3. Apply knowledge of immunology and immunisation	A. Apply knowledge of components and functions of the immune system during immune challenge B. Principles of vaccination

Graduate Competency 11 - Companion Animal Nutrition

About This Competency

The companion animal veterinary nurse can competently apply knowledge of nutrition of animals to ensure a high standard of animal welfare in the safe and effective delivery of animal healthcare.

Performance Standard	Indication of content
1. Apply knowledge of nutrients and digestibility	A. Digestive physiology B. Essential nutrients
2. Apply knowledge of feeding animals	A. Nutrient requirements of animals B. Dietary analysis, composition C. Principles of companion animal feeding D. Nutritional supplements and additives E. Principles of appetite and hunger
3. Apply principles of nutrition focused patient assessment	A. Nutritional assessment of companion animals B. Hospital nutrition protocols
4. Apply knowledge of nutrition to therapeutic and assisted feeding	A. Assisted feeding B. Therapeutic nutrition

Graduate Competency 12 - Nursing Process, Care Planning & Nursing Interventions

About This Competency

The companion animal veterinary nurse can competently apply knowledge of the application of the nursing process to ensure a high standard of animal welfare in the safe and effective delivery of animal healthcare.

Performance Standard	Indication of content
1. Apply knowledge of the nursing process and care planning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A. Nursing philosophy in terms of how it relates to patient care B. Principles of nursing process and how it relates to care planning and delivery for companion animals C. Application of care planning and nursing process
2. Apply knowledge of client co-design, and relationship-centred care	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A. Care planning and relationship-centred care B. Communicating for client understanding
3. Demonstrate knowledge of veterinary nursing services in the clinic environment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A. Veterinary nursing services in the clinic environment
4. Apply knowledge of end-of-life care and euthanasia	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A. Palliative/end-of-life care B. Relationship centred care associated with end of life C. Process of euthanasia

Graduate Competency 13 - Companion Animal Fluid Therapy

About This Competency

The companion animal veterinary nurse can competently apply knowledge of fluid therapy and blood transfusions to ensure a high standard of animal welfare in the safe and effective delivery of animal healthcare.

Performance Standard	Indication of content
1. Demonstrate knowledge of fluid therapy	A. Principles of fluid dynamic physiology B. Principles of fluid replacement therapy
2. Apply knowledge of fluid therapy to care for animal patients receiving fluids	A. Care for animals receiving fluid therapy B. Peripheral intravenous catheterization/cannulation

Graduate Competency 14 - Companion Animal Wounds & Bandaging

About This Competency

The companion animal veterinary nurse can competently apply knowledge of wound management and bandaging to ensure a high standard of animal welfare in the safe and effective delivery of animal healthcare.

Performance Standard	Indication of content
1. Demonstrate knowledge of wound physiology and healing relating to companion animal patients	A. Physiology of skin, inflammation, and infection
2. Apply knowledge of wound physiology to wound management	A. Wound documentation, pain management, nutrition, and wound healing B. Wound treatments, compression, immobilisation, wound dressings. C. Identifying problems with wounds and implementing solutions to issues that negatively affect wound healing. D. Wound asepsis including microbial resistance, culture and sensitivity, infection control. E. Challenging wounds and complications, including, burns, contaminated wounds, non-healing wounds, abscesses, wounds under tension
3. Demonstrate knowledge of bandaging in companion animal patients	A. Types of bandages B. Methods of bandaging C. Nursing patients with bandages, casts, and external fixators
4. Apply knowledge of bandaging in companion animal patients	A. Effective and competent application of bandages B. Effective and competent removal of bandages

Graduate Competency 15 - Companion Animal Anaesthesia & Analgesia

About This Competency

The companion animal veterinary nurse can competently apply knowledge of anaesthesia and analgesia to ensure a high standard of animal welfare in the safe and effective delivery of animal healthcare.

Performance Standard	Indication of content
1. Apply knowledge of the preanaesthetic period to facilitate optimal patient care	A. Patient evaluation B. Patient preanaesthetic care C. Anaesthetic protocol D. Preanaesthetic drug administration
2. Apply knowledge of general anaesthesia to facilitate optimal patient care	A. Scope and use of general anaesthesia B. Physiological effects of anaesthesia C. Patient induction D. Endotracheal intubation E. Ventilation F. Maintenance anaesthesia G. Patient positioning, restraint, and transport H. Recovery
3. Apply knowledge of anaesthetic agents and techniques to facilitate optimal patient care	A. Preanaesthetic agents B. Induction agents C. Maintenance anaesthetic agents D. Local anaesthetic agents
4. Apply knowledge of anaesthetic equipment and procedures to facilitate optimal patient care	A. Endotracheal tubes B. Anaesthetic machines C. Anaesthetic breathing systems D. Oxygen and flow rates. Induction, maintenance, recovery E. Anaesthetic monitoring equipment F. Care and maintenance of anaesthetic equipment
5. Apply knowledge of anaesthetic workplace safety	A. Safe handling of compressed and volatile gasses B. Hazards of waste anaesthetic gas
6. Apply knowledge of anaesthetic problems and emergencies to facilitate optimal patient care	A. Causes of anaesthetic problems and emergencies B. Response to anaesthetic problems and emergencies
7. Apply knowledge of analgesia and pain management to facilitate optimal patient care	A. Physiology of pain B. Pain assessment C. Principles/goals of analgesic use D. Pharmacology and use of analgesics E. The veterinary nurse's role in pain management

Graduate Competency 16 - Companion Animal Surgical Procedures

About This Competency

The companion animal veterinary nurse can competently apply knowledge of surgical nursing and theatre practice to ensure a high standard of animal welfare in the safe and effective delivery of animal healthcare.

Performance Standard	Indication of content
1. Apply knowledge of surgical preoperative patient care	<i>Period from pre-admission through to immediately prior to induction.</i> A. Patient pre-admission, admission, and post admission procedures B. Preoperative preparation C. Preoperative patient care
2. Apply knowledge of surgical intraoperative patient care	<i>Period from induction through to the end of anaesthesia.</i> A. Surgical site preparation - first scrub B. Patient positioning C. Maintenance of the sterile field, and non-sterile surrounds D. Surgical site preparation - second scrub/sterile prep E. During surgical procedure F. End of surgical procedure
3. Apply knowledge of surgical postoperative care	<i>Period from the end of anaesthesia through to the end of the patient's recovery.</i> A. Patient extubation B. Patient monitoring C. Patient care D. Surgical discharge preparation
4. Apply knowledge of post-surgical procedures	A. Clean, disinfect, and maintain the surgical theatre/equipment. B. Clean, disinfect, and maintain equipment. C. Clean, disinfect/sterilise and maintain the surgical instruments

Graduate Competency 17 - Companion Animal Reproduction, Obstetrics, and Neonatal Care

About This Competency

The companion animal veterinary nurse can competently apply knowledge of reproduction, obstetrics, and neonatal care to ensure a high standard of animal welfare in the safe and effective delivery of animal healthcare.

Performance Standard	Indication of content
1. Apply knowledge of reproduction	A. Reproductive cycles B. Control and manipulation of reproductive cycles C. Mating D. Common reproductive diseases and conditions of both the male and female and their management
2. Apply knowledge of obstetrics	A. Stages of pregnancy and animal needs B. Stages of parturition and relevance to nursing care, and client communication C. Postpartum needs of the dam and the neonate D. Common problems for the dam during parturition and the immediate postpartum period
3. Apply knowledge of neonate care	A. Nutrition of the neonate B. Common problems in neonates and their management

Graduate Competency 18 - Companion Animal Diagnostics

About This Competency

The companion animal veterinary nurse can competently apply knowledge of diagnostic testing to ensure a high standard of animal welfare in the safe and effective delivery of animal healthcare.

Performance Standard	Indication of content
1. Apply knowledge of diagnostics to sample collection and processing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A. Prepare animal and equipment for safe/low stress sample collection B. Collect, label and store samples from animals C. Prepare samples for in-house analysis or for dispatch samples to external laboratories
2. Apply knowledge of diagnostic tests on samples and recording results	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A. Carry out in house testing and record results A. Demonstrate knowledge of microbiology including culture and sensitivity
3. Apply knowledge of maintenance and quality control in the in-house laboratory to ensure diagnostic test integrity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A. Use, care and troubleshooting, maintenance, and quality control of diagnostic equipment including microscope, centrifuge, refractometer, blood analysers. B. Quality control procedures sample integrity, infection control, avoiding cross contamination

Graduate Competency 19 - Companion Animal Imaging

About This Competency

The companion animal veterinary nurse can competently apply knowledge of veterinary imaging techniques to ensure a high standard of animal welfare in the safe and effective delivery of animal healthcare.

Performance Standard	Indication of content
1. Apply knowledge of x-ray machine and associated equipment	A. Structure and function of x-ray machine and associated equipment B. Production of x-rays
2. Apply knowledge of medical imaging health and safety in relation to radiation protection, equipment and underlying physical principles	A. Medical imaging safety
3. Apply knowledge of the production of diagnostic radiograph images	A. Preparing equipment to take the image B. Patient positioning techniques for basic imaging C. Assessing the radiograph D. Records
4. Demonstrate knowledge of ultrasonography and endoscopy	A. Preparing, maintenance and storage of equipment for imaging B. Patient preparation techniques for ultrasound
5. Demonstrate knowledge of other imaging techniques	A. Radiographic contrast studies B. Other imaging

Graduate Competency 20 - Companion Animal Dentistry

About This Competency

The companion animal veterinary nurse can competently apply knowledge of preventative and therapeutic dental care to ensure a high standard of animal welfare in the safe and effective delivery of animal healthcare.

Performance Standard	Indication of content
1. Apply knowledge of preventative and therapeutic dental care to patient assessment and treatment	<ul style="list-style-type: none">A. Role and scope of nursing practice within nursing care provision for patients undergoing dental careB. Major anatomical, physiological, and pathological features of the mouth/oral cavity and teeth, and the implications for dental care.C. Knowledge of dental pathology and preventative careD. Knowledge of correct techniques for basic dental prophylaxisE. Care of the dental patientF. Safe practice in relation to protection, equipment and underlying physical principles for dental procedures.

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