



Veterinary Nursing Training Package Development

Skills Impact

Submission from the Australian Veterinary Association Ltd



28 April 2017

About us

The Australian Veterinary Association is the national organisation representing veterinarians in Australia. Our 9000 members come from all fields within the veterinary profession. Clinical practitioners work with companion animals, horses, farm animals, such as cattle and sheep, and wildlife. Government veterinarians work with our animal health, public health and quarantine systems while other members work in industry for pharmaceutical and other commercial enterprises. We have members who work in research and teaching in a range of scientific disciplines. Veterinary students are also members of the Association.

Recommendations

As qualified veterinary nurses provide a significant role in the provision of veterinary services, the Australian Veterinary Association believes that students of Veterinary Nursing in Australia should have a high-quality outcome irrespective of where they live, where they are trained and where they are employed. This outcome should be of an international standard and take into consideration the specific workplace health and safety aspects of working in a veterinary workplace.

The Australian Veterinary Association (AVA) supports the following:

1. All students commencing the Certificate IV in Veterinary Nursing should have guaranteed access to a veterinary workplace or be employed prior to commencing study. A traineeship model would be ideal.
2. Work placements must have support systems in place to ensure learning is facilitated. The AVA understands the issues involved in setting specific hours for the qualification. Should rigorous assessments be included in a traineeship package this would not be required. If they are not included then we support a regulated 800 hours of work placements.
3. Diploma candidates must have employment in their chosen area of study.
4. The AVA supports the Certificate II in Animal Studies including relevant Veterinary Nursing Units as an entry requirement to the Cert IV in Veterinary Nursing. If equivalency is used in this respect then recognition of prior learning (RPL) must be applied. We support the future development of a Cert II Veterinary Nurse Assistant.
5. The AVA supports the proposition that all veterinary nursing students must be practically assessed in the workplace by an independent qualified assessor. This is essential for day 1 skills. We were involved in the NSW Assessment Pilot to create standardised assessments and look forward to seeing these incorporated into the training package.
6. The AVA supports the inclusion of the following units:
 - anatomy and physiology
 - specific nutrition
 - anaesthesia and analgesia
 - pharmacology.
7. We wish to retain the specific Animal Care Workplace Health and Safety Unit as there are many unique hazards in our industry. Many veterinary nurses come in contact with zoonotic diseases with the potential to cause serious long term effects.
8. We are supportive of a single Diploma in Veterinary Nursing that allows students to specialise in one or more areas. We support the introduction of an Equine Veterinary Nurse Diploma.