

# Veterinary nurse in relation to the legal nursing essay



Veterinary nursing is a relatively young profession, it has only been established as a profession for the last 50 years, and has however kept pushing the boundaries of the Para health care profession. Veterinary nurses not only play a key role in preventative health care and animal welfare, but also carry out diagnostic tests and procedures, medical treatments and minor surgical procedures under the direction of the veterinary surgeon. Wherever they work – in general practice, a specialist centre, education or industry – veterinary nurses draw on their experiences and knowledge to identify the nursing interventions each patient requires. Vets are often assisted by registered veterinary nurses, who are able to both assist the vet and to autonomously practice a range of skills of their own, including minor surgery under direction from a responsible vet.

Veterinarians have had assistance from staff throughout their existence of the profession, but the first organised Para veterinary workers were the canine nurses trained by the Canine Nurses Institute in 1908. According to the founder they would “ carry out directions of the veterinary surgeon, meet a genuine need on the part of the dog owners, and at the same time provide a reasonably paid occupation for young women with a real liking for animals”.

In 1913, the Ruislip Dog Sanatorium was founded, and employed nurses to care for unwell dogs and in the 1920s, at least one veterinary surgery in Mayfair employed qualified human nurses to tend the animals.

In the mid-1930s, the early veterinary nurses approached the Royal College of Veterinary Surgeons for official recognition, and in 1938 the Royal

Veterinary College had a head nurse appointed, but the official recognition was not given until 1957, first as veterinary nurses, but changed within a year to Royal Animal Nursing Auxiliaries (RANAs) following objection from the human nursing profession.

In 1951, the first formal Para veterinary role was created by the United States Air Force who introduced veterinary technicians, and this was followed in 1961 by a civilian programme at the State University of New York (SUNY) Agricultural and Technical College. In 1965 Walter Collins, DVM received federal funding to develop model curricula for training technicians. He produced several guides over the next seven years, and for this work he is considered the “ father of veterinary technology” in the United States. In 1984, the term veterinary nurse was formally restored to Para veterinary workers in the United Kingdom.

In the majority of Anglophone countries, Para-veterinary workers with a formal scope of practice, and a degree of autonomy in their role, are known as veterinary nurses. The primary exception to this is in North America, where both the United States and Canada refer to these workers as veterinary (or animal health) technicians or technologists. Human nursing associations have often claimed rights over the term ‘ nurse’ and in some countries, this is protected by law.

This was the case in the United Kingdom until 1984, where veterinary nurses were referred to as ‘ registered animal nursing auxiliaries’, in line with the naming convention at the time for less qualified assistants in human nursing, called ‘ nursing auxiliaries’. This is still the case in the United States, where

the American Nursing Association and some state nursing associations have claimed proprietary rights to the term ' nurse'.

Some veterinary technicians argue that as they spend approximately 90% of their time performing nursing tasks, they should be allowed to use the title of veterinary nurse. Veterinary Nurses are just as much nurses as human nurses. Vet nurses carry out almost identical procedures and often have more responsibilities than a human nurse. The same respect is not given for both professions as human life will always be valued more than that of animals. Below is a list of nursing duties performed by human nurses

Duties may vary depending on your role but will usually include:

writing patient care plans

implementing plans through tasks such as preparing patients for operations, wound treatment and monitoring pulse, blood pressure and temperature

observing and recording the condition of patients

checking and administering drugs and injections

setting up drips and blood transfusions

assisting with tests and evaluations

carrying out routine investigations

responding quickly to emergencies

planning discharges from hospital and liaising with community nurses, GPs and social workers;

communicating with and relieving the anxiety of patients and their relatives

advocating on behalf of patients

educating patients about their health

organising staff and prioritising busy workloads

mentoring student and junior nurses

maintaining patient records

making ethical decisions related to consent and confidentiality

These duties are very similar to those of a veterinary nurse. Veterinary Nurses have devised their own care plans for patients, ensuring that times and doses are recorded correctly and making sure good quality of patient care is maintained. Veterinary Nurses run blood tests, obtain samples of blood/urine, they administer drugs and injections, carry out investigations and routine check-ups, they work closely with the vet and other lay staff in the animal practice. Dealing with owners is an everyday occurrence, getting to know them and making them more comfortable is also all part of a veterinary nurse's role. The veterinary Nurses run the animal practice. Besides taking care of all in patients and seeing patients coming in and out of the clinic, they also have the role of managing the practice. This can include anything from stock ordering to maintaining a clean environment.

The term “ nurse” cannot be reserved for human nurses. Nursing is something that many people are passionate about and it shouldn't matter what you are nursing when a universal standard of nursing is put in place.

The range of practice for veterinary workers varies depending which country you practice in, and by qualification level. In some places, more than level of para veterinary worker exists.

For instance, in the United Kingdom there are both veterinary nurses, who are qualified professionals with a protected title, and veterinary assistants, who do not have a single level of qualification which they must attain, and whose title is not protected. At the higher levels, veterinary nurses or technicians may be able to practice skills autonomously, including examinations and minor surgery on animals, without the direct supervision of a veterinarian.

Para veterinary workers are likely to assist the vet, or perform by themselves on behalf of the vet, medical skills such as observations which include taking and recording pulse, temperature, and respiration. Wound and trauma management is carried out which includes cleaning and dressing the wounds, and applying splints and other necessary equipment. There are also physical interventions such as catheterizations, ear flushes and venepuncture. Preparing and analysing biological samples such as skin scrapings, microbiology, urinalysis, and microscopy.

Dependant on their qualifications and training, they may also be called upon to operate diagnostic screening equipment, including electrocardiographic, radiographic and ultrasonography instruments, including complex machines <https://assignbuster.com/veterinary-nurse-in-relation-to-the-legal-nursing-essay/>

such as computed tomography, magnetic resonance imagers and gamma cameras.

Veterinary Nurses would commonly assist veterinarians in surgery by providing correct equipment and instruments and by assuring that monitoring and support equipment are in good working condition. They may also maintain treatment records and inventory of all pharmaceuticals, equipment and supplies, and help with other administrative tasks within a veterinary practice such as client education.

When an owner brings an animal to a veterinary clinic, a veterinary nurse is often one of the first people they see. Before the veterinarian talks to the owner, the nurse may take the animal's weight and temperature. This information, along with changes in the pet's health or recent medical concerns, is then recorded for the doctor to review. After the visit is complete, the technician normally updates the pet's record with the diagnosis and recommended treatment plan.

During the examination, the veterinary nurse may assist the veterinary surgeon by holding the animal still or muzzling if need be. The nurse may also help bandage wounds and apply topical ointments. In some cases, this assistant may fill syringes and administer vaccinations to animals. One of the major responsibilities of a veterinary nurse is caring for animals before, during, and after surgery. This may involve clipping fur or checking the heart rate prior to the operation. During surgery, a veterinary nurse might assist the veterinarian by handing the surgical instruments and monitoring the

patient's respiratory rates. After the procedure is completed the veterinary nurse must observe the animal to make sure there are no complications.

When a pet is hospitalized, the veterinary nurse is normally responsible for the animal's care. This can include providing food, water, and medicine. It could also encompass walking dogs, changing litter pans, or cleaning fecal matter from cages. Veterinarians may request certain tests or procedures for their patients. A veterinary nurse often performs tasks such as checking for worms or looking in an animal's ears to check for ear mites. In some cases, a nurse might also draw blood samples and test them for heartworm, anemia, or other conditions.

The educational requirements for a veterinary nurse vary from one country to the next, but are generally anywhere from two to four years of college. Many people also complete an internship with a veterinarian before being employed in this capacity. Both education and completing an internship can lead to a rewarding career helping both pet owners and their pets. All veterinary nurses must be registered or listed with the Royal College of Veterinary Surgeons (RCVS). Registered or listed veterinary nurses have dispensations in law [the Veterinary Surgeons Act of 1966 amended in 2002)] to undertake certain procedures to include minor surgery on animals under veterinary direction. Registered veterinary nurses (RVNs) are bound by a code of professional conduct and are obliged to maintain their professional knowledge and skills through on going CPD. Those VN's listed after 2002 are automatically registered



The level of education of a veterinary nurse has will depend on the role they are performing, and the veterinary medico-legal framework for the area in which they are working. Higher level paraveterinary workers, such as veterinary nurses, veterinary technicians or veterinary technologists, who have an insight into practice which they are expected to perform without instruction, are likely to have both formal qualifications and in many jurisdictions will also require a formal registration with a monitoring body.

In countries where the role of paraveterinary workers is most advanced, the qualification required is likely to be based in higher education, such as in the United States or Canada where veterinary technicians must normally gain an associate degree at an institution recognised by the American Veterinary Medical Association or Canadian Veterinary Medical Association, and can choose to study for an extended period to gain a bachelor's degree (which in America may confer the title 'technologist', rather than 'technician'), or the United Kingdom, where veterinary nurses enter the profession through either a two year diploma programme or through completion of a foundation degree or honours degree.

Many countries, including the United Kingdom, Canada, and parts of the United States, restrict some elements of practice, and may restrict use of the recognised name, to those people currently registered with an appropriate licensing body, meaning that it would be illegal for any person not on the register to represent themselves as a paraveterinary worker, or to perform some of the procedures that a licensed professional could. The precise details of these restrictions vary widely between legal areas, and

neighbouring areas may have different policies, as is the case in the various states of the US.

This licensing body may have its own requirements for maintaining a registration, and those who hold the requisite academic qualification may still have to still complete a further range of exams or tests to become registered. For instance, in the United States, most areas use the Veterinary Technician National Exam, and this will be used by the state licensing authority (such as a state veterinary medical association) to qualify an applicant to become a registered veterinary technician.

In some cases, those people who qualified before the introduction of formal academic qualification requirements may still be working as paraveterinary workers, and may still be entered on a required register through the use of grandfather rights. For instance, in some states of the US, people with a set number of years or hours of experience assisting a veterinarian could sit for the Veterinary Technician National Exam, however this route was phased out in 2011, and future candidates must have an academic qualification.

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The role of a veterinary Nurse has such a huge range that it is difficult to pinpoint all tasks performed by vet nurses. As we have seen from above the veterinary nurse has many similar responsibilities to a human nurse. The term “ Nursing” should be applies to everyone carrying out nursing tasks and handling patients. Because the Veterinary Nursing is officially so young there are not enough regulations in place to fully expand the profession. A veterinary nurse is a minor veterinary surgeon that has a wide knowledge base and a huge array of skills. A veterinary Nurses ability ranges from minor surgery to administration of possibly lethal drugs. These responisbiliteis should be more widely acknowledged and regulated. There are still too many cases of veterinary nurses that are not registered and therefore cannot be controlled. Just like going to the doctor with your child going to the veterinary practice should be a safe experience, clients should be able to fully trust that their animals are in the best hands possible. It is the hope of the many veterinary nurses that sooner rather than later the veterinary nursing profession is acknowledged for what it truly is and for what veterinary nurses truly do.