

Veterinary Nursing (7457) OSCE mitigation update



Covid-19 and Veterinary Nursing

Update on OSCE mitigation approach

The RCVS have informed City & Guilds that their VN Council has approved an alternative approach (mitigation) to the Objective Structured Clinical Examination (OSCE) known as the Veterinary Nurse Patient Based Assessment (VN-PBA). The VN-PBA has been designed specifically as an alternative examination to the OSCE to be used during the Covid-19 pandemic by an Awarding Organisation (AO).

Please read the [RCVS press release](#) and the [VN-PBA Student Handbook](#) for further information.

As you will know we wrote to the RCVS back in March asking for consideration to be given to an alternative to the OSCE which was rejected. However the RCVS then announced on 17 April a taskforce had been formed to review the possible alternatives (see RCVS statement [here](#)).

City & Guilds contributed to the RCVS taskforce and we are pleased that they have now agreed to a mitigated approach for the OSCEs for candidates who intended to sit their assessment before 31 July this year.

We are now reviewing the details of the VN-PBA and how we can offer this alternative over the coming months. We will provide an update to all veterinary centres next week. Following which, we will publish further information and guidance on the City & Guilds Covid-19 website [here](#). This will include a timeline, including next steps (e.g. how to enter your candidates).

We would like to emphasise that the VN-PBA is an RCVS approach, and as the sector regulator we are accredited by the RCVS. We are not able to comment on the content of the PBA, only how we intend to offer this for your learners. Centres with queries, questions or complaints should contact the RCVS directly at VNPBA@rcvs.org.uk.

During this initial period, we encourage centres to begin conversations with eligible candidates in readiness for our booking process in July, and to ascertain if your candidates wish to engage in the process.

Whilst we understand this approach may not be favoured by all candidates, at this stage we support the principles of the VN-PBA as it offers an alternative other than the initial 'delay' mitigation. We continue to monitor the situation closely around Covid-19, however at this time we cannot provide any guarantee when the next OSCE assessment series will be available. OSCE series are likely to continue to be impacted by Covid-19 restrictions.

VN-PBA entry criteria

For a student to be eligible to apply to enter the VN-PBA they must meet the following criteria:

- Registered on either 7457-03/13/23/33 City & Guilds veterinary nursing qualification
- Actively enrolled with the RCVS
- Have intended to sit their OSCE assessments by 31 July '20 (March and June OSCE series)
- Completed all work-based assessments of the DOS and have had the evidence internally quality assured
- Passed all other examinations required by City & Guilds
- Completed or made significant progress towards the completion of the minimum period of education and practical training outlined in

- schedule 1 of the VN registration rules
- Have the support of their centre in their application

The first sitting of this adapted assessment will only be available for candidates who were entered for an OSCE which was cancelled or postponed due to the COVID-19 pandemic. (March and June 2020). Those who were booked onto the March OSCE will be given priority to ensure they are not disadvantaged further.

Please note that eligible candidates will only be permitted **ONE** attempt at the Patient Based Assessment (VN-PBA) with City & Guilds. The PBA will also count towards the maximum permitted attempts at the OSCE.

If it continues to be challenging to deliver an OSCE event safely during autumn/winter 2020, then City & Guilds will consult with the RCVS with the aim of continuing to deliver the VN-PBA to other candidates who meet the entry criteria.

City & Guilds will contact centres in early July to begin the booking process, starting with those candidates entered for the March OSCE.

On demand (e-volve) exams for 7457-03/13

We are pleased confirm that centres will shortly be able to use Remote Invigilation to complete outstanding multiple-choice onscreen exams. This will enable learners to take exams in their own homes while still being properly invigilated. We will publish detailed guidance including minimal technical requirements and the process for requesting permission to conduct remote invigilation – we will aim to ensure prompt approval. Where approval has been given, remotely invigilated exams may be audited by City & Guilds and/or the RCVS.

Where a centre has started to return to normal activity, and meets Government 'Covid secure' guidance, they can book and complete onscreen exams as per normal without using our Remote Invigilation solution – if it is safe to do so. It is important to ensure that no pressure is put on learners to return to college and certain factors (e.g. family members that may be shielding and time out of the classroom) are taken into consideration.

Internal assessments – centre-devised assignments

As previously communicated, centre-devised internally marked assessments can benefit from relaxed conditions during this time.

This includes:

- the use of sharing tasks with candidates using online platforms where centres and learners have the systems in place;
- relaxing some supervised expectations (for example, for research-based tasks); and
- the use of follow-up oral questioning/Q&A by an assessor who is occupationally competent, in a way that authenticates the responses are the candidate's own. (These will need to be recorded in written or verbal format and linked to the assessment criteria).

For some students who may be unable to draw on direct real world/workplace experience due to the current situation, the use of hypothetical scenarios may be used – although these should be used sparingly.

This update only applies to the 7457-03/13 qualifications. No mitigations or adaptations are applicable for the new 7547-33/43 qualifications.

Queries and questions...

Over the coming week, we will be working to finalise our plans for the successful delivery of the VN Patient Based Assessment (VN-PBA), working closely with the RCVS to put in place a suitable approach.

We appreciate you will have lots of questions, however, please bear with us as we need time to ensure we can focus on getting everything ready, as quickly as we can, to ensure candidates are not disadvantaged further.

The RCVS Veterinary Nursing Department can also be contacted on VNPBA@rcvs.org.uk.

Kind regards,

On behalf of City & Guilds

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