Veterinary Nursing Patient-based Assessment (VN-PBA) Candidate Guidance

Version 1.0, October 2020
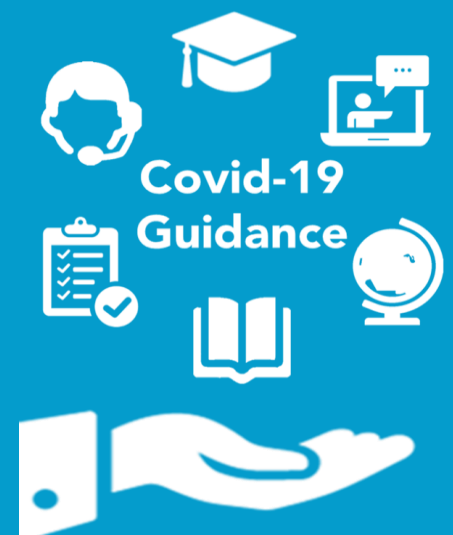
Covid-19 Guidance

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Vet Nursing | Patient-based Assessment (PBA) Centre Guidance, Version 1.0, October 2020

Foreword

The information provided in this document is intended for use by candidates who were eligible to complete the OSCE examination on or before 31 July 2020 and who have been impacted by Covid-19, and who wish to complete the Patient-based Assessment (PBA) alternative.

The VN-PBA has been designed specifically by the Royal College of Veterinary Surgeons (RCVS). City & Guilds is the Awarding Organisation (AO) delivering the assessment to candidates (you).

Here at City & Guilds we recognise that the past few months have been incredibly challenging for you, and that you are eager to complete your assessment and to move on with your career.

Please rest assured that as an organisation we remain committed to doing our best to provide a range of options for you to help achieve the qualifications you require.

We also recognise that you have spent several years preparing for your OSCE, and due to the Covid-19 pandemic now find yourself preparing for a different form of assessment. However, you should remember that our examiners are looking for you to demonstrate the same skills you would in the OSCE, just in a slightly different way.

As we near the end of the first phase delivery of the PBA, we have learnt many lessons and hope that we can improve candidate experience in the next phase, as well as making the process clearer, simpler and fairer for all.

Please ensure you take the time to read through the information in this document, and also familiarise yourself with the range of guidance published by the RCVS either on the City & Guilds website or the RCVS website.

It is imperative that you also read the relevant RCVS student handbook for your qualification:

RCVS VN-PBA Student Handbook (Small Animal)

RCVS VN-PBA Student Handbook (Equine)

We wish you the best of luck with your assessment.

Introduction

The VN-PBA has been designed specifically by the Royal College of Veterinary Surgeons (RCVS) as an alternative examination to the Objective Structured Clinical Examination (OSCE) to be used during the Covid-19 pandemic by an Awarding Organisation (AO).

Please note, the support resources and guidance documents available are applicable to City & Guilds Veterinary Nursing PBA candidates only.

Candidate eligibility

You are required to present case reports, along with supporting evidence, to demonstrate how you have met the Day One Competences and Skills (DOS).

You will undertake a detailed and structured discussion about your involvement with the cases, as showcased in your portfolio. The outcome of the discussion will determine whether you can be awarded your OSCE assessment unit, which then enables you to claim the full qualification certificate and subsequently apply to join the RCVS Register of Veterinary Nurses.

To be eligible to apply to enter the VN-PBA, you must:

- Be registered on a City & Guilds veterinary nursing qualification
- Be actively enrolled with the RCVS
- Have intended to sit your OSCE assessments by 31 July 2020 (March and June OSCE series)
- Have completed all work-based assessments of the DOS and have had the evidence quality assured by your centre
- Have passed all other examinations required by City & Guilds
- Have completed or made significant progress towards the completion of the minimum period of education and practical training outlined in schedule 1 of the RCVS VN Registration Rules
- Have your examination application supported by your centre
- Have access to a suitable computer with audio, webcam, and good stable internet connectivity
- Have access to a quiet place, free from disruptions and distractions
- Be able to provide a valid form of ID (e.g. current/in date passport or photo driving licence) on the day of the examination
- Have fully completed the Nursing Progress Log (NPL)

If your centre is unable to confirm that the eligibility criteria has been met, unfortunately you will not be permitted to complete the PBA.

The RCVS have produced detailed Student Handbooks containing information about the criteria and process for the PBA. Please use the links provided in the foreword section on page 3.

Your centre should provide you with further guidance on how to prepare for the PBA in addition to the RCVS Student Handbook

Key dates

PBA Phase 2 Timetable

You are eligible for Phase 2 of the PBA if you intended to complete your OSCE assessment by 31 July 2020 and would have entered the June OSCE.

You may also have been entered for Phase 2 if you were either eligible for Phase 1 but chose to delay entry or were withdrawn due to GDPR.

The timetable below sets out the process for entry, submission of evidence and when to expect assessment to take place.

Key activity	Date
Confirmation of candidate VN-PBA date and time (to centres)	W/C Monday 5 October 2020
Window opens for submission of case reports (by your centre)	Monday 12 October 2020
Deadline for submission of case reports (by your centre)	Friday 23 October 2020
VN-PBA assessments start	Monday 2 November 2020
VN-PBA assessments finish	Sunday 20 December 2020
Results Day (Provisional)	Monday 18 January 2021

The timetable may be revised, so please check our website regularly for updates.

Case reports and supporting evidence

The RCVS have provided guidance in their student and centre handbooks as to the level of supplementary evidence required. This should relate to the cases that you have provided information for within your submission document. This should be evidence that shows the skills that you have used as part of that case. Unnecessary evidence such as practice guidelines are not necessary for the discussion so please do not include these.

In addition to the case reports and supplementary evidence, your centre will also be required to provide a completed submission form for you. There is one for each of the different pathways (small animal and equine) and these can be found in the "RCVS documents" tab on our [website](#).

Candidate checklist

To help support you in ensuring that you provide all the correct information, we have created the following checklist:

Checks to be made	Completed
Case report notes completed as per the RCVS requirements and mapped to all relevant DOS. **Note: All DOS must be covered by at least one case report.**	
Supplementary evidence, including x-rays, to support each case report gathered and mapped to the relevant case report.	
All evidence checked for sensitive client or practice information and fully redacted.	
Candidate submission form completed including the tracking matrix. (completed by your centre)	

Acceptable evidence

Your case reports should include only cases that you as the candidate were directly involved with since 1 June 2019. This may include, but is not limited to, cases that are recorded in the Day One Skills recording tool (NPL). A sample of the DOS is being assessed and the case reports should cover the areas that the DOS have been grouped into.

Using the template provided by the RCVS, case reports should provide a brief overview of the case (preferably less than 300 words) and ideally this will cover more than one clinical procedure/nursing intervention. For example, you may submit one case report where you have X-rayed a patient, applied a bandage, and administered analgesia.

[RCVS VN-PBA Submission Document (Equine)](#)
[RCVS VN-PBA Submission Document (Small animal)](#)

Supporting evidence such as original care plans, laboratory reports and standard operating procedures can be submitted as supporting evidence to the case reports.

Please be aware that the RCVS require all supporting evidence to be original documents with your entries clearly highlighted. **Any supporting evidence recreated retrospectively will be discounted**.

Please be mindful of the number of documents you supply. Supplementary evidence should be grouped into one PDF rather than several one-page documents and must be cross-referenced to more than one DOS, or all DOS if applicable. A

completed submission document (pathway specific) including the tracking matrix to reference and confirm which DOS have been covered must also be provided by your centre.

The RCVS encourage you to provide a range of supporting supplementary evidence such as case notes, radiographs, and care plans. **Supplementary evidence must relate to the case and not your ability to nurse the case.** However, you are not expected to provide excessive detail (e.g. the list of equipment used and how each was prepared).

If one of our examiners feel that the evidence you have provided is excessive, this could result in your PBA being delayed, and your centre being asked to review the evidence and re-submit.

If you are submitting video recordings as evidence, the submission form must include timestamps to indicate where each DOS is covered.

Nursing Progress Log (NPL)

Our examiners will be given access to your NPL to review entries against the DOS where they are unsure that a domain has been sufficiently evidenced in the PBA. The NPL entries will help our examiners to ascertain if you have a good understanding of the skill requirements.

It is a requirement for entry to the PBA that the NPL has been fully completed by you, and internally quality assured by your centre. If an examiner finds any issues with the NPL, or there is insufficient evidence to support the DOS, then you could be withdrawn from the PBA.

GDPR requirements

It is primarily the responsibility of you the candidate and your employer/practice to ensure compliance with the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR).

If you provide personal client information within the PBA submission, this will be viewed as a breach of GDPR. You should remember that you are applying to enter a professional register and expected to understand and follow all relevant legislation.

You **must** ensure all personal and/or sensitive client details, are removed from all case reports and evidence submitted.

Personal/sensitive data is information that relates to an identified or identifiable individual, and may include:

- Full name and/or legible signature
- Residential or commercial address
- Telephone number
- Email address
- Insurance policy number
- Microchip number

Where an examiner identifies a breach in GDPR in the evidence provided, the following action will then be taken by City & Guilds:

1. The examiner will contact City & Guilds to notify us of the potential breach, informing us of the evidence we need to review.
2. A member of the City & Guilds team will check the evidence to confirm whether there has been a breach. Where confirmed, we will then cancel the PBA.
3. City & Guilds will contact your centre directly to inform them you must be withdrawn.
4. City & Guilds will also inform the RCVS of the data breach, including your candidate and centre details.

Your centre will not be able to make checks to any evidence once the submission window for the series has closed. Any evidence found containing sensitive or identifiable information has already breached GDPR, so you would not be permitted to make amendments and would be withdrawn.

You will not be permitted to re-complete the assessment within the same phase. However, may be re-entered by your centre for the next phase (applicable to Phase 1 only) or the next available OSCE.

Please be aware that whilst we will endeavour to provide as much notice as possible, we are reliant upon the examiners notifying us of any GDPR breaches. Therefore, there may be situations where a PBA is cancelled at very short notice.

Submitting case reports and evidence

All case study evidence will be uploaded by your centre to our secure administration system.

What is considered as a good range of evidence?

A good range of evidence may include, but is not limited to:

- Clear radiographs / x-rays
- Fully completed hospitalisation charts
- Good anaesthetic monitoring charts
- One or two SOPs (where specifically referred to within the cases)
- Care plans
- Admission forms (where these have been completed by you and show additional information not just the signed consent).

What is the preferred format for the evidence to be provided?

We recommend that supplementary evidence for each case report is uploaded as a single attached (e.g. collated into a Word Document or PDF). This is so that it is clear to the examiner which evidence relates to which case report.

What would be considered an excessive amount of evidence?

As above, the preference from examiners is for one document to be uploaded per case report including all supplementary evidence (i.e. for 8 case reports there would be 8 piece of supplementary evidence). Where a piece of evidence is relevant to multiple case reports, this can be cross-referenced by your centre on our system rather that submitted multiple times.

For example, there were 8 case reports each with 10 different pieces of evidence including the same pieces of evidence multiple time, this would be considered excessive. Examiners have recommended 4 to 5 pieces of evidence per case report as sufficient.

What would be considered an irrelevant piece of evidence to support a case report?

Where evidence does not support your ability in the case or does not provide an indication of your ability, this would not be relevant. For example, a disinfectant label would not be considered relevant unless you are specifically explaining how barrier nursing protocols are different from routine disinfection.

Case reports should only reflect what you have done yourself. Examiners do not need to know the patient's history, only the information that is important to the actual case.

How should sensitive information within documents be redacted?

You should ensure any identifiable information is covered or removed from submissions. This should be done by any means available. It is not sufficient to strike-through information with a thin pen, as this information would still be clearly visible.

Where this is done using a marker-pen and then scanned, you should be aware that there have been instances where redacted information is still visible due to the laser reflection from the scanner. We recommend if this method of redaction is used, that you place additional sheets of paper behind the document to stop light coming through, causing the printed ink to become visible.

All documents should be checked prior to submission that sensitive information is not visible and attempts to make redactions have been successful.

Once the assessment window has closed, the GDPR breach will have occurred, so it is extremely important to ensure no personal/sensitive information is visible on the electronic copies of the evidence.

VN-PBA session

The VN-PBA discussions will be held using GoToMeeting which is a web-hosted service created by LogMeIn. It is an online meeting, desktop sharing, and video conferencing software package that enables the user to meet with other computer users, customers, clients, or colleagues via the internet in real time

A personalised one-time link will be sent to the named contact(s) at your centre a few days prior to the timetabled PBA and it is your centre's responsibility to provide this to you. **This will be the only reminder of the discussion time.**

We also recommend that you familiarise yourself with the system prior to your PBA discussion:

Attendee guide for Windows
Attendee guide for Mac
Video guide

The PBA will have two examiners, and both will be present during your assessment, however only one of the examiners will take the lead and ask you the questions. The other will still be on screen but taking notes and showing any additional information to you when necessary.

The meetings will be set up so that you will only be able to enter once the examiner has begun the session. The meeting must be started with your video enabled. Where there are issues with sound or video which cannot be resolved, the PBA will need to be rescheduled. Please be assured that we will do our very best to ensure the replacement assessment date is as soon as possible.

Please be aware that if you enter the exam early the examiners will be on screen and will start to interact with you. This is because our examiners want to make sure you are comfortable and ensure you are ready to begin. If you need time to prepare before the scheduled start time you should tell the examiner to mute themselves and not to start early.

Each discussion is scheduled for 45 minutes. Depending on the answers given this may be shorter. Please do not see this as a reflection on your ability. Where your cases show a good range of skills covered against the DOS you could naturally expect the session to be shorter.

During the discussion, the examiner will ask you questions relating to your submitted cases. Once you have answered the question the examiner may ask further questions on the same subject. This is to ensure that they can collect enough supportive evidence for their decision. If at any point you are unsure of what the examiner is asking, you should ask them to rephase the question. Please remember that the role of the examiner is to give you the opportunity to share the knowledge you have gained and how you apply knowledge in practice.

If a you are unable to attend the allocated PBA due to illness or an unforeseen event, and we are notified 48 hours prior to your PBA, then we will work with your centre to identify a new slot for you to undertake the PBA.

If you are absent from your PBA without a legitimate reason, it is unlikely that we will be able to provide you with a later slot as all assessment bookings are subject to examiner availability. We will work with your centre to ensure anyone in this position is given an opportunity to either continue with the PBA (if a slot becomes available) or wait to undertake an OSCE instead.

You must ensure that you have the sufficient resources available to complete the PBA. Lack of resource is not considered a legitimate reason for absence from the PBA.

Resources and requirements during the PBA process

You will need to correctly position yourself in line with the camera so that the examiners can clearly see your face and surroundings.

Pre-assessment checks will be carried out, including an identity check and an environment check via video link, and the discussion will be recorded by the examiner. In addition, you will be asked to confirm you are 'fit to sit' the PBA and complete a candidate declaration.

Note: You must have your photo ID to hand at the start of the PBA.

Please be aware that at any point during a discussion, the examiner conducting the VN-PBA may stop the clock and ask you to provide further reassurance that the assessment environment has not been compromised.

For the PBA, you will need:

- a suitable quiet room to conduct the discussion where you will not be disturbed
- have access to a computer, laptop, or reasonably sized tablet to complete the VN-PBA with a good internet connection. You should avoid the use of a mobile phone device as this may be too small for document sharing
- have a working microphone, otherwise we will not be able to proceed with the VN-PBA
- have a working webcam that can easily be moved, i.e. a laptop with a webcam or a desktop computer webcam that has sufficient wire length. This is to ensure the room check can be carried out
- To have a valid form of photo ID with you and easily accessible (e.g. passport, driver's licence, etc.)

Note: You will not be permitted to complete the VN-PBA without valid ID having been provided at the beginning of the discussion.

Confidentiality requirements

We understand that you may be in contact with others who are completing their PBA. However, it is important that during these unprecedented times we can continue to maintain the integrity of our assessment. You must not under any circumstances:

- Discuss the content of any assessment with another person
- Discuss the content with your employer, your centre, or another training provider
- Record or take pictures, screen shots or notes throughout any assessment
- Make audio recordings throughout any assessments
- Have access to textbooks, reference material, internet etc. throughout the discussion, however you may have notes relating to the case studies being discussed.
- Make comments or posts via social media (e.g. Facebook, WhatsApp etc) or Vet Nursing forums regarding the PBA

Note: The above also extends to the posting or discussion of the assessment and/or assessment process on social media.

Any candidate found to have breached their agreement with us (through verbal declaration) as part of the VN-PBA will be disqualified. You should consider the impact that your actions may have on other candidates too, which may include cancellation of their PBAs where we cannot be confident in the integrity of the assessment.

If you are found to have breached the agreement, or are seen to be in possession of any such prohibited evidence or material which is considered a breach, this may lead to an automatic fail or in serious cases, being prevented from entering the register with the RCVS.

Using GoToMeeting

Centres will be sent the unique link for you to join your allocated GoToMeeting (GTM) session the week prior to their scheduled PBA.

GTM sessions can be joined through an internet browser, however we do recommend that you download the GTM desktop app prior to the PBA.

You should join **5 to 10 minutes** prior to the allocated start time of your PBA to ensure there are no issues with GTM. We recommend that you test your GTM link is working in advance. However, you will not be able to use this time for preparation, you should do this before joining.
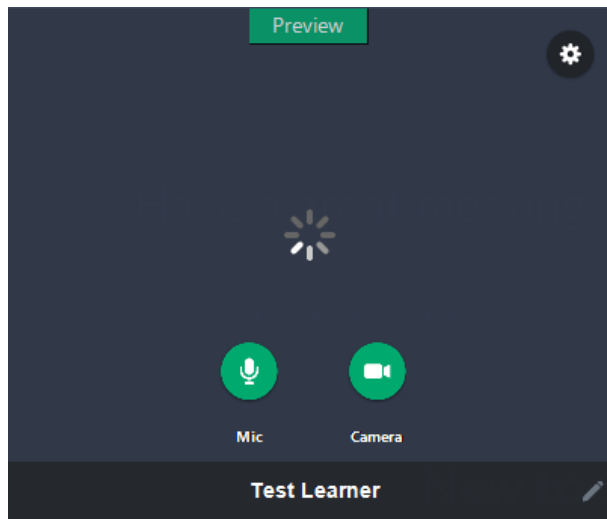
You will be presented with a pop-up window to confirm your settings before joining the meeting.

You should ensure you have your microphone (Mic) and camera switched on. The associated buttons will turn **green** when switched on and a video preview will load.

You can use the **Settings** to check the video and microphone device in use before joining. You can also amend your guest name by selecting the pencil at the bottom of the preview box.

It is recommended that you use a headset during the PBA session to avoid any audio feedback as using a built-in laptop microphone may cause an echo. Where you do not have a headset, it is recommended that headphones are used alongside the built-in microphone.

Once you are ready, you need to select the button to join at the bottom of the window: **OK, I'M READY**
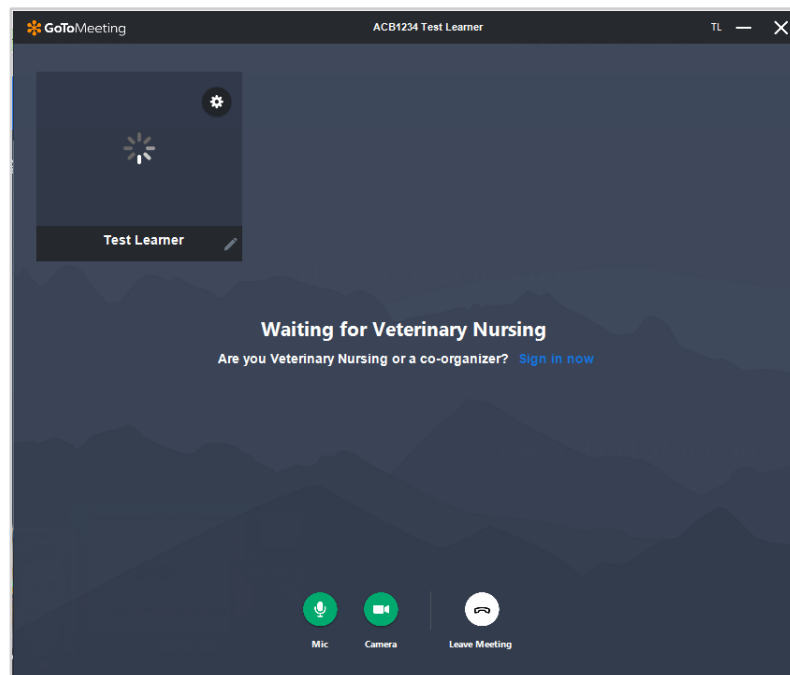
You will need to wait for the examiner to begin the session.

The PBA session will be recorded.

If you are faced with any technical issues using GTM, you will need to contact your centre urgently to discuss.

If issues cannot be resolved, the centre will need to contact our Quality team. You **should not** contact the Quality team directly as we are limited in what help we can provide to candidates directly.

Once the PBA has finished, either the examiner will end the session which will automatically close the meeting, or you may leave once permission is given by selecting **Leave Meeting**.

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