



**Australian Government**

# **ACMVET509A Manage veterinary nursing procedures**

**Release: 1**

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## Modification History

Release	TP Version	Comments
1	ACM10v3	Initial release. Based on Victorian accredited course unit VU20204

## Unit Descriptor

This Unit of Competency describes the skills and knowledge necessary to manage nursing procedures in general veterinary practice. Effective management requires veterinary nurses to perform and co-ordinate nursing procedures in order to support veterinarians and achieve the best possible patient outcomes. Nursing procedures range from veterinary support in consults and surgery to the daily care of hospitalised patients. Nursing support includes the preparation of equipment, materials, medications and the patient; monitoring anaesthesia, providing assistance in theatre, administering drugs, providing wound care, drain maintenance, critical care and infection control.

## Application of the Unit

This Unit is intended for veterinary nurses with extensive vocational expertise who are responsible for providing advanced nursing skills and support for veterinarians in general practice. It is assumed that such nurses will have a leadership role in their practice and be involved in the development, implementation and review of clinic policies and procedure. In addition to legal and ethical responsibilities, all Units of Competency in the ACM10 Animal Care and Management Training Package have the requirement for animals to be handled gently and calmly. The individual is required to exhibit appropriate care for animals so that stress and discomfort is minimised.

## Licensing/Regulatory Information

Licensing, legislative, regulatory or certification requirements may apply to this Unit. Therefore, it will be necessary to check with the relevant state or territory regulators for current licensing, legislative or regulatory requirements before undertaking this Unit.

## Pre-Requisites

Nil

## **Employability Skills Information**

This unit contains employability skills

## **Elements and Performance Criteria Pre-Content**

Elements describe the essential outcomes of a Unit of Competency.

Performance criteria describe the performance needed to demonstrate achievement of the element. Where bold italicised text is used, further information is detailed in the required skills and knowledge section and the range statement. Assessment of performance is to be consistent with the evidence guide.

## Elements and Performance Criteria

ELEMENT	PERFORMANCE CRITERIA
1. Supervise nursing support for veterinary procedures	1.1 Available nursing staff are co-ordinated to support veterinary activities, as required. 1.2 <b>Animal first aid measures</b> to sustain life and minimise pain, are supervised as required. 1.3 Preparation of a range of <b>materials and equipment</b> is coordinated in anticipation of need. 1.4 Nursing staff assistance in a range of medical and surgical <b>veterinary procedures</b> is supervised. 1.5 Nursing staff support to monitor and communicate anaesthetic depth and patient <b>vital signs</b> during general anaesthesia is coordinated. 1.6 Nursing staff requirements <b>for post-operative procedures</b> are co-ordinated.
2. Organise, monitor and document referral requests, procedures and follow-up processes	2.1 <b>Referral veterinarian or other health care professional and/or service</b> are notified regarding reason for referral, in accordance with clinic procedures and referring veterinarian's instructions. 2.2 <b>Transfer of copies of client records and referral information is arranged.</b> 2.3 <b>Clients are advised of referral procedures and provided with copies of relevant documentation.</b> 2.4 Referrals are documented in case notes. 2.5 Referral veterinarian patient case report outcomes and required after care is documented in case notes.
3. Manage hospitalised patients	3.1 Specific <b>veterinary instructions</b> for the care of hospitalised patients are implemented in line with veterinary <b>treatment plans</b> . 3.2 <b>Nursing care</b> of hospitalised patients is co-ordinated according to veterinary treatment plans. 3.3 <b>Infection control</b> policies and procedures are developed and implemented in line with <b>workplace health and safety</b> and biosecurity requirements. 3.4 <b>Nursing procedures</b> are carried out in accordance with veterinary directions. 3.5 <b>Hospital rounds</b> are conducted with attending veterinarian and to ensure effective <b>nurse handovers</b> and appropriate rostering of nursing staff.
4. Monitor the maintenance of accurate records	4.1 <b>Clinic policies</b> and procedures for maintaining <b>appropriate documentation</b> of hospitalised patients is confirmed with nursing staff. 4.2 Clinic policies and procedures for recording and communicating patient status and progress to other staff and owners is confirmed with nursing staff.

**ELEMENT****PERFORMANCE CRITERIA**

- 4.3 A range of clinic policies and procedures are developed and implemented in order to facilitate nursing activities.
- 4.4 Nursing policies and procedures are reviewed in order to improve patient outcomes and customer service.
5. Contribute to professional development
- 5.1 Links with veterinary nurses and other relevant allied healthcare professionals are established.
- 5.2 Personal *professional development opportunities* are identified and used to plan skills and knowledge enhancement.
- 5.3 Changes in veterinary nursing procedures and techniques are monitored and reported to others.
- 5.4 Case presentations and/or literature reviews are presented to others in a public/peer setting.
- 5.5 Skills and knowledge are transferred to new contexts.

## Required Skills and Knowledge

This section describes the skills and knowledge required for this unit.

### Required skills Include:

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#### Ability to:

- apply problem solving skills to use available resources and anticipate veterinarians' requirements
- communicate effectively with veterinarian, other professionals, staff and clients using appropriate communication strategies and terminology whilst complying with practice protocols
- co-ordinate and/or carry out a range of veterinary nursing procedures including:
  - accurately monitoring, recording and recognising abnormal vital signs
  - administering/maintaining fluid therapy including blood products under veterinary direction
  - administering medications under veterinary direction by intravenous means, including use of fluid pumps
  - monitoring, cleaning and sterilising medical and surgical equipment, as required
  - performing emergency cardiopulmonary resuscitation on companion animals
  - placing intravenous and urinary catheters
- demonstrate empathy with animals
- employ interpersonal skills to relate to people from a range of social, cultural and ethnic backgrounds and with a range of physical and mental abilities
- employ safe and environmentally responsible organisational systems and procedures when working with and handling animals
- employ self-management skills to:
  - comply with policies and procedures
  - consistently evaluate and monitor own performance
  - seek learning opportunities
- manage veterinary nursing procedures through effective supervision and co-ordination of clinic nursing staff
- maintain highest standards of hygiene and infection control at all times to reduce the risk of infection and cross-infection
- record use of chemicals and medicines according to prescribed legislative requirements
- record patient details accurately and legibly
- use literacy skills to:
  - read, select and implement policies and procedures, including workplace health and safety, infection control and other clinic policies and procedures
  - complete relevant workplace documentation
  - prepare general information, reports and papers according to target audience
  - read and understand a variety of texts
- use numeracy skills to monitor patient vital signs and calculate drug doses and fluid rates

- use safe manual handling techniques and/or equipment
- use safe waste handling and disposal procedures
- use strategies to clarify, verify and confirm information and instructions.

**Required knowledge includes:**

- **Knowledge of:**
- accurate identification of surgical instruments
- anaesthetic risks
- animal nutrition and husbandry
- blood, blood types and transfusion medicine
- clinical signs of sepsis and wound breakdown
- clinical signs of shock
- common infectious diseases
- commonly used anaesthetic agents, planes and stages of anaesthesia and anaesthetic equipment
- critical care and intensive nursing routines
- emergency procedures including CPR
- fluid therapy
- principles of animal welfare and ethics
- quarantine of patients and infection control measures in an isolation facility
- relevant state or territory legislation and regulations relating to the practice of veterinary science, workplace health and safety and animal welfare
- relevant state or territory legislation covering the use of therapeutic and controlled substances
- waste disposal.

## Evidence Guide

The evidence guide provides advice on assessment and must be read in conjunction with the performance criteria, required skills and knowledge, range statement and the Assessment Guidelines for the Training Package.

### Overview of assessment

Critical aspects for assessment and evidence required to demonstrate competency in this unit

The evidence required to demonstrate competence in this Unit must be relevant to workplace operations and satisfy all of the requirements of the performance criteria, required skills and knowledge and the range statement of this Unit. Assessors should ensure that candidates can:

- recognise, communicate and respond to abnormal patient vital signs and anaesthetic complications
- co-ordinate hospital admissions and discharges
- supervise, roster and co-ordinate nursing staff in support of veterinary activities
- develop and implement infection control and workplace health and safety and biosecurity procedures
- demonstrate cardiopulmonary resuscitation
- assist in a range of veterinary procedures
- carry out a range of nursing procedures
- manage nursing care of hospitalised patients and patients in quarantine or isolation
- ensure the maintenance of accurate records
- develop, implement and review nursing policies and procedures in veterinary practice
- identify opportunities to contribute to the veterinary practice knowledge base and improve existing practices and procedures within scope of job responsibilities
- prepare and present case studies and/or literature reviews to others.

The skills and knowledge required to manage veterinary nursing procedures must be transferable to a range of work environments and contexts and include the ability to deal with unplanned events.

It is highly recommended that learners perform work placement in another approved veterinary practice or training workplace in order to gather further evidence of competence and demonstrate the transferability of skills and knowledge outcomes.



Context of and specific resources for assessment	<p>Assessment of this Unit is to be practical in nature and must be assessed in a veterinary practice in order to gain exposure to sufficient caseload.</p> <p>There must be access to a veterinary clinic or animal hospital, a range of companion animals as well as the appropriate equipment, resources and documentation to enable one to demonstrate competence.</p>
Method of assessment	<p>To ensure consistency in one's performance, competency should be demonstrated, to industry defined standards, on more than two occasions over an extended period of time, by preparing for a range of procedures, providing peri-operative nursing care and managing the hospitalisation of more complicated cases on a regular basis.</p> <p>The assessment strategy must include practical skills assessment. Suggested strategies for this Unit are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• written and/or oral assessment of candidate's required knowledge</li> <li>• observed, documented and first-hand testimonial evidence of candidate's application of practical tasks</li> <li>• case study analysis</li> <li>• role plays</li> <li>• third-party evidence</li> <li>• workplace documentation</li> <li>• portfolio.</li> </ul> <p>This Unit may be assessed in a holistic way with other Units of Competency relevant to the industry sector, workplace and job role.</p>
Guidance information for assessment	<p>Assessment methods should reflect workplace demands (e.g. literacy and numeracy demands) and the needs of particular target groups (e.g. people with disabilities, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, women, people with a language background other than English, youth and people from low socioeconomic backgrounds).</p>

## Range Statement

The range statement relates to the Unit of Competency as a whole. It allows for different work environments and situations that may affect performance. Bold italicised wording, if used in the performance criteria, is detailed below. Essential operating conditions that may be present with training and assessment (depending on the work situation, needs of the candidate, accessibility of the item, and local industry and regional contexts) may also be included.

<p><b><i>Animal first aid measures</i></b></p>	<p>Animal first aid measures include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• DR ABC (Danger, Response, Airway, Breathing, CPR)</li> <li>• perform cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR)</li> <li>• control haemorrhage</li> <li>• wound management</li> <li>• treatment of shock.</li> </ul>
<p><b><i>Materials and equipment</i></b></p>	<p>Materials and equipment include but are not limited to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• automatic processor</li> <li>• anaesthetic machines</li> <li>• drains</li> <li>• drapes</li> <li>• dressings and bandages</li> <li>• electrocautery</li> <li>• electrocardiograph (ECG)</li> <li>• endoscope</li> <li>• formalin pot</li> <li>• intravenous and urinary catheters</li> <li>• intravenous fluid pump</li> <li>• otoscope</li> <li>• pins</li> <li>• splints</li> <li>• surgical instruments</li> <li>• suture material</li> <li>• swabs</li> <li>• tubes</li> <li>• ultrasound</li> <li>• X-ray.</li> </ul>
<p><b><i>Veterinary procedures</i></b></p>	<p>Veterinary procedures may include but are not limited to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• abdominocentesis</li> <li>• arthrocentesis</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• cystocentesis</li><li>• blood collection</li><li>• express anal glands</li><li>• general surgery for example soft tissue surgeries such as:<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• desexing</li><li>• exploratory surgery</li><li>• lump removals</li><li>• induce anaesthesia</li><li>• insert intravenous catheter</li><li>• intubate patient's airway</li><li>• intravenous, subcutaneous or intramuscular injection</li><li>• placement of nasogastric feeding tube</li><li>• placement of nasal oxygen tubes</li><li>• physical examination</li><li>• thoracocentesis</li><li>• urinary catheterisation</li><li>• wound care or dressing.</li></ul></li></ul>
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<p><b><i>Vital signs</i></b></p>	<p>Vital signs include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• temperature</li> <li>• pulse</li> <li>• respiration</li> <li>• mucous membrane colour</li> <li>• capillary refill time</li> <li>• femoral pulse</li> <li>• menace response</li> <li>• pupillary light response</li> <li>• deep pain sensation</li> <li>• withdrawal response</li> <li>• jaw tone</li> <li>• swallowing and palpebral reflex</li> <li>• monitoring of vital signs may include the use of:</li> <li>• electrocardiograph (ECG)</li> <li>• pulse oximeters</li> <li>• capnographs</li> <li>• oesophageal stethoscopes</li> <li>• blood pressure monitors.</li> </ul>
<p><b><i>Post-operative procedures</i></b></p>	<p>Post-operative procedures may include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• removal of endotracheal tube</li> <li>• keeping patient warm and comfortable</li> <li>• nursing observation</li> <li>• monitoring analgesia</li> <li>• wound care</li> <li>• fluid therapy</li> <li>• administration of veterinary medications</li> <li>• communication with owner</li> <li>• reporting progress to veterinarian/s.</li> </ul>
<p><b><i>Referral veterinarian or other health care professional and/or service</i></b></p>	<p>Referral veterinarian or other health care professional and/or service may include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• behavioural specialist</li> <li>• chemo and radiation specialists</li> <li>• complementary therapy practitioners</li> <li>• acupuncturist</li> <li>• chiropractor</li> <li>• massage therapist</li> <li>• naturopath</li> <li>• physiotherapist</li> <li>• veterinary dentist</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• farrier</li><li>• medication manufacturer consultant</li><li>• nutritionist</li><li>• ophthalmologist</li><li>• orthopaedic surgeon</li><li>• plastic surgeon</li><li>• trauma specialist.</li></ul>
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<b><i>Veterinary instructions</i></b>	<p>Veterinary instructions may include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• frequency of observations</li> <li>• vital signs to be recorded</li> <li>• drugs doses, routes of administration and frequency</li> <li>• recommended diet</li> <li>• housing</li> <li>• toileting</li> <li>• wound care</li> <li>• other nursing or administrative requirements as directed.</li> </ul>
<b><i>Treatment plans</i></b>	<p>Treatment plans comprise a list of diagnostic tests, medications and procedures recommended by the veterinarian in order to aid in the diagnosis and treatment of a patient.</p>
<b><i>Nursing care</i></b>	<p>Nursing care includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• patient observation</li> <li>• patient monitoring</li> <li>• analgesia</li> <li>• fluid therapy</li> <li>• drug administration</li> <li>• wound management</li> <li>• maintenance of drains and tubes</li> <li>• nutrition</li> <li>• toileting</li> <li>• exercise</li> <li>• environmental enrichment</li> <li>• communication with veterinarian.</li> </ul>
<b><i>Infection control</i></b>	<p>Infection control means:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• appropriate cleaning and disinfection regimes for equipment, housing, bedding etc</li> <li>• the housing or hospitalisation of patients with infectious disease away from other patients, in order to reduce the spread of infection</li> <li>• quarantine may involve an isolation facility and the use of specific nursing techniques and personal protective equipment to aid infection control.</li> </ul>
<b><i>Workplace health and safety</i></b>	<p>Workplace health and safety includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• animal care for small, large and exotic animals has a range of associated risks from bites, kicks or</li> </ul>

	<p>scratches. All clinic duties should reflect an awareness of and a respect for these risks.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• safe work practices include the packaging and handling of loads, including animals and equipment. Appropriate safe handling techniques are used to reduce muscle load on exertion.</li><li>• the handling of chemicals and medicines in the clinic requires extra care to ensure safe work practices are maintained.</li><li>• clinic activities also have inherent risks including gas leakage, zoonoses, release of infective agents (both animal and human), needle pricks, and cuts from other sharps and exposure to ionizing radiation.</li><li>• biological hazardous waste and sharps disposal must be carried out in line with relevant workplace health and safety legislation.</li></ul>
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<b><i>Nursing procedures</i></b>	<p>Nursing procedures may include but are not limited to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• blood collection</li> <li>• express anal glands</li> <li>• induce anaesthesia</li> <li>• insert intravenous catheter</li> <li>• intubate patient's airway</li> <li>• intravenous, subcutaneous or intramuscular injection</li> <li>• placement of nasogastric feeding tube</li> <li>• placement of nasal oxygen tubes</li> <li>• urinary catheterisation</li> <li>• wound care or dressing.</li> </ul>
<b><i>Hospital rounds</i></b>	<p>Hospital rounds involve:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• case reviews performed by veterinary and nursing staff in the hospital ward.</li> <li>• hospital rounds usually consider treatment plans, patient progress and client communication.</li> </ul>
<b><i>Nurse handovers</i></b>	<p>Nurse handovers involve:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• hospital rounds for nursing staff</li> <li>• effective transfer of information regarding the care and progress of hospitalised patients</li> <li>• ensuring appropriate rostering of clinical staff</li> <li>• nurse handovers should occur at shift changes to ensure continuity of patient care.</li> </ul>
<b><i>Clinic policies</i></b>	<p>Clinic policies may cover:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• accessing and updating files</li> <li>• admission and discharge of patients</li> <li>• admittance of visitors</li> <li>• client privacy</li> <li>• compliance with relevant legislative requirements</li> <li>• guidelines for the sale of medicines and animal treatments (prescription and non-prescription)</li> <li>• information specific to the practice</li> <li>• recording information</li> <li>• security, confidentiality and privacy</li> <li>• type of information and advice that can be provided by staff.</li> </ul>
<b><i>Appropriate documentation</i></b>	<p>Appropriate documentation means:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• admission and client consent forms</li> <li>• written estimates</li> </ul>



	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• hospital whiteboards</li> <li>• medical and hospital record</li> <li>• treatment plans</li> <li>• anaesthetic records</li> <li>• dental charts</li> <li>• submission forms</li> <li>• laboratory reports</li> <li>• computer records</li> <li>• discharge notes</li> <li>• client handouts and instructions.</li> </ul>
<p><b><i>Professional development opportunities</i></b></p>	<p>Professional development opportunities may include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• attending conferences and seminars</li> <li>• completing additional relevant training</li> <li>• conducting research and presenting results</li> <li>• participating in forums</li> <li>• presenting information to staff and or others</li> <li>• reading research papers</li> <li>• visiting other practices.</li> </ul>

## **Unit Sector(s)**

Veterinary nursing