Qualification Title: New Zealand Certificate in Animal Technology (Level 5) with strands in Rural Animal Technician, and Veterinary Nursing Assistant

Qualification number: 2490

Date of review: 7 May 2018

Final decision on consistency of the qualification: National Consistency Confirmed

Threshold:

The threshold to determine sufficiency with the graduate profile was determined as evidence that under supervision, within a vet clinic OR large or mixed practice OR in the field, graduates will be able to assist with interfacing with clients.

In addition to this, graduates of the **Rural Animal Technician strand** in a rural setting will be able to assist with:

- a) Maintaining and performing technical tasks related to animal health, welfare and husbandry;
- b) Dispensing and administering veterinary medicines; and
- c) Collecting, testing and preparing diagnostic samples for dispatch.

In addition to this, graduates of the **Veterinary Nursing Assistant strand** in a veterinary clinic setting will be able to assist with:

- a) Maintaining animal health and husbandry including routine diagnosis;
- b) Caring for hospitalised patients; and
- c) Surgery preparation and anaesthesia.

Tertiary Education Organisations with sufficient evidence

Tertiary Education Organisation	Final rating
AG Challenge Limited	Sufficient
Ara Institute of Canterbury	Sufficient
Eastern Institute of Technology	Sufficient
National Trade Academy Limited	Sufficient
Otago Polytechnic	Sufficient
Southern Institute of Technology	Sufficient
Toi Ohomai Institute of Technology	Sufficient
Unitec Institute of Education	Sufficient
Universal College of Learning (UCOL)	Sufficient
Vet Nurse Plus Limited	Sufficient

Waikato Institute of Technology	Sufficient
Wellington Institute of Technology	Sufficient

Introduction

This 120-credit, level 5 qualification is for people with previous animal handling experience who wish to assist in a veterinary related field or veterinary clinic with either companion or rural animals, or work independently as a rural animal technician.

Evidence

The education organisations provided a range of evidence to demonstrate that their graduates met the graduate profile outcomes. Educational organisations presented evidence relating to:

- Programme rigor including photographs and samples of student work, assessment and moderation, real-world teaching and learning and alignment with GPOs.
- Student, graduate and industry feedback
- Graduate destinations and employer feedback.

The criteria used to judge the evaluation question were:

- The nature, quality and integrity of the evidence presented by the education organisations

- How well the organisation has analysed, interpreted and validated the evidence, and used the understanding gained to achieve actual or improved consistency

- The extent to which the education organisation can reasonably justify and validate claims and statements relating to the consistency of graduate outcomes, including in relation to other providers of programmes leading to the qualification

How well does the evidence provided by the education organisation demonstrate that its graduates match the graduate outcomes at the appropriate threshold?

Evidence of programme robustness was strong in the majority of submissions. In addition to this all programmes are required to have 240 hours of practice in related settings to ensure students can demonstrate competence in real or realistic settings. Several providers have achieved this by establishing veterinary clinics that operate on commercial lines, and others are closely aligned to one or more veterinary practice. Rural Animal Technicians also work out in the field in a farm related setting.

In general, education organisations could provide more robust evidence from work placement partners, employers and level 6 teaching staff.

Overall the evidence provided by the majority of providers makes a convincing case for this evidence to demonstrate that the graduates match the graduate outcomes at the appropriate threshold. In some cases, the evidence could have been strengthened and extended to cover a wider range of aspects.

Special Focus

This qualification has two strands, namely Rural Animal Technician and Veterinary Nursing Assistant. The qualification comprises 10 core credits and 110 credits specific to each strand. Of the 12 providers of this qualification, two offer both strands, another offering the Rural Animal Technician strand only and nine the Veterinary Nursing Assistant strand. Numbers of graduates per provider varied from 7 to 71 in 2016 and 8 to 53 in 2017.

Examples of good practice

Most providers made a concerted effort to contact graduates to gather authentic graduate destination data to inform both their self-assessment and the consistency review. One organisation used multiple strategies to gain such feedback including questionnaires, phone and video interviews and a Facebook page. In several cases questions for graduates are aligned with the Graduate Profile Outcomes.

The majority of providers belong to a Cluster Group which provides a forum for discussion as well as cross-moderation and benchmarking.

Self-reflection and areas for improvement were included in a number of reports and presentations evidencing self-assessment capability.

Issues and concerns

While a number of providers had gained feedback from teaching staff of the NZ Diploma in Veterinary Nursing (level 6) programme, several did not have this evidence. As the majority of graduate's progress to the diploma, this information is significant in determining whether students have the necessary skills, knowledge and attributes to transition into this programme. Providers should carefully consider what documents are included in their submission, and evaluate their usefulness in providing authentic evidence that graduates are meeting the graduate profile outcomes. For example, a number of organisations provided Education Performance Indicators for the qualification. This data does not provide evidence that graduates are able to apply their knowledge, skills and attributes to the appropriate level in the relevant occupational setting or next programme of study.

Providers should be clear whether they are referring to students or graduates; industry or employers, and should also state who is being referred to as 'stakeholders' as this may include or exclude students.

Providers who offer both strands should provide separate descriptions and data on each. Combing both strands does not provide an accurate enough snapshot of achievement against the qualification GPOs.

Recommendations to Qualification Developer

The organisations had several recommendations for the developer.

a) That the name of the qualification be reviewed as 'Veterinary Nursing Assistant' was not an established role in the industry.

a) The utility of the qualification was questioned as it was becoming evident that students were only gaining employment after completing the level 6 qualification. The vast majority of students completing level 5 were therefore enrolling in the level 6. The separation of these two qualifications needs to be reviewed.

b) The qualification states that graduates would provide assistance under the direction of a veterinarian. It was considered that this was unrealistic as most vets did not provide this direct supervision, which, in most cases, was undertaken by the vet nurses.

c) While the qualification's Strategic Purpose Statement indicated that the graduates would work 'under the direction of a veterinarian', it also stated that graduates of the rural animal technician strand could also 'work independently as a rural animal technician'. This created confusion.

d) A number of the organisations recommended that the gradate outcome 'Graduates will be able to work in client business interface of animal related facility' should be at level 6 and not level 5 as this frequently required the person to provide first line triage which

requires advanced knowledge. Also in the rural environment where Rural Animal Technicians would be working, this aspect of the role was very limited in scope and frequency.