

Qualification Title: New Zealand Diploma in Veterinary Nursing (Level 6)

Qualification number: 2491

Date of review: 10 April 2019

This report refers to graduates awarded this qualification prior to: 31 December 2018

Final decision on consistency of the qualification: *National consistency is not yet confirmed*

Threshold:

The threshold to determine sufficiency with the graduate profile was determined as evidence of:

Graduates being able to provide surgical and medical veterinary nursing, manage veterinary nursing services and perform diagnostic sampling and medical imaging

Education Organisations with sufficient evidence

The final decision on the sufficiency of an education organisation evidence, will be updated as other organisations show sufficient evidence.

Education Organisation	Final rating
Ara Institute of Canterbury	Sufficient
Vet Nurse Plus Limited	Sufficient
Unitec Institute of Technology (Unitec)	Sufficient
Wellington Institute of Technology (WelTec)	Sufficient
Universal College of Learning (UCOL)	Sufficient
Otago Polytechnic	Sufficient
Southern Institute of Technology (SIT)	Sufficient
Waikato Institute of Technology (Wintec)	Sufficient

Introduction

The purpose of this Level 6 ,120 credit Diploma is to prepare individuals as veterinary nursing care professionals with the skills, knowledge and attributes needed to help animals attain, maintain or recover optimal health and quality of life. The qualification provides individuals with technical veterinary nursing skills in a clinical environment as well as the ability to manage patients and clients, and follow protocols in all aspects of clinical veterinary practice.

Graduates may be employed in veterinary clinics as a veterinary nurse and will be able to practice sustainably and engage in on-going learning in the field.

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This qualification is targeted at individuals who have already completed the Veterinary Nursing Assistant strand of New Zealand Certificate in Animal Technology (Level 5) or equivalent and who seek to further their veterinary nursing education.

The Primary ITO is the qualification developer for this qualification and will be leading a qualification review later this year. A representative from the ITO participated in the Consistency Review meeting, along with representatives of the nine education organisations who have had graduates from their programmes of study. A member of NZQA's Approvals and Accreditation team also attended the meeting as an observer.

During the graduate reporting period (1 January 2014 to 31 December 2018) the nine organisations had a total of 360 graduates of the New Zealand Diploma in Veterinary Nursing.

Evidence

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

The criteria used to judge the evaluation question were:

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

Programme evidence

As the prerequisite for this qualification is the Veterinary Nursing Assistant strand of the New Zealand Certificate in Animal Technology (Level 5), the education organisations outlined the processes they employed to ensure candidates held this qualification or were assessed for equivalent skills, knowledge and experience before enrolling and commencing the programme. All nine organisations confirmed they had appropriate entry criteria/selection, or recognition of prior learning processes in place to ensure this requirement had been met by all their students who were now graduates. Whilst the majority of students had completed the Level 5 qualification (Veterinary Nursing Assistant strand), or the earlier National Certificate, a small number had entered from the workforce with experience or other related qualifications.

The qualification document sets out the following general conditions relating to the programme.

- Programmes leading to this qualification should include a minimum of 240 hours in a veterinary clinic setting, to provide assimilation of theoretical knowledge and practical skills learned.
- All outcomes in this qualification require aspects of record keeping, communication, cultural recognition and sensitivity, and professional and ethical behaviour which should be considered as part of the assessment process.
- Compliance with workplace health and safety requirements, sustainable practices (environmental, social, financial), and animal welfare standards, applies across all outcomes.

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The organisations each explained how they provisioned the 240 hours of clinical experience either through clinical placements in local veterinary clinics, or in clinics on their campuses.

In addition to these general conditions, there are specific conditions relating to each graduate profile outcome, detailing topics and procedures which must be included in the programme delivery and assessment of the outcomes.

Whilst the organisations had demonstrated how they were going to meet these conditions in their applications for approval of their programmes of study, the Reviewer sought evidence of how they were continuing to deliver on these commitments. Some of the organisations included relevant evidence in their submissions and/or presentations, and others provided this evidence with their post-meeting submission. Overall, this evidence showed that the conditions were continuing to be met.

There was a range of evidence presented to demonstrate that the programmes had been well designed, with matrixes demonstrating how the graduate outcomes were aligned with the learning outcomes and assessment activities. All nine organisations provided evidence of their internal quality improvement processes, and for those whose delivery was in the early stages (first programme run in 2018) their plans to review and enhance programmes based on results and feedback from their industry partners.

Moderation evidence showed that internal moderation practices were in place and had resulted in enhancements to assessment and marking. The most impactful practice was the external moderation conducted at the annual Cluster Group meetings, in which all nine organisations actively participate. The moderation includes course descriptors, sample assessments and marking schedules, marked assessments/portfolios, as well as their internal moderation process and outcomes. There was clear evidence that this moderation event is taken seriously and valued by the organisations, as well as providing an opportunity to share practice and resources. Moderation outcomes are well recorded and responded to in the organisation's Action Plans and also recorded in their programme self-assessments. There was an issue in one organisation's clinical assessment practice identified which is now being reviewed.

Graduate feedback

Some organisations had utilised well designed surveys relating questions to the graduate outcomes, and results were presented in their submissions. Their results were generally very positive, with one organisation's findings showing that all of their graduates (96% response rate from the cohort of 26) considered they were well prepared in all the graduate outcomes. This was supported by videoed interviews and triangulated with responses from employers. Other organisations had low response rates to surveys and results were not representative of their graduates.

A few organisations presented feedback from course evaluations which largely related to the student's satisfaction with the course delivery and materials. In these cases, new surveys or evidence collection methodologies, were being worked on with plans to implement these with their 2019 graduates.

Destinations and Employer Feedback

Graduate destination data was presented by all organisations, showing where graduates were employed (e.g. Veterinary Practices or related industry roles), were seeking employment, or had progressed to further learning such as a science degree, although this

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qualification does not specifically have an educational pathway. Some examples of these destinations include - 47 of 56 graduates, over three years, were employed as veterinary nurses, some in part-time, casual and locum roles. One provider reported that they had found that a significant number of their graduates had initially been employed as veterinary nurses, however after a year had moved on to other work with better pay and conditions.

Employer feedback had been collected via formal surveys, focus groups and from Local Advisory Groups. Other, more informal, approaches were also used to collect feedback from supervisors whilst students were in clinical practice, unstructured telephone interviews, and general feedback gathered by tutors through their industry connections. These were not always routinely recorded making this type of evidence more difficult to present and use to support claims that graduates had met the qualification profile.

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

The educational organisations presented a range of evidence. Whilst there was some variability in the presentation of this evidence and the analysis, most were able to make convincing cases that their evidence demonstrated their graduates had met the graduate outcomes at the appropriate threshold.

All organisations provided good evidence of how modules/courses, learning outcomes and assessments were mapped to the graduate profile outcomes, assuring good coverage of these outcomes in their programmes of study.

The national moderation conducted annually at the Veterinary Nursing Cluster Group meeting, which all organisations participate in, is a well organised and robust approach and the evidence from these moderation activities, results and action plans provided a sound basis for having confidence in the quality of the organisation's assessment of the four graduate profile outcomes. One organisation had an assessment issue identified via this national moderation exercise which required some attention for the current cohort of learners.

Graduate and employer feedback were the other key evidence collected and presented that supported, to varying extents, claims the graduates match the graduate outcomes at the appropriate threshold. Whilst, response rates to surveys ranged from being high to poor and not representative of the graduate cohorts, and in some cases, survey questions were not aligned with graduate outcomes, or the results were not well analysed and reported; graduates and employers, expressed confidence that they met all the graduate outcomes. Most organisations presented plans to further enhance or redesign their evidence collection processes from both graduates and employers in their submissions and post-meeting reflections.

Graduate destination data generally indicated graduates were gaining employment in veterinary clinics or related industry roles. Some of the organisations needed to improve their approaches for keeping track of graduates and were working on systems. This evidence added support to claims that graduates met qualification outcomes.

All organisations presented evidence of their engagement with industry at a local level. In some cases this evidence was stronger and indicated a closer connectivity than in others, where it is obvious further work is need to strengthen these ties. Generally, this evidence supported claims that graduates met the outcomes and were fit for purpose.

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Special Focus (includes special focus on a strand or outcome)

No special focus

Examples of good practice

Veterinary Nursing External Moderation. Conducted annually this activity provides the organisations with opportunity for engaging in robust reflection and evaluation of their peers' course materials and assessments, benchmarking of student results and graduate outcomes, and a platform for sharing of resources. The collegiality amongst the group, demonstrated at the consistency review meeting, confirms that this cluster group is operating effectively as a professional support group, as well as developing the skills for being a critical friend for others delivering the same programme.

Organisations, particularly those for which this was their first consistency review, used the meeting as a learning opportunity, taking on-board the feedback from the Reviewer, and presenting well-thought through post-meeting reflections, and detailing planned improvements.

Issues and concerns

No issues or concerns.

Recommendations to Qualification Developer

There were no specific recommendations to the Qualification Developer. The educational organisations are keen to engage in the qualification review process and would like to see more specificity in the graduate profile as an outcome of the review.