What does a career in veterinary nursing involve?

A well-trained and dedicated veterinary nursing team is the key stone of any veterinary practice, providing support to animals, clients, veterinary surgeons and the reception team.

The responsibilities of the veterinary nursing team are extremely varied and each day presents new challenges. Nonetheless, having a commitment to animal care and putting their welfare first is at the heart of veterinary nursing.

As a veterinary nurse you will develop and utilise a multitude of skills, as well as a thorough understanding of the science behind animal health and behaviour. Duties of the veterinary nursing team include handling patients during treatment, monitoring patients during anaesthesia, collecting samples for analysis, dispensing and administering medication, and feeding, grooming and exercising animals in the practice’s care.

Nursing staff may also run clinics for preventative and follow-up care; such as, puppy and kitten health checks, weight management, pre and post-operative check-ups, microchipping, immunisation and dental care.

Veterinary nurses also have an important role in educating clients about animal welfare. Further, veterinary nurses play a significant part in animal care in the community; from teaching children in schools about how to look after their pets, to providing home visits and care to the pets of elderly or disabled owners.

Is it for me?

If you are enthusiastic, caring and a good communicator, who enjoys working with animals, a career in veterinary nursing could be for you.

A dedication to the profession and a commitment to always doing what is best for the animals entrusted in your care is of paramount importance. Animals require around-the-clock care, so you must be prepared to work variable hours, including evenings, weekends and bank holidays.

Good communication and people skills are also essential for a career in veterinary nursing, particularly when conveying upsetting and difficult news to owners. Veterinary nursing is physically and emotionally demanding, but at the same time, extremely rewarding. As a veterinary nurse, you’ll play a valuable role in the welfare of animals, develop lasting relationships with owners and actively improve lives everyday.
How do I become a veterinary nurse?

At Central College of Animal Studies, our vocational training courses provide students with the necessary knowledge and practical skills to be a valued member of the veterinary nursing team. We provide Level 2 and Level 3 qualifications, all of which are work-based and carried out in a training practice to ensure students are confident in a veterinary environment.

In order to enrol on a course, you will need a minimum of five GCSEs – or equivalent – at grade C or above, including Maths, English Language and a Science.

What about career progression?

The opportunities and flexibility of veterinary nursing are among the many benefits of this career path, and these are also extended to various options for career progression.

Demonstrating an excellent knowledge of animal science and nursing acumen may naturally lead to nurturing other veterinary nursing staff in positions such as head nurse or in a teaching role. Similarly, administrative skills and leadership may result in a career in practice management.

Alternatively, you may wish to further develop your skills in certain areas of veterinary medicine by specialising in equine, exotic or small animal care, surgical or medical nursing, or in behaviour counselling, diagnostics, rehabilitation, anaesthesia or laboratory work.

Lastly, veterinary nursing is not limited to the practice; opportunities to broaden your knowledge or support animal projects abroad are available to veterinary nurses. From the WVS Mission Rabies project in India to the African Lion Foundation’s war against poaching, veterinary nurses can help to reduce the suffering of animals worldwide.

Where do I sign up?

Call 01359 243405, email enquiries@ccoas.org.uk or head to www.ccoas.org.uk to receive further information about enrolling on any of our veterinary nursing courses.