



**Australian Government**

# **ACMVET406A Nurse animals**

**Release 2**

## ACMVET406A Nurse animals

### Modification History

| Release | TP Version | Comments                                                       |
|---------|------------|----------------------------------------------------------------|
| 2       | ACM10v3    | Reference to OHS legislation replaced with generic terminology |
| 1       | ACM10v1    | Initial release. Supersedes and is equivalent to RUV4606A      |

### Unit Descriptor

This Unit of Competency covers the process of providing high quality nursing care for all patients (animals) treated or housed at the clinic. It includes providing advice to clients (owners), monitoring animals and providing animal first aid as required.

### Application of the Unit

This Unit applies to a veterinary nurse working under supervision of a veterinarian in a veterinary clinic or similar practice. 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. Identify patients and monitor clinical signs              | <p>1.1. Patients are <b>identified</b> according to <b>features</b> and fixed identification.</p> <p>1.2. <b>Animal first aid</b> is applied in accordance with clinic policy and veterinary advice if required.</p> <p>1.3. <b>Clinical signs</b> are documented through observation and owner interview and are communicated to the veterinarian.</p> <p>1.4. <b>Audible, visual or measurable signs of pain</b> are identified, recorded and used to assist in the identification of a need for analgesics.</p> <p>1.5. <b>Behavioural changes</b> indicating pain are identified and reported to the veterinarian.</p> <p>1.6. Patient needs are established in consultation with the veterinarian.</p> |
| 2. Communicate with clients concerning hospitalised patients | <p>2.1. Clients are counselled and informed of patient's progress and condition at regular intervals.</p> <p>2.2. Client complaints are responded to and grief support is carried out in accordance with clinic policy.</p> <p>2.3. Patient records are checked to ensure instructed routines are communicated to client.</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |
| 3. Provide animal care in pain situations                    | <p>3.1. An empathetic and caring approach is utilised in the husbandry of animals in pain.</p> <p>3.2. Compassionate and safe handling techniques are employed in accordance with <b>workplace health and safety</b> requirements.</p> <p>3.3. Industry-recognised <b>pain management techniques</b> are used to minimise patient trauma.</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |
| 4. Care for animals                                          | <p>4.1. Animals are safely returned to owner or housing after treatment.</p> <p>4.2. Nursing intervention is provided for individual animals in accordance with clinic policy.</p> <p>4.3. <b>Prescribed routines</b> are implemented and treatments are recorded.</p> <p>4.4. Patient observations are recorded in accordance with clinic policy.</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |
| 5. Care for hospitalised animals                             | <p>5.1. Basic animal welfare requirements are provided in accordance with clinic policies.</p> <p>5.2. <b>Environment</b> specifically required for the individual animal is maintained in accordance with the veterinarian's instruction.</p> <p>5.3. Patients' bodily functions are monitored and facilitated according to instructions.</p> <p>5.4. Regular <b>monitoring</b> of patients is carried out and</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |

| ELEMENT | PERFORMANCE CRITERIA                                                                                                                                                                 |
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|         | <p>recorded in accordance with clinic policy.</p> <p>5.5. <b><i>Industry-recognised animal psychology procedures</i></b> are carried out in conjunction with patient monitoring.</p> |

## Required Skills and Knowledge

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

### Required skills

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#### Ability to:

- employ keen observation skills to recognise signs or behavioural change indicators in patients
- recognise, respond to and assist with emergencies
- undertake animal first aid procedures
- use, and record the use of, chemicals and medicines in accordance with relevant state or territory legislation
- use literacy skills to read, select and implement policies and procedures, including workplace health and safety, infection control and other clinic policies and procedures; coordinate patient admission and discharge; implement sequenced written instructions; and record patient details accurately and legibly
- use oral communication skills/language required to fulfil the job role as specified by the clinic, including negotiating and questioning techniques, active listening, asking for clarification from veterinarian, and acknowledging and responding to a range of views
- use numeracy skills required to weigh and measure animals, check drug dosages and record patient information
- use interpersonal skills to relate to people from a range of social, cultural and ethnic backgrounds and with a range of physical and mental abilities
- use problem-solving skills to use available resources, prioritise tasks and use appropriate pain management techniques
- work effectively in a team situation in the clinic, gently and carefully handle animals in pain, act promptly and effectively in response to the veterinarian's instructions and recognise and appreciate pain in animals.

#### Required knowledge

- animal behaviour characteristics and traits
- animal first aid procedures and techniques
- animal pain management procedures and techniques
- animal physiology and anatomy, applied pharmacology and the range of analgesics, including appropriate antagonists, related to nursing animals
- relevant national, state or territory legislative requirements for animal welfare, transportation of animals, animal management and veterinary practitioners Acts that underpin routine animal health advice
- requirements for safe and suitable housing and appropriate materials for its construction
- veterinary chemicals, the relevant poisons schedule and the legislative requirements relevant to their use.

## 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.

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| <b>Overview of assessment</b>                                                                       |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |
| <b>Critical aspects for assessment and evidence required to demonstrate competency in this Unit</b> | <p>The evidence required to demonstrate competency 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:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• identify patients and determine patient histories</li> <li>• provide animal first aid as required</li> <li>• observe patients and maintain accurate records for clinical signs, pain and behavioural changes</li> <li>• meet patients' needs whilst they are treated or housed at clinic</li> <li>• inform clients of patients' progress and counsel clients accordingly</li> <li>• communicate effectively with the veterinarian and clients.</li> </ul> <p>The skills and knowledge required to nurse animals must be transferable to a range of work environments and contexts and include the ability to deal with unplanned events.</p> |
| <b>Context of and specific resources for assessment</b>                                             | <p>Assessment for this Unit is to be largely practical in nature and will be most appropriately assessed in a veterinary nursing workplace with access to the appropriate equipment and/or resources to enable one to demonstrate competence.</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |
| <b>Method of assessment</b>                                                                         | <p>To ensure consistency of performance, competency should be demonstrated, to industry defined standards, on more than two occasions over a period of time in order to cover a variety of circumstances, patients, cases and responsibilities and over a number of assessment activities.</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> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |

|                                            |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |
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|                                            | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• simulation exercises that reproduce normal work conditions</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> |
| <b>Guidance information for assessment</b> | 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).           |

## Range Statement

### 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.

|                                                                                                                       |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Animal (patient) <b><i>identification</i></b> and <b><i>features</i></b> may include:                                 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• coat or skin colours and texture, markings and patterns, permanent scars, toe nail colour and eye colour</li> <li>• height, age and sex</li> <li>• microchip, ear tags, tattoos and markings, and leg bands.</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                     |
| <b><i>Animal first aid</i></b> may be required for:                                                                   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• haemorrhage</li> <li>• fractures and dislocations</li> <li>• injuries to and failing of organs and systems</li> <li>• respiratory distress</li> <li>• toxicity</li> <li>• wounds.</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                |
| <b><i>Clinical signs</i></b> that may be observed may include:                                                        | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• blood pressure</li> <li>• pulse rate and quality</li> <li>• respiratory rate and effort</li> <li>• rectal temperature</li> <li>• pulse oximetry and blood gases</li> <li>• anaesthesia depth</li> <li>• capillary refill time</li> <li>• palpebral reflex</li> <li>• heart rate</li> <li>• mucous membrane colour</li> <li>• pedal withdrawal reflex.</li> </ul>            |
| <b><i>Audible, visible or measurable signs of pain</i></b> , including <b><i>behavioural changes</i></b> may include: | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• biting, kicking and scratching</li> <li>• blood pressure</li> <li>• displacement of bones</li> <li>• elevated temperature</li> <li>• increased heart rate</li> <li>• increased respiration</li> <li>• increased vocalisation</li> <li>• pale mucous membranes</li> <li>• straining or arching of the back,</li> <li>• trembling and changes in normal physiology</li> </ul> |

**RANGE STATEMENT**

- withdrawal of affected limb.

| <b>RANGE STATEMENT</b>                                                                 |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b><i>Workplace health and safety</i></b> risks when working with animals may include: | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• animal bites, kicks, scratches and crush injuries</li> <li>• biological hazardous waste and sharps disposal</li> <li>• handling of chemicals and medicines</li> <li>• gas leakage</li> <li>• inhalation of aerosol particles</li> <li>• intraocular contamination</li> <li>• manual handling, including carrying, lifting and shifting</li> <li>• needle pricks and cuts from other sharps</li> <li>• release of infective agents (animal and human)</li> <li>• slippery or uneven work surfaces</li> <li>• zoonoses.</li> </ul> |
| <b><i>Pain management techniques</i></b> may include:                                  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• appropriate analgesics</li> <li>• comfortable bedding</li> <li>• heat source</li> <li>• limb elevation using restraints or cradles</li> <li>• maintenance of body temperature and patient airway.</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |
| <b><i>Prescribed routines</i></b> may include:                                         | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• bandaging and wound management</li> <li>• bathing, grooming and nail clipping or beak trimming</li> <li>• checking body weights to gauge hospitalisation success or stress</li> <li>• exercising and providing nutritional requirements</li> <li>• maintaining urinary and intravenous catheters</li> <li>• monitoring basic drug dosages</li> <li>• neonatal nursing</li> <li>• oral and injectable administration of medications</li> <li>• parasitic control treatments.</li> </ul>                                           |
| <b><i>Appropriate environment</i></b> may include:                                     | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• elements, such as:             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• atmosphere:                 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• light, sound, suitable bedding and warmth</li> </ul> </li> <li>• access to food and water, as appropriate</li> <li>• allowing animals to facilitate bodily functions with non-intervention.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                  |
| <b><i>Monitoring patients</i></b> may include:                                         | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• observing and recording:             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• pulse, heart rate and respiration</li> </ul> </li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |

| RANGE STATEMENT                                                                |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                |
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|                                                                                | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• temperature</li><li>• capillary refill time</li><li>• palpebral reflex</li><li>• demeanour</li><li>• urinary and faecal ability</li><li>• output and volume</li><li>• fluid and food intake ability and volume</li><li>• observation and maintenance of intravenous fluid lines</li><li>• oxygen therapy</li><li>• in-dwelling urinary and intravenous catheters</li><li>• all changes must be reported to the veterinarian.</li></ul> |
| <b><i>Industry-recognised animal psychological procedures</i></b> may include: | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• mental stimulation as required</li><li>• provision of comfort (e.g. touching, stroking, speaking, soothing and reassuring) and privacy (e.g. hiding places for wildlife and shy species), according to individual animal requirements</li></ul>                                                                                                                                                                                        |

## Unit Sector(s)

Veterinary nursing