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**Fitness to Practise
(HE13)**

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Description:

This document outlines the Fitness to Practise regulations applicable to all students across TEC Partnership, on a programme that involves professional practice placements and determination of fitness to practise. These regulations determine the procedures that govern the definition, investigation and outcomes of allegations of professional misconduct and/or professional unsuitability.

If you need any further advice on how the regulations work, you should contact the HE Quality Office.

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This document is available in alternative forms

Reference	Change
1.1	New
1.2	Update to include appeal procedures.
1.2.1	Update to replace Progression and Standards Committee with Academic Authority and Standards Senior Committee.
1.3	Update to incorporate East Riding College and to change responsible committee to Higher Education Quality Improvement Committee
1.5	Added a definition of Fitness to Practise 1.2 Statement added 3.5, 3.6, 3.7 Additions to incorporate Veterinary Nursing 8.2 Updated regulations Update Group to TEC Partnership Update Senior Management Team to Senior Leadership Team Update Higher Education Quality Improvement Committee to Higher Education Curriculum, Quality and Standards Gender pronouns updated Minor grammatical errors Update school to area Added an appendix for Veterinary Nursing

1.0 Introduction

1.1 Fitness to Practise Definition

Fitness to Practise is about demonstrating, in both professional and private life, the ability to meet professional standards of character, competence and health.

1.2 A student's fitness to practise is called into question when their conduct, behaviour, competence or health raises persistent concerns regarding their suitability to continue on a programme which leads to registration with a professional, statutory and regulatory body (PSRB) or in some cases where professional practice leads to contact with children or vulnerable adults.

1.3 The TEC Partnership has a responsibility to ensure that its graduates, on programmes which lead to professional practitioner status, are 'fit to practise' in their profession once they have completed their studies.

1.4 This Code of Practice does not apply to students on BSC Nursing (Adult) G1FHE who should follow the policy of the University of Hull: <https://www.hull.ac.uk/choose-hull/university-and-region/governance/policies.aspx>

2.0 Purpose

2.1 The purpose of this policy is to define the intentions, expectations and actions with respect to assuring applicants' and students' fitness to practise.

2.2 The policy describes the procedures which must be followed in all cases where an area is responsible for delivering a programme which results in a professional registration or eligibility to apply for professional registration, or in careers which give access to children and/or vulnerable adults.

2.3 This policy applies to all applicants, students and students who have suspended studies who are registered with a programme validated by TEC Partnership or validated by another Higher Education institution (HEI) on a programme delivered by TEC Partnership. TEC Partnership's Executive Leadership Team is responsible as the ultimate arbiter for the interpretation and application of the policy.

2.4 Those applying this policy must ensure that the proceedings take account of:

- the protection of patients, clients and the public
- the declaration and maintenance of standards of professional and personal conduct and behaviour
- the need to preserve public confidence in students of the relevant profession
- the need to maintain confidence in the ability of TEC Partnership to deal effectively and appropriately with fitness to practise allegations about students on programmes that lead to registration with a PSRB

2.5 Those applying this policy will take a sensitive yet efficient, communicative and constructive approach throughout all stages ensuring that every reasonable effort is made to comply with timescales. In exceptional cases, timescales may be extended to ensure fairness.

2.6 Where proceedings are instigated under this policy, actions should not also be taken against the same applicant/student under the regulations for Academic Misconduct, Student Disciplinary or Fitness to Study.

2.7 Students must be given the opportunity to explain, respond and defend their case. Students must be given the opportunity to seek appropriate representation from within the TEC Partnership or from acceptable external sources. Legal representation will not be permitted.

2.8 Support in the application of this policy may be sought from the relevant PSRB.

2.9 All matters relating to proceedings pertaining to this policy must remain confidential to the parties concerned. TEC Partnership may however, exercise its duty (in some cases its legal duty) to inform professional statutory or regulatory bodies and/or organisations such as the Police, Home Office, Social Services, UCAS, Student Loans Company etc. in the sharing of information.

2.10 On completion of any proceedings, all correspondence will be placed within the student file and secured copies maintained in the HE Quality office.

2.11 The standard of proof applied to the factual aspects of the proceedings is based on 'the balance of probabilities'.

3.0 Principles of Professional Behaviour and Standards

3.1 Students are encouraged to demonstrate high standards in both their professional and personal lives and in accordance with the rules, regulations, policies, procedures and codes of conduct of the relevant PSRBs.

3.2 Students must adhere to TEC Partnership regulations on professional behaviour in order to demonstrate that they are fit to practise. These cover the following areas:

- Relationships with patients and clients
- Probity – acting with honesty, integrity and worthy of trust
- Maintain effective, good practice
- Working with others
- Serious health issues

3.3 Fitness to Practise indicates that a student is capable of safe and effective practice without supervision, and that their conduct and behaviour meets the standards specified by the relevant PSRB responsible for allowing candidates who complete their studies to be admitted to practise in the relevant profession.

3.4 Students are required to conduct themselves in a professional manner consistent with both their profession and as a student of the TEC Partnership.

3.5 Fitness to Practise assessment is a continuous process which is monitored and assessed throughout a student's period of study.

3.6 For some programmes, such as Veterinary Nursing, this continuous assessment will be fundamental to the programme of study and will be formally assessed. Failure to meet certain competencies could affect the student's ability to be a practitioner in their chosen field.

3.7 For other programmes, the Fitness to Practise assessment may take place as a formal declaration, such as satisfactory Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) clearance.

3.8 Applicants and students are required to disclose any criminal convictions (including spent convictions within the provisions of the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974 and 2020) and inclusion on the DBS Barred List prior to admission and whilst remaining a student of TEC Partnership. Should an applicant or student fail to disclose information required, the applicant/student will be referred to the Fitness to Practise Committee.

3.9 Students must be aware that their behaviour outside the practice environment, including in their personal time, may impact on whether they are deemed 'fit to practise'. Behaviour at all times must warrant the trust of the public and their profession.

3.10 A non-exhaustive list of common areas of concern pertaining to professional conduct and relating to fitness to practise include:

- Aggressive, violent or threatening behaviour including bullying, criminal convictions or cautions
- Drug, alcohol or substance misuse
- Persistent inappropriate professional attitude
- Persistent rudeness to others
- Unlawful discrimination
- Harassment
- Dishonesty, theft or fraud including dishonesty outside the professional role
- Breach of confidentiality

4.0 Fitness to Practise – Application, Admissions and Enrolment

4.1 All potential and current students on programmes leading to a registration with professional, statutory or Regulatory Body (PSRB) are required to undergo an enhanced Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) check prior to enrolment. If information is received from the check which had not already been declared by the student, the case will be referred to the Fitness to Practise committee for further investigation.

4.2 To ensure that TEC Partnership meets its obligations, an assessment will be made on a potential student's fitness to practise based on the information available at that time. An application may be refused where the area believes that an individual is not fit to undertake their chosen programme leading to registration with a PSRB.

4.3 Where a student declares a criminal conviction or caution, they will be contacted by the Learner Services teams at the relevant college and asked to supply more information.

4.4 The anonymised information will then be considered by the Fitness to Practise committee which may include representation from the relevant PRSB to consider the information before making a decision on the application.

4.5 Applicants who declare an existing disability or health condition will also be required to undergo further assessment to ensure that reasonable adjustments can be made to assure fitness to practise as well as fitness to study.

4.6 Students will be required at enrolment (and re-enrolment) to self-declare information with regard to health, criminal convictions, disciplinary or formal proceedings by PSRBs or local authorities, severe mental or psychological conditions, serious recurring physical conditions or a failure to follow vaccination requirements. Failure to supply information which is subsequently brought to TEC

Partnership's attention will result in a referral to the Fitness to Practise committee.

4.7 Positive declarations will be referred to the Fitness to Practise Committee where further information may be considered.

5.0 Process - Receiving information and key stages

5.1 Information or concerns about a student or applicant's fitness to practise may be received from a variety of sources including the public, other students, practice placement staff, employers, mentors or other academic or support staff or the student themselves.

5.2 Information raising or detailing concerns about a student's fitness to practise must be supported by evidence (5.3) and submitted to the Chair of the Fitness to Practise Committee (see 5.14 for its constitution). Anonymous reports will not normally be considered.

5.3 A written report must be made to the Chair. This report must state the precise nature of the behaviour and the reasons why the behaviour is believed to constitute concerns with fitness to practise as described in this policy. Anyone with knowledge of an incident must write a report in accordance with this paragraph. The report must also identify any persons who may have relevant first-hand knowledge of the behaviour or concern.

5.4 On receipt of the report, the Chair and Deputy Chair of the Fitness to Practise Committee will meet to discuss the most appropriate way forward. The Chair and Deputy Chair may consult with the relevant PSRB before deciding on any next steps. The Chair and Deputy Chair will establish as far as possible that the evidence is not vexatious.

5.5 In some instances, no further action may be taken. If it is deemed that the evidence presented does not warrant further action, the case will be closed and will be reported to the student and the person or persons making the allegations within five working days. A record of the allegations will be kept in the student's file for the duration of their study at the TEC Partnership.

5.6 Should further action be required, the student will be informed, at the earliest opportunity, the stages of the process and a clear guide as to which stage the concern indicates.

- Stage One (Informal)
- Stage Two (Investigation/Assessment)
- Stage Three (Formal)

5.7 Stage One – If it is considered appropriate, the student will attend a meeting with the Chair or Deputy Chair of the Committee to explain their account of events and demonstrate their response to the evidence presented. This may alert the Committee representative to any relevant issues or mitigations that have not previously been raised.

The outcomes of this informal stage may be:

- No further action
- Recommendations for support or guidance from the tutor or other personnel
- Progress to Stage Two (Investigation/Assessment)
- Progress to Stage Two with suspension from practice
- Progress to Stage Two with suspension from practice and study

5.8 Stage Two – Investigation and Assessment – The Chair or Deputy Chair decides that more information is required based on the original allegation or following inadequate information from stage one. The Chair or Deputy Chair of the Committee will appoint an investigation officer from within the wider committee and will usually be an academic member of staff or manager who has not been involved with the case to date or has not had any significant relationship with the student (e.g. current tutor).

5.9 The investigating officer will be charged to undertake a thorough investigation, gathering enough high-quality evidence for the Committee to make a decision.

A thorough investigation will:

- Consider the original allegation(s)
- Outline the scope of the investigation
- Identify the sources of evidence used
- Analyse the available evidence
- Indicate any concerns that public safety, or the reputation of PSRBs are at risk
- Be timely and the timescale reported to the committee and the student where possible
- Result in a report to the Fitness to Practise Committee

5.10 The investigating officer will not return a decision on a student's fitness to practise, but will produce a report to be submitted to the Committee, along with any supporting evidence.

5.11 The Chair/Deputy Chair of the Fitness to Practise Committee, consulting with at least two other members of the committee, will decide on the most appropriate course of action:

- No further action
- Meeting with student to give guidance to student on professional behaviour and standards
- Progress to Formal Fitness to Practise Hearing (Stage 3). The student may or may not be suspended from practice or study and practice.

5.12 The Chair/Deputy Chair will write to the student outlining the outcome of Stage Two of the policy within five working days of the outcome decision.

5.13 Suspension from Practice – if the Chair or Deputy Chair of the Fitness to Practise Committee determines that there is enough evidence at either stage one or two, and that the behaviour or professional standards breach indicates a risk or potential risk to the well-being of the student or another person, a decision may be made to suspend the student with immediate effect or from a specified date. This decision must be supported by another colleague of equal standing.

5.13.1 Suspension may be from either the whole programme or a specified part such as professional placement based on a justification of risk.

5.13.2 The consequences of the suspension (of either the whole or part of the programme) will be set out in the letter and include guidance on attending examinations or other assessments. A copy of the letter must be held within the relevant college's Learner Services team and the HE Quality office.

5.13.3 Immediate suspension will be imposed once the student has received the signed letter. The

letter must either be hand-delivered with confirmation of receipt to the student by the bearer or another form of proof of receipt obtained.

5.13.4 Suspension will be in effect until the Chair/Deputy Chair determines that suspension is no longer required, the time period indicated in the original letter expires or the allegation is rejected at Stage Three.

5.13.5 Lifting of suspension must be communicated in accordance with the stipulations of 5.13.3

5.14 Stage Three - Formal – Fitness to Practise Committee and Hearing

The committee will include two individual Senior Leadership Team members from the relevant college and the Group Academic Registrar:

The committee will be constituted by

- Chair and/or Deputy Chair
- Investigating Officer
- Impartial member of Academic staff from the relevant profession
- A member of the profession to which the programme of study relates who may be external to TEC Partnership
- Safeguarding Officer
- Secretary (not designated as a Committee member)

Anyone who has been involved in the making of the allegation or who has given first-hand evidence in the investigation must not be a member of the Committee.

5.15 The student has the right to be heard at the hearing and may be accompanied by a person of their choosing (other than legal representation). This person will not act as an advocate but may advise the student as deemed appropriate. The student's personal tutor may also be present should the student so wish and may give evidence as required by the Committee (if this has not already been included in the investigation).

5.16 The student is entitled to waive their right to attend and be heard by notifying this in writing. The hearing must then proceed in their absence. The committee may decide to proceed with the hearing if the student does not attend and the committee has been assured that all reasonable attempts have been made to contact the student.

5.17 If a legitimate reason for non-attendance at the prescribed date/time is accepted by the committee, then the hearing shall be rearranged with at least three days' notice.

5.18 The hearing will consider the report and the oral presentation of the findings given by the investigating officer (or designated representative). The hearing will also consider any further evidence presented prior to the hearing. The student has the right to be present for the presentation of this evidence.

5.19 The Hearing Committee or the student may call upon witnesses who can provide first-hand knowledge of any matters pertaining to the case.

5.20 The proceedings of the hearing will be recorded by a member of staff other than a committee member (Secretary).

6.0 Decision of the Hearing Committee

6.1 Once all evidence has been presented, the Committee will consider its decision in private.

6.2 If the Hearing Committee decides that the case is not proven, the Committee must rule that the allegation is rejected and the case closed. No sanctions will be imposed and the student must be notified of this decision and the reasons within three working days. Transcripts of the hearing should be made available to the student upon written request.

6.3 The Hearing Committee shall decide on a balance of probability whether the student:

- Is fit to practise and/or
- Has behaved in ways which constitute sanctions under the disciplinary policy

6.4 Where the Hearing Committee determines that the student is not fit to practise, or has behaved in ways to require sanctions, it must order that:

- The student's programme of study is terminated with immediate effect
- The student is transferred to another programme with no professional accreditation where this is possible
- The student is issued with appropriate disciplinary warning
- The student is required to suspend study until such time as any undertakings or recommendations are fully met

6.5 The Hearing Committee will consider the contexts of their decision based on any prior warnings or sanctions, the nature of the conduct, any mitigation or extenuating circumstance and the student's record on the programme prior to the allegations.

6.6 The decision of the Committee and reasons for the decision will be communicated to the student in writing within three working days. Any warning will be issued within seven working days.

6.7 The Chair or Deputy Chair will inform, in writing, any external body including the relevant PSRB of the decisions of the Committee where the student's programme has been terminated under the Fitness to Practise policy or provide evidence to these organisations as determined appropriate. This will include the Student Loans Company and their employer.

6.8 If termination of the programme is the outcome of the Hearing Committee, their recommendation will be submitted to the Principal of the relevant college who will take responsibility for the decision to terminate the student's programme.

7.0 Appeal Stage

7.1 Students may appeal against the decision and/or penalty imposed by the Fitness to Practise Hearing Committee but not in respect to the professional judgement of the Hearing Committee as to professional unsuitability (fitness to practise). Appeals may be received in respect to the application of the procedure through which the decision was made.

7.2 The outcome of an Appeal Committee where the decisions of a Hearing Committee should be set aside due to procedural failings does not limit a new allegation in respect of the same incident as the original. However, in this instance, the allegation must be heard by a committee comprising of entirely

different members to the original.

7.3 Independent external review (OIA)

7.3.1 For students on TEC Partnership Degrees - once the formal appeal stage has been completed, the student is entitled to request a completion of procedures letter. Subsequently, the student can request that the OIA, the independent ombudsman service, review their case should they be dissatisfied with the outcome of the provider's Fitness to Practise Process. The student has 12 months from the date of the Completion of Procedures letter to submit their appeal to the OIA.

7.3.2 For students on partner university validated courses - once the TEC Partnership has made their final determination, students have the right to request a Final Determination of TEC Partnership letter. They then have the right to appeal through their relevant university. For University of Hull students this must be completed within 15 working days of receipt of the Final Determination of TEC Partnership letter. Once the University of Hull have reviewed the complaint they will issue a completion of procedures letter allowing review by the OIA.

8.0 Reporting and Monitoring

8.0 TEC Partnership's Higher Education Curriculum, Quality and Standards Committee (HECQS) will review findings, themes and trends relating to fitness to practise and report institutional themes to the HE Oversight Committee.

8.1 TEC Partnership is committed to widening participation and to promoting lifelong learning in conjunction with its equality of opportunity policies. It actively employs strategies to fulfil these aims. TEC Partnership is committed to pursuing non-discriminatory systems and practices inclusive of the following:

- i. learning difficulty/disability and/or sensory/mobility impairment
- ii. gender
- iii. ethnic or cultural origin
- iv. religion
- v. age
- vi. socio-economic group
- vii. sexual orientation

8.2 This Code of Practice is informed by the following:

- i. Equality Act 2010
- ii. Freedom of Information Act 2000
- iii. The Data Protection Act 2018
- iv. Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974, 2020
- v. General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR)

Appendix 1

Fitness to Practise for Veterinary Nursing

Principles of behaviour for student veterinary nurses

It is not possible or desirable to provide an exhaustive list of behaviours expected of you as a student veterinary nurse, or which could call your fitness to practise into question. This guide therefore sets out broad principles and example behaviours expected of you in the context of three key areas – people, private and student life, and practice. The principles set out in this guide are informed by some of the key principles of the *RCVS Code of Professional Conduct for Veterinary Nurses*. The Code sets out veterinary nurses' professional responsibilities. RCVS supporting guidance provides further advice on the proper standards of professional practice. The Code and supporting guidance are essential for veterinary nurses in their professional lives and are fundamental to the RCVS regulatory process (www.rcvs.org.uk/vncode) The Code will apply to you when you register as a veterinary nurse with the RCVS. Although you are not yet qualified or registered as a veterinary nurse (and so not yet subject to RCVS jurisdiction) you should familiarise yourself with the Code and aim to follow its general principles. You should also familiarise yourself with the RCVS Day-one Competences. These set out the minimum level of knowledge, skills and attitudes that all student veterinary nurses are expected to have met upon registration with the RCVS.

1. People

You will come into contact with a range of people in the course of your education and training. Maintaining working relationships is vital for practice and this will require effective communication skills and teamwork. You should practise these skills with your fellow students, academic staff and colleagues and clients at your training practice.

Principles

- Honesty and integrity
- Independence and impartiality
- Client confidence and trust

Behaviours

You can demonstrate you are fit to practise by:

- ✓ Communicating effectively with clients, the public and professional colleagues; listening carefully and responding appropriately, using language appropriate to the audience and the context.
- ✓ Being open and honest, including with clients, and respect clients' needs and requirements.
- ✓ Ensuring that you do not disclose information about a client to a third party, unless the client gives permission or there is an appropriate justification.
- ✓ Working effectively as a member of a multi-disciplinary team in the delivery of services to clients.
- ✓ Respecting the skills and experience of your qualified colleagues and working under their direction and supervision as required by Schedule 3 of the Veterinary Surgeons Act 1966.
- ✓ Understanding and respecting that clients must be free to give or withhold consent to treatment.
- ✓ Recognising diversity and respecting the cultural differences, values and beliefs of others, including fellow students, colleagues and staff at your training provider.
- ✓ Treating others courteously, with consideration and respect.
- ✓ Recognising that other people may question your fitness to practise, and demonstrating insight and engagement with associated investigations.

Concerns

Failing to demonstrate the above behaviours may raise questions about your fitness to practise. In addition, the following are examples of particular concerns that may affect your fitness to practise:

- × Breaching client confidentiality without proper justification, including the posting of comments, pictures, x-rays and videos on social media.
- × Persistent rudeness and general lack of courtesy when dealing with clients, colleagues and staff at your training provider/ training practice.
- × Inappropriate or offensive behaviour towards fellow students, colleagues or clients, including bullying.
- × Making disparaging comments about fellow students, colleagues or clients.
- × Aggressive, threatening or violent behaviour.
- × Failure to follow a colleague's instructions or client's requests.
- × Going beyond the scope of client consent.
- × Dishonesty, including dishonesty outside the professional role.

2. Private and student life

Fitness to practise encompasses not only your professional competence and practical skills, but also the way in which you conduct yourself outside the professional environment. This includes your private life and student life. The Code states that veterinary nurses must not engage in any activity or behaviour that would be likely to bring the profession into disrepute or undermine public confidence in the profession. As a student veterinary nurse, you should also uphold the reputation of the profession at all times and consider how your behaviour and conduct could affect the trust that the public places in the veterinary nursing profession. Remember that wherever you are, you are representing the veterinary nursing profession, your training provider and your training practice.

Principles

- Honesty and integrity
- Professional accountability

Behaviours

You can demonstrate that you are fit to practise by:

- ✓ Taking responsibility for your own physical and mental health, seeking treatment and limiting practice if necessary, and communicating with your training provider.
- ✓ Abiding by the rules and regulations of your training provider and other organisations linked to your studies.
- ✓ Honouring commitments and taking responsibility for your work.
- ✓ Attending mandatory teaching sessions or making alternative arrangements with your training provider.
- ✓ Submitting academic work on time.
- ✓ Co-operating with formal investigations about you or others

Concerns

Failing to demonstrate the above behaviours may raise questions about your fitness to practise. In addition, the following are examples of particular concerns that may affect your fitness to practise:

- × Substance misuse e.g. drugs and alcohol.
- × Criminal convictions or cautions.
- × Cheating in examinations, plagiarising coursework and assessments, and passing off other people's work as your own.
- × Forging a clinical coach's signature on clinical assessments or online logs.
- × Forging a veterinary surgeon's signature on registration documents.
- × Submitting fraudulent CVs, application forms and employment references.

- × Misuse of social media
- × Failure to seek medical treatment or other support.
- × Refusal to follow medical advice or treatment plans.

3. Practice

Schedule 3 of the Veterinary Surgeons Act 1966 permits student veterinary nurses to undertake medical treatments and minor surgical procedures, not involving entry into a body cavity. There are some important conditions, however:

- The medical treatment or minor surgery can only be carried out on animals under the care of a veterinary surgeon.
- The veterinary surgeon is the employer or acting on behalf of the employer of the student veterinary nurse.
- The medical treatment or minor surgery is carried out in the course of the student veterinary nurse's training.
- The medical treatment or minor surgery is carried out at the veterinary surgeon's direction.
- The medical treatment or minor surgery is supervised by a veterinary surgeon or veterinary nurse and, in the case of minor surgery, the supervision is direct, continuous and personal.

'Direction' means that the veterinary surgeon instructs the student veterinary nurse as to the tasks to be performed, but is not necessarily present.

'Supervision' means that the veterinary surgeon or veterinary nurse is present on the premises and able to respond to a request for assistance if needed.

'Direct, continuous and personal supervision' means that the veterinary surgeon or veterinary nurse is present and giving the student veterinary nurse his or her undivided personal attention.

Failure to comply with these conditions not only renders your actions illegal, but may also have implications for animal welfare. Compliance with these conditions is therefore absolutely paramount to demonstrating that you are fit to practise.

In addition, you must respect the fact that in delegating medical treatments and minor surgical procedures to you, your qualified colleagues have responsibilities and could be held to account to their decisions. The RCVS supporting guidance on delegation to veterinary nurses states:

'In considering whether to direct a veterinary nurse or student veterinary nurse to carry out "Schedule 3 procedures", a veterinary surgeon must consider how difficult the procedure is in the light of any associated risks, whether the nurse is qualified to treat the species concerned, understands the associated risks and has the necessary experience and good sense to react appropriately if any problem should arise. The veterinary surgeon must also be sure that he or she will be available to answer any call for assistance, and finally, should be satisfied that the nurse feels capable of carrying out the procedure competently and successfully.'

Principles

- Professional competence
- Honesty and integrity
- Client confidence and trust
- Professional accountability

Behaviours

You can demonstrate you are fit to practise by:

- ✓ Working under direction and supervision as required by Schedule 3 of the Veterinary Surgeons Act 1966.
- ✓ Making sure that colleagues and clients know that you are a student.
- ✓ Making animal health and welfare your primary consideration when attending to animals.
- ✓ Taking responsibility for your working practices.

- ✓ Understanding the professional responsibilities and legal obligations relevant to veterinary practice, including the legislation relevant to the welfare of animals and legislation related to veterinary medicines.
- ✓ Working within the limits of your competence and being aware of personal limitations; demonstrating awareness of when and from where to seek advice, assistance and support.
- ✓ Ensuring that you are appropriately supervised.
- ✓ Providing care that is appropriate and adequate.
- ✓ Reporting any concerns about patients.
- ✓ Reporting errors or mistakes (including your own) to an appropriate senior member of staff.
- ✓ Having the confidence to speak up when you have concerns about matters affecting patients, clients, staff and the practice – recognising that speaking up and taking advice from your superiors is generally more appropriate than taking matters into your own hands.
- ✓ Ensuring that infection control protocols are adhered to and maintain high standards of cleanliness, hygiene and asepsis.

Concerns

Failing to demonstrate the above behaviours may raise questions about your fitness to practise. In addition, the following are examples of particular concerns that may affect your fitness to practise:

- × Undertaking medical treatment or minor surgery independently, without direction or supervision.
- × Undertaking acts of veterinary surgery beyond the scope of Schedule 3 e.g. non-minor surgical procedures and surgical procedures that involve entry into a body cavity.
- × Lacking insight into your limitations and lack of experience.
- × Deliberately ignoring instructions or advice.
- × Taking unnecessary risks and compromising animal welfare.
- × Independently prescribing, supplying or administering medicines.
- × Accessing the controlled drugs cabinet without permission.
- × Purporting to have qualifications you do not have.
- × Falsely completing / signing documentation.

RCVS. 2016. *Fitness to Practise: A Guide for UK Providers of Veterinary Nursing Education and Student Veterinary Nurses*. Available at <http://www.rcvs.org.uk/news-and-views/news/new-fitness-to-practise-guidance-for-student-veterinary-nurses/> [Accessed 15th June 2023]

