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Abstracts

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Reflecting on Teaching Challenges Through Collaborative Practice

Katie Gazey[1], Sarah Broadberry[2], Sarah Vivian[3]
[1]BSc, MSc, RVN, SFHEA: Senior Lecturer in Veterinary Nursing Science. NTU, [2]PhD PGCHE BSc (Hons), MA, SFHEA: Associate Professor in Scholarship, Academic and Professional Practice Manager, NTU, [3]RVN MRes BSc (Hons) SFHEA: Lecturer and Admissions Tutor. Bristol Veterinary School

Introduction: Cross-institutional collaboration plays a vital role in strengthening the quality and relevance of professional education. Bringing together expertise, resources, and diverse professional perspectives, institutions can address real-world challenges more effectively than they could in isolation. This approach enhances the transfer of best practice between partners, and supports the development of skills.

Cross-institutional collaboration enriches both teaching and practice, ensuring that educational programmes remain responsive to the evolving needs of the professions they serve. But also presents challenges, notably differing institutional priorities and expectations.

Summary of work completed: Collaborative research began between Nottingham Trent University and the University of Bristol on student veterinary nursing cohorts to recognise what influences their Emerging Professional Identity (EPI). The longitudinal study, in its third year, has enabled the authors to navigate through several challenges arising from working across the requirements and expectations of two Higher Educational Institutes (HEI).

Evaluation, Outcomes & Impact: The aim of the project was to identify opportunities to support EPI in student veterinary nurses, working collaboratively produced additional benefits which have helped to create evidence-based insights. Working collaboratively has enhanced teaching practice by enabling the educators to exchange effective pedagogical strategies. This collective approach supports more engaging and inclusive learning experiences for students which is evidenced through changes to curriculum following the research outcomes.
Discussion: Collaboration promotes shared learning, allowing individuals to gain new insights and perspectives that may not emerge in isolation. Ultimately, while collaboration requires ongoing effort, flexibility, and compromise, it strengthens teaching effectiveness by drawing on the collective expertise of a group rather than relying solely on individual contributions.

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Primary Care Clinical Rotations Are Associated with Shifts in Senior Veterinary Students' Perceptions of Scope, Complexity, and Career Alignment

Alison Meindl[1], Rachael Kreisler[2], Danielle Scott[3]
[1]DVM, DABVP (Canine and Feline Practice), [2]VMD, MSCE, DACVPM (Epidemiology), [3]DVM, MS

Introduction: The study objective was to evaluate changes in senior veterinary students' perceptions of companion animal primary care and career preferences following a primary care clinical rotation.

Summary of Work Completed: A multi-institutional survey was administered to veterinary students at 10 U.S. colleges of veterinary medicine before and after a companion animal primary care rotation between January 2024 and July 2025. Survey items were organized into six conceptually defined perception groupings. Changes in perception scores and agreement with a career goal were analyzed using linear mixed-effects models with random intercepts for student and school. Career preferences were assessed using ordinal rankings of eight career paths, and free-text responses were reviewed descriptively to identify recurring themes.

Evaluation, Outcomes & Impact: A total of 442 students completed the pre-rotation survey, and 83 had a paired post-rotation survey. Post-rotation, modest but statistically significant increases were observed in perceptions of clinical complexity and intellectual engagement (β = 0.13, 95% CI 0.01–0.26) and scope and holistic practice (β = 0.09, 95% CI 0.00–0.18). Agreement that companion animal primary care was a career goal also increased (β = 0.21, 95% CI 0.07–0.36). School-level clustering accounted for little variance, while student-level clustering was substantial. Companion animal practice was the only career path for which the median rank improved. Free-text responses reflected greater appreciation of the breadth, complexity, and intellectual demands of primary care following the rotation.

Discussion: Overall, primary care rotations were associated with small but consistent shifts toward more informed and favorable perceptions of companion animal primary care. These findings suggest that primary care rotations primarily deepen students' understanding of the breadth and complexity of primary care practice and supports increased emphasis on immersive primary care and contextualized care experiences during veterinary school.

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Evaluating the Implementation of Reasonable Adjustments in addressing Mental Health and Neurodivergence for Student Veterinary Nurses during Clinical Placement

Lauren Cooke, Heather Imrie, Gregory Steele and Nicola-Jayne Johnson.
NTU Veterinary Nursing, RCVS MMI Grant Holders.

Student Veterinary Nurses (SVNs) increasingly enter training with diagnosed or suspected mental health and neurodivergent challenges (Hagan, 2022), reflected in the rising number of Statements of Access issued within our institution. During clinical placement, these students may face challenges relating to communication, time management, and task completion (Major, 2024), yet may feel less able to seek support than when based at university. Simultaneously, Training Practices (TPs) vary in their awareness, confidence and capacity to recognise and respond to these needs. In 2025, the Royal College of Veterinary Surgeons (RCVS) released *Embracing Reasonable Adjustments for Student Veterinary Nurses* (RCVS, 2025), offering new sector-wide guidance. What is not yet known is how this might be implemented and have impact within practice settings (Beck, 2022).

This study evaluates the current experiences of SVNs and TPs regarding mental health, neurodivergence and reasonable adjustments, and examines the early effects of implementing the 2025 RCVS guidance. Phase 1 comprised two online surveys, distributed to all SVNs enrolled at our training centre and to affiliated/non-affiliated TPs hosting our students. These surveys explored the prevalence of relevant conditions, perceived barriers during placement, current understanding of reasonable adjustments, and expectations of support. Early evaluation focused on identifying key themes in pre-implementation challenges and mapping variability in TP readiness to adopt the guidance.

Following analysis of Phase 1 findings, SVNs and TPs were supported in order to raise awareness and engagement around the new RCVS recommendations. Phase 2 comprises follow-up surveys and targeted semi-structured interviews to capture perceived changes in support, perceived effectiveness of implemented adjustments, and practical barriers to adoption. Together, these data will allow us to assess the impact of the guidance on SVN placement experience, TP confidence, and relational dynamics between students and supervisors.

The anticipated outcomes include emerging evidence on how reasonable adjustments function in real-world veterinary training environments, early recommendations for enhancing the RCVS guidance, and identification of priorities for broader national research. This work foregrounds the experiences of an under-represented group within the veterinary professions (Pickles and Hollis, 2024) and aims to contribute to more equitable, inclusive, and sustainable clinical learning environments.

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Debriefing: A new initiative to develop reflective practice in veterinary graduates

Callum Brock MRCVS, Laura McGillycuddy MRCVS, Rosamund Ford MRCVS

Introduction: Intra-mural rotations represent a critical transition in veterinary education, where students encounter increasing responsibility, uncertainty, and the realities of clinical decision-making. While this period offers a rich and varied opportunity for learning, relentless work-based education may impede students' ability to monitor their own progress, interpret and reflect on feedback and adapt their learning strategies without structured support. Equipping students with the skills required to be effective self-regulated and reflective general practitioners is vital to establish a foundation for lifelong learning.

Summary of Work Completed: The initiative describes the introduction of 4 facilitated online group reflective sessions over the rotation year. These sessions provide a regular, structured opportunity for students to check-in with staff and each other on both their clinical experiences and emotional responses. They are encouraged to share and discuss feedback received from rotation supervisors as well as give an assessment of their own performance and set specific self-improvement goals for the next block. The former additionally serves to ensure high quality feedback is provided across all rotations which provides the best environment for student growth. The latter (with support and facilitation) aims to assist the development of the skills required for self-regulated learning (SRL), encouraging students to complete the cycle of SRL-adjusting learning skills and setting specific goals based on their reflections (White et al., 2014).

Impact and Outcomes: This approach has only recently completed its first cycle. Assessment of impact/outcomes is therefore in its infancy and currently limited to anonymous student feedback. Students report they appreciate knowing their concerns are being heard, the opportunity to share experiences with their peers and the support to reflect and set individual goals for the next rotation block.

Discussion: It is expected these sessions will contribute to an increase in independent learning, goal-setting and a healthier learning environment within rotation groups, as well as continuing to serve as an informal audit of feedback quality. Continued feedback from the students and the NSS is expected to provide further data on the project's impact.

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Real-world uses of Artificial Intelligence (AI): Working with Industry to incorporate AI into case-based learning (CBL)

Elizabeth Bennett[1], Sophie McGill[2], Lindsey Gould[3]
[1]Lecturer, Bristol Veterinary School, University of Bristol, [2]Lecturer in Veterinary Practice (Small Animal Medicine), Bristol Veterinary School, University of Bristol, [3]Lecturer in Veterinary Education, Bristol Veterinary School, University of Bristol

Introduction: The world of veterinary medicine is changing rapidly with integration of artificial intelligence (AI) across expanding areas of telemedicine, diagnostic medicine, veterinary databases and practice management systems (1, 2). This field may continue to evolve, following advances in human medicine (3). Additionally, owners and farmers may have access to AI-powered services. Keeping curricula up to date with this field can be challenging, however ensuring that graduates are prepared to both utilise and critique AI outputs is critical (4, 5).

Summary of work: The authors collaborated with industry to create an authentic digital small animal CBL case using examples from artificial intelligence diagnostic equipment.

Evaluation & Impact: By incorporating AI into case-based learning (CBL), the information students gather will be dynamic and keep pace with the field. Working with industry can allow an authentic experience for students as they work through a case to prepare them for practice.

Discussion: Enhancing digital learning resources by collaborating with industry in CBL will be discussed, along with methods for integrating discussion and debate around the benefits and limitations of AI in veterinary medicine.

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How can we bring multidisciplinary learning into the educational setting to prepare graduates for general practice

Katie Gazey[1], Zoe Lawlor[2]
[1]NTU, [2]UoN

Introduction: Multidiscipline working is a foundational skill that we all need in practice and industry to be able to provide great care to our patients and have a comfortable and effective working environment. This is something that whilst taught about and seen in EMS for student veterinary surgeons (SVS) and in clinical placement for student veterinary nurses (SVN) is not mirrored in the educational settings and we want to explore why this could be beneficial to SVN and SVS and how we could do this. This is particularly important in general practice where roles can be very varied.

Summary of workshop :
The workshop will include a brief overview from authors about their journey with multidisciplinary teaching and then we will break out into groups to discuss the following areas.

1. Opinions of teaching SVS and SVN and other veterinary paraprofessional together
2. Topics where multidisciplinary teaching would most benefit this learning
3. Positive experiences of multidisciplinary teaching
4. Barriers to achieve multidisciplinary teaching and what can be done to overcome them

How authentic are your GP rotations? The benefits and challenges of student-led, full-fee primary care teaching

Lindsey Harland MRCVS[1]
[1]University of Nottingham

Introduction: Most veterinary graduates enter small animal primary care practice within fee-generating clinical environments where decision-making is shaped by client expectations, financial considerations, and time pressures. Students learn general practice (GP) across a range of settings, including distributed placements, university-owned clinics, and subsidised or charity-based services. While these models provide valuable experience, they vary in the extent to which students take responsibility for consultation-led decision-making within authentic practice contexts.

This interactive workshop will explore how different GP teaching models shape student learning, focusing on the role of case responsibility in developing applied clinical reasoning. Drawing on experience of developing a student-supported primary care model embedded within an associate practice, participants will be introduced to an approach in which students lead consultations under clinician supervision within a full fee-generating practice environment.

A distinguishing feature of this model is that students are not supernumerary; they contribute to service delivery within a viable primary care setting. This creates a learning context in which clinical decisions must be justified not only medically, but in terms of value and feasibility for the client. Through facilitated discussion and case-based activities, participants will explore how increasing student responsibility supports the shift from generating “gold standard” plans to applying contextualised care in real time

Summary of workshop: The session will begin by mapping how GP teaching is currently delivered across participants' institutions, highlighting where and how students develop consultation-led decision-making skills.

Following a brief overview of an embedded, student-led primary care model, participants will engage in a case-based activity to explore how responsibility for decision-making influences clinical thinking. Small group discussion will then focus on identifying transferable elements of this approach and how they could be applied within different teaching contexts.

The session will include practical strategies to support supervising clinicians in facilitating student-led consultations safely, and will conclude with participants identifying achievable changes to enhance authenticity within their own GP teaching.