

10/2/2016

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**Martine Moore**

Certificate IV Veterinary Nurse

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**Fair Work Ombudsman**

**Award Review Request**

[yourfeedback@fwo.gov.au](mailto:yourfeedback@fwo.gov.au)

**RE: Review Request**

**14.2 Practice managers, Veterinary nurses, Receptionists, Animal attendants and Assistants.**

**CLASSIFICATIONS**

As part of the,

Animal Care and Veterinary Services Award 2010 [MA000118]

**To the Award Review Panel,**

I would like to bring to your attention a flaw in the classifications of the above Award which leaves all 'Levels' open to interpretation and manipulation by employers, thus underpaying many employees in the Veterinary industry. Those mainly affected have been awarded an AQF IV/Certificate IV in Veterinary Nursing.

Adding to the Award confusion is the 'Pay Calculator' available on your website. The expanded classification levels imply unqualified employees, with no medical training or experience in the Veterinary industry are to work as a Level 4 and be paid by the same 4 level structure in each of the 4 levels.

After being awarded my Certificate II Animal Studies in 2013 and my Certificate IV Veterinary Nursing in 2014 I was left deflated and confused when told I would only be paid at Level 3. My employer suggested I wasn't up to Level 4 standard. My understanding of Level 4 Certificate IV Veterinary Nurse was, you are either a Certified Veterinary Nurse or not. Surely if the Government has awarded me this Certificate IV then I am considered to be of that standard? I obviously have a completely different understanding to theirs, and after some time there was mention of 4 levels of Veterinary Nurse.? As I am still now being paid as a 'Level 3' but employed as Veterinary Nurse and completing all Veterinary Nurse specific tasks as part of my daily routine, I had to investigate why my interpretation of the Award is so very different.

I would like to walk you through my process of investigation to hopefully show how difficult it can be to understand the Award and how this affects ones ability to question their employers interpretation. I regret at times it may be confusing and hope you can get through it. Armed with only the printed Award, I asked my first question and realized it wasn't going to be that easy.



### **So what is the difference between Levels?**

*A Level 3 employee will possess an AQF Level 3 or other equivalent qualification or possess knowledge and experience to enable them to operate at trade level.*

*A Level 4 employee will possess competencies of AQF 4 or other equivalent qualifications.*

### **What does AQF stand for? It's not in the Award definitions.**

*The Australian Qualifications Framework (AQF) is the national policy for regulated qualifications in Australian education and training. It incorporates the qualifications from each education and training sector into a single comprehensive national qualifications framework. (Australian Qualifications Framework Second Edition January 2013)*

**AQF level 3=Certificate 3.** *The purpose of the Certificate III qualification type is to qualify individuals who apply a broad range of knowledge and skills in varied contexts to undertake skilled work and as a pathway for further learning. Certificate III qualifications are located at level 3 of the Australian Qualifications Framework. (Australian Qualifications Framework Second Edition January 2013)*

**AQF level 4=Certificate 4.** *The purpose of the Certificate IV qualification type is to qualify individuals who apply a broad range of specialized knowledge and skills in varied contexts to undertake skilled work and as a pathway for further learning. Certificate IV qualifications are located at level 4 of the Australian Qualifications Framework. (Australian Qualifications Framework Second Edition January 2013)*

That sounds easy enough, the AQF level has a direct correlation to the same Certificate Level in the Award.

### **Level 3-Responsibility, skills and knowledge**

Limited supervision, established predictable routines, exercise discretion and judgement within established criteria.

Tasks-Assist with animal care, limited supervision of Introductory level and level 1 employees, daily clinic routines, routine patient monitoring, administration duties, hazard identification and risk control awareness, provide grief support and basic first aid.

Nothing Medical, Surgical or Laboratorial mention under Level 3.

### **Level 4-No responsibility, skills or knowledge?**

Tasks-clinic admissions, provide Veterinary Nursing care and grief support to clients, radiograph routines and procedures, perform and record pathology procedures, assist with post mortem, prepare and support surgical procedures, monitor patient anaesthesia, perform post-operative procedures, Nurse hospitalised animals, monitor clinical signs, communicate with owners, animal pain relief and care, carry out Medical Nursing routines, Surgery schedules, surgery preparations, surgical instrument and equipment cleaning and care and carry out post-operative theater routines.



Level 4 is a Veterinary Nurse, you're not technically allowed to do most of these tasks without being a qualified or experienced Veterinary Nurse.

Where are these Veterinary Nurse levels are they on about?

I was undertaking most of those tasks as a Level 2/AQF II/Cert II Animal Studies studying to be a Veterinary Nurse, so why does my employer consider me a Level 3?

They gave me the work experience and training.

If I am only a Level 3 should I stop doing the tasks specific to Veterinary Nursing in Level 4?

Level 4 doesn't need to possess and AQF4 just the competencies of! Really?

Level 3 has to! I don't have a AQF Certificate 3! What? This doesn't make sense!

I understand the "competencies of" in regards to Veterinary Nurses that have no formal qualifications but have been Veterinary Nursing for a million years. They have a wealth of knowledge and skills we newer graduates can only dream of. However what are the equivalent qualifications for Veterinary Nursing in Australia? There is ONLY Certificate IV Veterinary Nursing in Australia! The United States and Canada have Veterinary Technicians which are more like our Advanced Diploma Level 6, and the United Kingdom's Veterinary Nurses are of Degree Level 6/7? The Award even implies you don't need a veterinary or animal specific qualification. So you just need to possess all the specific knowledge and skills of a AQF Certificate IV Veterinary Nurse to carry out the specific and complex medical Veterinary Nursing tasks and procedures without possessing the knowledge, skills or experience? I have an Advanced Diploma in Designer Dressmaking from my younger years, I could have made some awesome doggie suits, it doesn't mean I could save their life as I could do now I have my Certificate IV Veterinary Nursing.

So much for my easy answer of AQF level 4=Certificate 4.

Let's see what the Fair Work website and 'Pay Calculator' can tell me. I entered Veterinary Nurse, ticked NO to all trainee questions, was then asked "What is my classification?" and am confronted with this.....

Animal attendant - introductory level Animal attendant - introductory level description

Animal attendant - level 1 Animal attendant - level 1 description

Animal attendant - level 2 Animal attendant - level 2 description

Animal attendant - level 3 Animal attendant - level 3 description

Animal attendant - level 4 Animal attendant - level 4 description

Assistants - introductory level Assistants - introductory level description

Assistants - level 1 Assistants - level 1 description

Assistants - level 2 Assistants - level 2 description

Assistants - level 3 Assistants - level 3 description



Assistants - level 4 Assistants - level 4 description

Receptionist - introductory level Receptionist - introductory level description

Receptionist - level 1 Receptionist - level 1 description

Receptionist - level 2 Receptionist - level 2 description

Receptionist - level 3 Receptionist - level 3 description

Receptionist - level 4 Receptionist - level 4 description

Veterinary nurse - introductory level Veterinary nurse - introductory level description

Veterinary nurse - level 1 Veterinary nurse - level 1 description

Veterinary nurse - level 2 Veterinary nurse - level 2 description

Veterinary nurse - level 3 Veterinary nurse - level 3 description

Veterinary nurse - level 4 Veterinary nurse - level 4 description

Dear Lord now I know where the separate Levels 1, 2, 3 and 4 Veterinary Nurse came from.

### **Veterinary nurse - introductory level**

An employee who has had no experience in this industry will initially be engaged at the introductory level until the employee has performed satisfactory service for a period not exceeding three months. During this period the employer will provide on-the-job training to assist the employee to gain the appropriate skills. If the employee attains the level of skill required, the employee will progress to Level 1.

Employees at this level will perform routine tasks involving adherence to determined procedures and with only minimal scope for deviation from these procedures.

### **Veterinary nurse - level 1**

Level of responsibility, skills and knowledge

An employee at this level will:

- work under direct supervision with regular close checking of their work
- develop and then apply their knowledge and skills to a limited range of tasks and roles
- work within a specified range of contexts where the choice of action is clear and restricted
- normally develop and then use their competencies within established routines, where methods and procedures are predictable.

#### *Indicative Tasks*

Typical activities at this level may include:

- assisting other employees in their duties
- appropriate induction to the industry and the routines of the practice
- basic animal care
- grooming, feeding, cleaning and restraint as instructed
- basic clerical and/or reception duties and telephone skills under veterinary supervision.



## **Veterinary nurse - level 2**

A Level 2 employee will use limited discretion and initiative. Knowledge relating to the care of animals will be necessary.

Level of responsibility, skills and knowledge

An employee at this level will:

- work under direct supervision with routine checking of their work
- develop and then apply their knowledge and skills to a limited range of tasks and roles
- work within a specified range of contexts where the choice of action is clear and restricted
- normally use their competencies within established routines, where methods and procedures are predictable
- exercise discretion and judgment against established criteria.

### *Indicative Tasks*

In addition to those outlined in Level 1, typical activities at this level may include:

- following Occupational Health and Safety procedures in an animal care environment
- assisting with general animal care; provide food and water for animals
- participating in workplace communications
- carrying out basic clerical and/or reception duties under reduced supervision
- carrying out clinic routines; maintain clinic hygiene, carry out daily treatment of patients
- assisting in stock control and clinic security.

## **Veterinary nurse - level 3**

A Level 3 employee will possess an AQF Level 3 or other equivalent qualification or possess knowledge and experience to enable them to operate at trade level.

Level of responsibility, skills and knowledge

An employee at this level will:

- generally be working with limited supervision
- normally use their competencies within established routines, where methods and procedures are predictable
- exercise discretion and judgment against established criteria.

### *Indicative Tasks*

In addition to those outline in Level 2, typical activities at this level may include:

- assisting with animal care under limited supervision;
- limited supervision of employees at introductory level and Level 1
- undertaking daily clinic routines and routine monitoring of patients
- clerical duties including maintaining supplies, processing and preparing correspondence and accounts
- the ability to follow clinic procedures for hazard identification and risk control
- the ability to provide grief support to clients/animal owners
- providing basic first aid for animals.

## **Veterinary nurse - level 4**

A Level 4 employee will possess competencies of AQF 4 or other equivalent qualifications.

*Indicative tasks*

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In addition to those outlined in Level 3, typical activities at this level may include:

- coordinating clinic admissions
- providing veterinary nursing care and grief support to clients
- applying radiographic routines and implement procedures
- performing and record pathology procedures, assist with post mortem
- preparing and provide support for surgical procedures
- monitoring patient anaesthesia
- performing post-operative procedures
- nursing hospitalised animals, monitor clinical signs, communicate with owners
- providing animal care in pain situations
- carrying out medical nursing routines
- preparing surgery schedules, implement surgery preparations;
- cleaning maintain and store theatre instruments, equipment and supplies
- carrying out post-operative theatre routines.

I am still unable to find any indication in the actual Award itself of this separation of Levels, let alone the separation of Level 4 Veterinary Nurse into 4 Levels. There are a few issues I have regarding these Veterinary Nurse 'Levels' within my understanding and knowledge of the both the role and AQF Certificate IV of Veterinary Nursing.

1. It is not actually possible to have an 'Introductory Level' Veterinary Nurse, as it is a requirement of the AQF IV that you complete AQF Certificate II Animal Studies before you can be accepted into the course. Work experience is obtained through work placement during Certificate II Animal Studies.
2. As Certificate II Animals Studies is a requirement for entry into Certificate IV Veterinary Nursing we can also discount Level 1.
3. Because of the requirement of Certificate II Animal Studies, those enrolled in Certificate IV Veterinary Nursing that are lucky enough to be employed, are generally paid as a Level 2 but are still classified and employed as an Animal Attendant, not a Veterinary Nurse.
4. An AQF Certificate III in Veterinary Nursing doesn't even exist so it is not actually possible to possess one.

Turning to the 4 Levels of what the Award has as Level 3 but is Reception online. They are exactly the same 4 levels as Veterinary Nurse, exactly the same 4 levels as Assistant, and exactly the same 4 levels as Attendant! Now there really is a problem. By copy and pasting exactly the same Level Classifications into all Animal Care Classification Levels, the 'Pay Calculator' has effectively made it possible for an Assistant Animal Attendant with not even an AQF Certificate I in Animal Studies to be paid the same amount as an AQF Certificate IV Veterinary Nurse. Besides the fact that a Level I Assistant Animal Attendant at Level 4 is not really possible due to the complex medical procedures, it leaves a gaping hole for litigation. If you can find me a Level 1 Animal Assistant that knows what Nystagmus looks like, what IPPV stands for, what an S8 drug is, what a GDV involves, and which BBQ ingredient will make your dogs' immune system attack its own blood cells thus killing him, I'll review my view.



Most receptionists employed in a Veterinary Clinic or Hospital are AQF Certificate IV Veterinary Nurses. Employers expect them to act, answer and advise clients to Veterinary Nursing standard and using specific medical/veterinary terminology. Because they only work on reception, the classifications, levels and indicative tasks are misinterpreted by employers resulting in a Level 3 wage. “They are not involved in theater or patient anaesthesia so they must be Level 3”. They mustn’t have read the ‘Indicative Tasks’ section on page 18 of the award. If we add the confusion of Levels in Levels for receptionists on the ‘Pay Calculator’ there are probably some Veterinary Nurses being paid even less. What standard or level one manager thinks a Veterinary Nurse employee is achieving can be completely different to another, you can’t get along with everyone and there is discrimination.

Another issue here is for Veterinary Nurses who work one day in reception and another in surgery. Reading 16.2 (c) i-ii Higher duties allowance on page 16, it seems employers have missed this section completely as Reception Veterinary Nurses, employed as Veterinary Nurses but paid as Level 3 Receptionists, do not have their wage rate changed to Level 4 or Level 4 Reception when working in Treatment Rooms or Theatre where the Level 4 indicative tasks are more prevalent. The ‘Indicative tasks’ on page 36 of the Award also state “*The indicative tasks should not be used in place of the classification criteria when classifying an employee.*” Which is quite ambiguous. The indicative tasks contained in Level 4 of the Award reflect the complex knowledge and skills required to be a Veterinary Nurse and a Veterinary Nurse Only! Is this why we’re paid at Level3? Also “*Employees at any particular level may be expected to undertake duties/tasks of any level lower than the employee’s own, in addition to the duties/tasks specified at the employee’s level in which they are employed.*” Should this not also state something similar to the following from 16.2 (c)

*(ii) Any employee who is required to perform work temporarily for which a lower rate is paid must not suffer any reduction in wages whilst so employed; provided that any work of less than one week’s duration will be deemed to be temporary.*

All AQF Certificate IV Veterinary Nurses have had to complete 3 extensive case studies, one of which I have supplied as an example of technical knowledge, experience and research, personal Animal Dental portfolio of no less than 10 Dental procedures completed, personal Anaesthetic portfolio including no less than 10 full Anaesthetic Charts, complications and reports etc etc....then there is between 420 hours and 768 hours of compulsory work experience in a Veterinary Clinic before you will be awarded the certificate. Compare this with a AQF Certificate IV Training and Assessment which depending on course provider, you only need access to a workplace and have 3 written assignments. A Certificate III Animal Studies which would be considered Level 3 in the Award and the one you “must possess”, requires only 150 hours work experience in an animal related workplace of your choice but this excludes Veterinary Clinics!

### **Let’s make Veterinary Nurse Level 4 a separate entity level.**

The Fair Work ‘Pay Calculator’ is where the chaos, confusion and misinterpretation appears in detail and needs to be changed ASAP. The Award itself only has definition and generic wording issues. Veterinary Nursing requires specific complex medical knowledge plus the skills and experience to keep animals alive and well. It takes a heart of gold, a lead stomach, a selective sense of smell and the ability to act in unpredictable emergency situations. I would a review to take this into account when separating the levels and in the wording of Level requirements as Veterinary Nursing is far from generic.



And yes, I am going to be as bold as to suggest some solutions.

**14.2 Practice Managers, Veterinary Nurses, Receptionists, Animal Attendants and Assistants**

<b>Classification</b>	<b>Minimum Weekly Rate</b>	<b>Minimum Hourly Rate</b>
Introductory Rate	\$672.70	\$17.70
AQF Certificate Level 1-Animal Assistant	\$692.60	\$18.21
AQF Certificate Level 2-Animal Attendant	\$750.60	\$19.75
AQF Certificate Level 3-Animal Care Attendant	\$783.30	\$20.61
AQF Certificate Level 4-Animal Care Attendant	\$854.60	\$22.49
AQF Certificate Level 4-Veterinary Nurse-New Graduate	\$854.60	\$22.49
AQF Level 5-Veterinary Nurse-Diploma or Experienced	\$897.90	\$23.63
Practice Managers	\$897.90	\$23.63

**B.2 Practice Managers, Veterinary Nurses, Receptionists, Animal Attendants and Assistants**

**B.2.1 Introductory Level (no other levels required)**

Can remain the same but is in no way applicable to any other Level. Reserved only for those with no industry experience or animal handling skills. This mostly due to the hazard risks associated with incorrect animal handling, sharps, infection and disease control, biological and cytotoxic waste, radiation exposure and the handling and use of chemicals, poisons and drugs.

**B.2.2 Level 1 (no other levels required)**

May possess an AQF Certificate I in Animal Studies but is not essential. Pet Technician Certificate of Achievement is also acceptable for entry level animal knowledge.

Skill level appropriate for employment as an Assistant Animal Attendant, Assistant Animal Shelter Attendant and Assistant Animal Kennel/Cattery Assistant.

Responsibility, skills, knowledge and duties remain the same except an inclusion of (f) assist with directly supervised infection control and disinfection procedures.

**B.2.3 Level 2 (no other levels required)**

Must possess an AQF Certificate II in Animal Studies if employed in the Veterinary Industry. May possess an AQF Certificate II in Animal Studies or possess the equivalent knowledge and skill if employed in any Animal Care Industry. Knowledge relating to the care of animals and some animal handling is essential.

Skill level appropriate for employment as an Assistant Animal Receptionist, Animal Attendant, Animal Shelter Attendant, Animal Kennel/Cattery Attendant, Pet Shop Attendant or Assistant Dog Groomer Attendant.





Responsibility, skills, knowledge and duties remain the same except for a change to Indicative Tasks (a) from Occupational Health and Safety to Work Health and Safety, an addition to (e) assist with and maintain infection control and disinfection procedures and change the words ‘carry out’ in (e) to assist in.

### **B.2.4 Level 3 (no other levels required)**

Must possess an AQF Certificate III in either Animal Studies, Companion Animals or Captive Animals to operate at a trade level.

Skill level appropriate for employment as an Animal Care Attendant, Animal Care Receptionist, Assistant Animal Groomer, Boarding Kennel/Cattery Attendant, Animal Shelter Attendant or Wildlife/Reptile Carer Assistant (non-zoo).

Responsibility, skills, knowledge and duties remain except for a change to Indicative Tasks (c) undertake daily clinic routines, assist in daily medical routines and record/report routine monitoring of patients or routine health checks of boarding animals. An addition of maintain infection control and disinfection procedures to (e) and add to (f) provide Level 3 standard animal care advice to clients. (h) Provide general animal care; specific food requirements; select correct Bedding/Kennel/Cage size; parasite control; nail clipping; (j) assist in animal behavior training or modification. (k) undertake Shelter or Boarding animal admission procedures.

### **B.2.5 Level 4 (Excluding Veterinary Nurses) (no other levels required)**

Must possess an AQF Certificate IV in either Companion Animals or Captive Animals to operate at a specialised trade level. International employees must possess an equivalent and equal qualification attained in that country’s animal care industry. Employees that can demonstrate comparative and equal knowledge and skills due to their extensive work experience in the Animal Care Industry may also be considered for Level 4 non-Veterinary Nurse by either an employer or through Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) assessments.

Skill level appropriate for employment as an Animal Care Attendant, Animal Care Receptionist, Companion animal trainer/behaviourist, Companion Animal Groomer, Boarding Kennel/Cattery Supervisor, Animal Shelter Supervisor, Wildlife/Reptile Carer (non-zoo), Pet Minder or Mobile hydro-bathing operator.

### **Level of responsibility, skills, knowledge**

An employee at this level will:

- (a) work with little supervision.
- (b) able to complete animal specific documentation and records according to the laws abiding;
- (c) will maintain animal care standards and processes and provide problem solving support to others;
- (d) has limited responsibility of others in a team within limited parameters of knowledge.



- (e) possesses knowledge of specialised tasks or functions in known or changing contexts.
- (f) responsible for own organisation and tasks, and may have limited responsibility for organisation of others;
- (g) can identify factors and report diseases which may affect the service and/or animal care to be provided;

***Indicative tasks***

In addition to those outlined in Level 3, typical activities at this level include:

- (a) monitor animal welfare and safety practices in the workplace;
- (b) access, interpret and apply technical information;
- (c) participate in continuous improvement and planning processes;
- (d) identify hazards and implement appropriate hazard control measures;
- (e) demonstrate time and team management skills;
- (f) source and prepare materials and resources and ensure availability to support work operations;
- (g) schedule and sequence work, reservation arrivals and animal care to maximise safety and productivity;
- (h) interpret and apply relevant Acts and regulations relating to the Animal Care industry;
- (i) keep work area's and animal housing clean and hygienic at all times;
- (j) implement and monitor workplace procedures and instructions;
- (k) implement animal training and behaviour procedures and instructions;
- (l) Provide clients with Level 4 standard, non-medical animal care advice; grief support; correct and lawful confinement techniques; correct and lawful animal housing options.
- (m) Provide basic and complementary first aid for animals.

**B.2.6 Level 4 Veterinary Nurse-New Graduate and Reception. (no other levels required)**

Must possess an AQF Certificate IV in Veterinary Nursing to operate at this paraprofessional level. International employees must possess an equivalent and equal qualification attained in that country's Veterinary Nursing industry. Employees that can demonstrate comparative and equal knowledge and skills due to their extensive work experience in the Veterinary Nursing Industry may also be considered for Level 4 Veterinary Nurse by either the employer or through Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) assessments.

**Level of responsibility, skills, knowledge**

An employee at this level will:

- (a) work with little supervision.

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- (b) possesses knowledge of specialised veterinary tasks or functions in known or emergency contexts;
- (c) complete veterinary specific documentation and records according to the laws abiding;
- (d) communicate with all team members in a professional manner using medical terminology;
- (e) maintain veterinary standards and processes and provide problem solving support to others;
- (f) identify, rectify or report potential and actual problems; hazards and incidents associated with veterinary operations; biological, radiation or cytotoxic spills and hazards;
- (g) identify factors and report diseases which may affect the service and/or patient care to be provided;
- (h) monitor animal welfare and safety practices in the veterinary workplace;
- (i) provide leadership, support, Veterinary Nurse and animal care training and guidance to trainees, students and volunteers of any Level to ensure a safe environment.
- (j) interpret and apply relevant Acts and regulations specific to Animal Care and Veterinary Medicine;
- (k) implement and monitor veterinary workplace procedures and instructions;
- (l) use and interpret specific computer software applications and patient monitoring equipment effectively;
- (m) use veterinary monitoring equipment and other technology safely and according to workplace standards; ensure readiness, operational efficiency and safety of all veterinary equipment.

### *Indicative tasks*

In addition to those outlined in Level 3 and more specific to Veterinary Nursing, typical activities at this level include:

- (a) coordinate clinic admissions; prepare patient treatment consents;
- (b) provide Certificate IV Level Veterinary Nursing care, advice and grief support to clients;
- (c) undertake and applying radiographic routines and adhere to radiation safety procedures;
- (d) perform and record pathology procedures, assist with post mortem;
- (e) aseptically prepare animals, prepare theatre and provide support to veterinarians for surgical procedures;
- (f) sedate, induce, monitor and maintain patient anaesthesia; 'scrub in' for surgical procedures;
- (g) perform post-operative recovery and care procedures;
- (h) nurse hospitalised animals, monitor clinical and vital signs, communicate with owners; give detailed advice on home care, therapy and medications;
- (i) provide animal care in pain and/or emergency situations; administer pain relief and other medications;



- (j) carrying out reception nursing routines and triage;
- (k) assist with or carry out animal behaviour and training education classes;
- (l) liaise with Specialist Veterinary Hospitals regarding patient transfer and/or treatments;
- (m) clean, sterilize, maintain and store theatre instruments, equipment and supplies;
- (n) carry out post-operative theatre routines to maintain sterile and/or aseptic areas or surfaces;
- (o) keep reception, treatment rooms, other work areas and animal housing areas clean, presentable and aseptic at all times;
- (p) undertake medical procedures such as venipuncture, venous-catheter placement and patient intubation;
- (q) respond to and assist in emergencies and provide support for veterinarians;
- (r) ensure separate isolation areas for infectious diseases are biologically secure to prevent nosocomial infections to other patients; ensure safe, correct dilution and correct application of appropriate veterinary disinfectant.

### **B.2.6 Level 5-Veterinary Nurse-Diploma or Experienced**

Must possess an AQF Diploma in Veterinary Nursing-Surgical, ECC, Dental or General Practice and be employed as a specialist Diploma Veterinary Nurse to operate at this specialised paraprofessional level. International employees must possess an equivalent and equal qualification attained in that country's Veterinary Nursing industry.

To be eligible for Experienced Veterinary Nurse Level one must possess an AQF Certificate IV in Veterinary Nursing, have at least 6 years continuous full time work experience as a Veterinary Nurse and be able to demonstrate equivalent skills and knowledge to that of the AQF Diploma Level Veterinary Nurse.

#### **Level of responsibility, skills, knowledge**

An employee at Diploma Level will have specialist knowledge and skills specific to each of the Diplomas:

**The Diploma of Veterinary Nursing (Surgical)** is extremely complex and requires access and exposure to an extensive range of specialised surgical procedures, including intrathoracic, internal fixation, external fixation, soft tissue, ophthalmic, skin grafting, oncological surgery, advanced corrective Orthopaedics and which may require advanced anaesthetic monitoring. It also requires access to a veterinary clinic or hospital where specialised surgical procedures are performed; veterinary surgeons that perform specialised surgical procedures; patients and clients requiring specialised surgical procedures; and the equipment, instruments and resources required to perform specialised surgical procedures. (<http://training.gov.au/Training/Details/ACM50212>)

**The Diploma of Veterinary Nursing (Emergency and Critical Care)** is extremely complex and requires access and exposure to an extensive range of specialised emergency and critical care procedures, including



medical emergencies; trauma, including road traffic accident, chest, abdominal, head and respiratory; surgical (thoracic and abdominal); haematological (disseminated intravascular coagulopathy), resulting in blood transfusions; septic (systemic inflammatory response syndrome), relating to organ dysfunction; toxin recognition and management of topical and ingested toxins; and advanced critical care and intensive care monitoring (post-surgical). It also requires access to a veterinary hospital or emergency/specialist veterinary clinic where emergency and specialised critical care procedures are performed; veterinarians who perform emergency and specialised critical care procedures; patients and clients requiring emergency and specialised critical care surgery, nursing and discharge; and the equipment, instruments and resources required to perform emergency and specialised critical care procedures. (<http://training.gov.au/Training/Details/ACM50412>)

**The Diploma of Veterinary Nursing (Dental)** is extremely complex and requires access and exposure to all seven veterinary dentistry disciplines (periodontics, endodontics, restorative dentistry, oral surgery, prosthodontics, orthodontics and exotic animal dentistry). It also requires access to a veterinary clinic or hospital that performs advanced veterinary dentistry; a specialist veterinary dental clinic or hospital or a referral veterinary dental clinic or hospital; veterinarians who perform advanced dental procedures and are, at a minimum Members of the Veterinary Dental Chapter, Australia and New Zealand College of Veterinary Scientists (MACVS); patients and clients requiring veterinary dental oral radiographs and advanced dental procedures; and the equipment, instruments and resources required to perform all seven veterinary dentistry disciplines. (<https://training.gov.au/Training/Details/ACM50312>)

**The Diploma of Veterinary Nursing (General Practice)** is complex and is provided for those wishing to become Head Veterinary Nurse or Practice Manager. It provides specialist training in the management of patients, clients, consults, medical and surgical cases, veterinary staff, nursing, reception and administrative duties, practice policies, procedures, retail and customer service experiences. (<https://training.gov.au/Training/Details/ACM50512>)

An Experienced AQF Certificate IV Veterinary Nurse is expected to and can demonstrate skills and knowledge that is equivalent to but more generalized than that of an AQF Diploma Level Veterinary Nurse.

### **B.2.7 Practice Management**

A Level 5 employee will have the overall responsibility of managing the day-to-day operations of a veterinary practice. The possession of an AQF Diploma Veterinary Nursing-General practice is preferred or other relevant managerial Diplomas are appropriate. A general understanding of the Animal Care and Veterinary industry is essential. Everything else in this section remains the same.

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I am sorry for not writing out complete knowledge, skills and tasks for the Diploma of Veterinary Nursing but I think that should be left to someone far more skilled at contract writing than myself. I have tried to write both Level 4's in a way that are obviously separate but I'm sure they are far from perfect. I hope I have lessened the

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loopholes so employers no longer have the option to misinterpret the classifications, they cannot discriminate by experience or their version of standards, nor can the underpay AQF Certificate IV Veterinary Nurses by classification of Receptionist or Animal Attendant.

I'm still waiting for a 'review' with my employer about still not being up to their version of Veterinary Nurse and what my duties should be, even though it is their responsibility to understand the Award. I can now see however how they have misinterpreted the classifications and probably have done so to many before me. What I can't believe is that they are the only employers to misinterpret the classifications this way, either innocently or otherwise.

If I do have this all horribly wrong then I would really appreciate some clarification on what I don't have correct. If I have it right, then I have done my bit for all those hard working Veterinary Nurses out there, some of who are oblivious to this issue. Luckily we're not in it for the money, we just love what we can do.

Thank you for your valuable time.

Kind regards

Martine Moore



## Resource Materials

[http://awardviewer.fwo.gov.au/award/show/MA000118#P492\\_42050](http://awardviewer.fwo.gov.au/award/show/MA000118#P492_42050)

Australian Qualifications Framework Second Edition January 2013, All editions of the Australian Qualifications Framework are on the AQF website [www.aqf.edu.au](http://www.aqf.edu.au)

General information on courses <http://training.gov.au>

<http://training.gov.au/Training/Details/ACM50212>,

<http://training.gov.au/Training/Details/ACM50312>

<http://training.gov.au/Training/Details/ACM50412>

<http://training.gov.au/Training/Details/ACM50512>

<https://training.gov.au/Training/Details/ACM40410>

<http://www.provetlearning.com.au/en-au/coursesavailable/pettechniciancertificate.aspx>

<http://www.vnca.asn.au/>

<http://vetnurse.com.au/>

<https://calculate.fairwork.gov.au/FindYourAward>