C-VCG.1 Clinical Governance in Veterinary Practice

Credits: 10 (100 hours)

Provider: Veterinary Postgraduate Unit – School of Veterinary Science

RCVS Content Covered

The module will cover the following key themes, focusing on how they might contribute to improving accountability and the quality of veterinary care. Candidates will be expected to explore aspects of clinical governance in its widest sense, using these areas as a framework for study:

Principles of clinical governance

- Key components of clinical governance framework
- Professional requirements for clinical governance
- Role of clinical governance in veterinary practice
- Quality improvement

Evidence-based care, research and clinical effectiveness

- Aiming to ensure the best possible outcomes
- Applying evidence-based veterinary medicine
- Conducting research to develop the body of evidence available
- Changing practice, developing new protocols, guidelines and standards, and implementing those already developed

Clinical audit and other quality improvement tools

- Utilising patient data in order to measure quality of outcomes
- Understanding the principles of clinical audit and how it can be used to improve patient care and outcomes through systematic review of care against explicit criteria and the implementation of change
- Understanding the use of other quality improvement tools, such as plan-do-study-act cycles and run charts, to monitor the quality of clinical care and to assess the effectiveness of change

Risk management

- Assessing what can and does go wrong in patient care
- Understanding why things go wrong
- Human factors in health care
- Learning from and reporting mistakes, near-misses and significant events
- Putting systems and processes in place to reduce risk
- Promoting a blame-free culture that encourages reporting of problems and learning from them

People management

- Promoting accountability
- Encouraging team-working and good professional attitudes and behaviours
- Identifying and addressing under-performance
- Supporting education, training and continuing professional development, including performance appraisal
- Good working conditions and monitoring staff health and wellbeing

Patient and client experience

- Using information technology to ensure that patient data are accurate and up-to-date
- Ensuring that veterinary services provided suit the needs of clients
- Using patient data to develop services tailored to practice needs
- Ensuring that client feedback, including complaints, is used to improve services and that clients are involved in the development of services and the monitoring of outcomes
- Using effective communication and feedback tools (such as newsletters, web-pages, questionnaires and staff communication protocols) to improve client involvement and experience
- Developing effective personal communications skills within veterinary teams and between veterinary professionals and their clients

Application and implementation of clinical governance in veterinary practice

- How clinical governance has developed in the veterinary profession
- Data sharing in the veterinary profession to develop quality improvement activities
- How clinical governance can be used to establish and sustain a learning culture
- Advantages and disadvantages of different approaches to clinical governance
- Skills needed to implement clinical governance

Aim of the Module

This module aims to provide students with the skills required to critically evaluate the concept of clinical governance, how its principles apply in veterinary practice, and what value it has in terms of maintaining and improving the quality of veterinary health care.

Learning Outcomes

At the end of the module, candidates should be able to:

1. Identify and critically appraise information on clinical governance pertinent to veterinary practice;
2. Apply the key concepts, principles and processes of clinical governance, and discuss their relevance to veterinary practice;
3. Assess strategies for developing and sustaining clinical governance in veterinary practice, including factors that facilitate and impede implementation;
4. Critically evaluate the impact of implementing clinical governance approaches in an area of practice;
5. Critically reflect on the effectiveness of clinical governance processes to improve the quality of veterinary care.

Module Structure

The module content will be split into 7 study units available through the virtual learning environment (VLE) in the form of narrated lecture materials, directed readings and resources available via the online library, and signposting to industry legislation and regulations. This material will be supported by interactions with peers and tutors in the form of asynchronous discussions. Skills developed in previous core modules will have prepared students to source suitable and relevant literature to support their studies.

Study Unit 1 - Principles of clinical governance

Study Unit 2 - Evidence-based care, research and clinical effectiveness

Study Unit 3 - Clinical audit and other quality improvement tools

Study Unit 4 - Risk management

Study Unit 5 - Staff management

Study Unit 6 - Patient and client experience

Study Unit 7 - Application and implementation of clinical governance in veterinary practice

Assessment Strategy

2 x reflective essays, with an assessed discussion component, covering the module content (1500 words each) and 1 x reflective essay (without discussion) covering the module content (1500 words).

PLEASE NOTE: It is your responsibility to ensure that you have access to sufficient appropriate cases where you were the primary decision maker to produce adequate material for the module. This may not be possible with some internship positions. You must also be aware of any limitations of your facilities that may make the accumulation of appropriate cases difficult or impossible.