



**Veterinary Continuous Education in Europe
International non-profit association**

**Competencies for
VETCEE Accredited Companion Animal
Programmes**

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Approved by **The VETCEE Board**

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Competences for VETCEE Accredited Companion Animal Programmes

Programmes applying for VETCEE accreditation as companion animal programmes may be designed as either Company Animal Internal Medicines programmes, Companion Animal Surgery Programmes or general companion animal programmes. However, in the case of general companion animal programmes, it is important to avoid dilution of quality due to the wide scope of such programmes and so particular care must be taken to ensure and demonstrate that the level of education does not fall below EQF level 7. This may require additional learning time above the recommended 30 ECTS.

The competencies described will be classified as core competencies, which will be common to both types of programmes and discipline modules, which will be appropriate to the designated programme.

Programme teaching and learning styles: Programmes may use a combination of teaching and learning methods including direct teaching, practical teaching, self-directed learning, case logs and assignments.

For Companion Animal Surgery Programmes, the aim should be to offer 2 ECT units or more of practical training with 1.5 ECT units being a minimum.

Core competency 1:

Professional key skills

About this unit:

This module should be obligatory for all candidates. It is intended to equip candidates with the general key skills that are required for an experienced companion animal practitioner who may be in sole charge of the delivery high quality first opinion veterinary

care.

Main topics:

This module should include the following topics:

1. Welfare and ethics
2. Personal development
3. Accurate, legible and complete keeping of records
4. Knowledge on safe and correct disposal of waste
5. Knowledge on effective infection control measures and prophylactic treatments - hygiene
6. Basic knowledge on breeding principles, legislation*, etc.

*as relevant to the country of origin or the programme with an overview in the European context.

7. Health and safety

Performance criteria and scope:

The level of competence acquired should be consistent with that required in a first opinion companion animal practice.

Candidates should be aware of welfare and ethical issues relevant to companion animal husbandry both at home and during examination, treatment and hospitalisation.

There should be inclusion of personnel development skills including the philosophy of lifelong learning.

The principles and purpose of accurate record keeping should be taught and demonstrated through verification of practical experience and skills e.g. case logs and reports.

Awareness and practical knowledge necessary for compliance with national requirements for the safe handling and disposal of

relevant hazardous waste is required.

Basic principles of breeding and the associated underlying genetic principles, as relevant to canine and feline breeding.

Awareness of the need for and certification principles that surround companion animal health insurance.

Practice business skills in the areas outlined above to a level that may be required by a senior clinician in sole charge of a practice or branch to a level that allows for the sustainable delivery of high quality veterinary care in a private clinic environment.

Quantum: ECTS 1

Core competency 2:

Clinical management and communications

About this unit:

Communication skills both to owners and within the practice team are an essential component of quality veterinary care.

In addition the overall management of clinical cases includes both management of the case within the first opinion practice and during and after referral where specialists input is indicated.

Main topics:

This unit includes the following areas:

1. Demonstrate an understanding of the principles of good communication and good case and client management. There should be some provision for practical training in communication skills.
2. Demonstrate an understanding of the communications issues that arise when offering referral for specialist investigation and treatment and continuity in case

management.

Performance criteria and scope:

Communication with the client should be emphasized. Key communications skills should include those required to obtain a comprehensive clinical history, to report treatment plans and results, to discuss the financial aspects of the proposed course of action and to handle difficult situations such as euthanasia, loss of a pet and complaints. Team communications should include how to foster good team-work, delegate tasks, constructively criticize and praise. Presentation skills can be limited to that required in staff training.

How to communicate history to a specialist colleague and report on progress and results to owners. Continuity of case management.

Quantum: ECTS 1

Core competency 3:

Analgesia and anesthesia

About this unit:

In first opinion practice competence in basic anaesthesia and analgesia is essential even if an individual practitioners' clinical interests are more biased towards medicine. This unit will cover the knowledge and skills required to undertake anaesthesia for medical diagnostic and interventional procedures as well as for emergency and general surgery. Practical knowledge of pain control is included in this module.

Main topics:

1. Being familiar with the actual methods of anaesthesia and analgesia in companion animals and be able to evaluate indications and contraindications for the different methods.

2. Being familiar with pre- and post-operative care

Performance criteria and scope:

Evaluating a patient before anaesthesia for risk assessment and choice of appropriate anaesthetic regime.

Theoretical and practical knowledge of administration of commonly used sedative combinations for tranquilisation for minor procedures or restraint.

Theoretical and practical knowledge of administration of general anaesthetic induction and maintenance consistent with first opinion practice.

Anaesthetic monitoring and resuscitation techniques.

Pre-emptive and post-procedure pain control.

Safety measures for staff.

Alternatives for inhalation anaesthesia

Quantum: ECTS 3

Core competency 4:

Emergency and supportive care

About this unit:

Emergencies by the very nature require immediate attention and therefore must be handled proficiently by a competent companion animal veterinarian. When stabilised, referral for specialist care may be undertaken.

Main Topics:

1. Administration of emergency and non-specialist intensive care
2. Being familiar with the principles and practical application of fluid therapy.

Performance criteria and scope:

All emergencies encountered in first opinion practice must be included, e.g. acute respiratory distress, acute trauma, gastric dilation torsion, acute abdomen, acute urinary tract obstruction, acute toxin ingestion, seizures, shock hypovolaemic and toxemic /septic.

Discuss: may need allow difference in this module between medicine and surgery i.e. medical stabilization of the above.

Diagnostic and practical interventionist skills required to stabilize and where necessary treat the patient to be included.

Quantum: ECTS 3

Competency 5:

Diagnostic imaging/Electrophysiology

About this unit:

This unit aims to equip candidates with sufficient diagnostic imaging skills to select the appropriate imaging required to assess a case.

Main topics:

1. Have knowledge and practical skills in undertaking and interpreting plain radiographs and using basic contrast radiographic techniques
2. Have knowledge of other imaging modalities and understanding of the indications for use of these modalities. i.e.
3. Ultrasound imaging, CT, MRI, Scintigraphy, Endoscopy
4. Techniques for electrophysiology especially the production and interpretation of an ECG.

Performance criteria and scope:

Practical skills required for routine radiology. In addition basic skills in order to undertake an E.C.G and perform basic ultrasound in an emergency e.g. to identify bleeding into the abdomen. However for other diagnostic imaging modalities and the procedures specifically mentioned, theoretical knowledge sufficient to make the appropriate selection of a modality and the interpretation of reports is required.

Quantum: ECTS 2

Designated competencies for medicine and surgery programmes

Competency 6a:

Clinical knowledge (internal medicine)

About this unit:

Being familiar with diagnostic procedures and treatment of the most common diseases in the dog and cat.

Main topics: These include the following topics

- Cardiology and respiratory diseases
- Dermatology*
- Ear-nose-throat
- Endocrinology
- Gastroenterology
- Infectious diseases
- Neurology
- Oncology including basic cytology
- Ophthalmology*

- Reproduction/neonatology
- Urology/Nephrology
- Clinical Nutrition
- Clinical pathology (applied)
- Immunology (applied) integrated as appropriate in above topics.
- Toxicology (clinical) integrated into the above topics

**Basic knowledge*

Performance criteria and scope:

General diagnostic principles and clinical problem solving skills.

In each of the above topics the candidate should become proficient in assessing and diagnosing the commonly encountered diseases seen in first opinion companion animal practice.

Knowledge and application of current treatment regimes for these diseases. It is also important to include awareness of less commonly encountered diseases including non-native diseases.

Practical skills necessary for collection of samples e.g. fine needle aspirates, basic biopsy techniques, thoracocentesis, paracentesis and spinal fluid sampling.

Quantum: ECTS 20

Competencies 6b:

General surgery: knowledge, decision making and skills

About this unit:

First opinion practice involves a significant amount of general surgical work. Diagnosis and pre-operative evaluation of surgical cases together with a thorough knowledge of tissue handling and aseptic principles are required.

A range of surgical techniques that are commonly undertaken in first opinion practice are listed. The programme should also include sufficient knowledge of surgical conditions that require referral to a specialist, plus knowledge sufficient to recognize and stabilize these conditions prior to referral.

1. Have knowledge of the principles of decision making in surgery, pre-operative evaluation, tissue handling and aseptic techniques.
2. Being familiar with and demonstrate competence in a range of surgical techniques. The surgical techniques required are listed in Appendix 1.
3. Have theoretical knowledge of more specialized surgical techniques. The surgical techniques required are listed in Appendix 2.

Performance criteria and scope:

Good surgical knowledge and practical skills consistent with good first opinion general practice. Particular attention to general surgical principles and skills applicable to all general surgery. Procedures requiring referral to a specialist require only general knowledge and not practical experience. Reference should be made to the anaesthesia module.

For Companion Animal Surgery Programmes, the aim should be to offer 2 ECT units or more of practical training with 1.5 ECT

units being a minimum.

Quantum: ECTS 20

I. Basic surgical and invasive diagnostic techniques that the candidate should be able to perform.

General Surgery:

Hernias (umbilical, inguinal)

Chest drain insertion

Anal sack extirpation

Abdominal surgery

Laparotomy

Enterotomy, resection and anastomosis (basic)

Gastropexy in gastric torsion

Splenectomy

Hysterectomy routine and pyometra

Caesarean section

Castration routine and ectopic and retained testes

Urethral obstruction, Emergency urethrostomy and cystotomy

Oncology (surgical)

Basic oncology surgery - surface tumour excision and biopsy techniques

Wound Reconstruction and management

Wound reconstruction (basic) e.g. basic skin flap techniques and management

Orthopedic

Lameness examination and fracture assessment

External support/casting

Closed repositioning of luxated hip

Suturing of tendons and muscles.

Appropriate bandaging

Tail amputation

Toe amputation

Simple to moderately complex fracture repair using basic internal fixation techniques (bone plates), External Skeletal Fixation and adjunctive fixation.

Ophthalmology

Basic ophthalmology techniques, including eyelid surgery (basic)

Repositioning of a prolapsed globe

Bulbar extirpation (enucleation)

Repositioning of a prolapsed third eyelid gland

Head and neck surgery

Oral cavity, oropharynx

Dentistry - treatment of tooth root abscesses, extraction basic and advanced

Ear - aural haematoma, pinna surgery, lateral wall and vertical canal ablation (indications and contraindications)

Thoracic and airway surgical diseases and emergencies

Pneumothorax – diagnosis and treatment

Tracheostomy techniques

Diaphragmatic hernia repair

Emergency Pericardiocentesis and drainage

Medical surgical diagnostic procedures

Skin scrapings and biopsies

General biopsy techniques - Fine needle aspirates, through cut biopsy, excisional biopsy

Surgical diagnostic procedures

Thoracocentesis
Paracentesis
Cystocentesis

II. Surgical techniques, principles of which should be known to the candidate (the candidate is not required to perform these techniques).

Orthopedic surgery principles:

Fracture Repair decision making

Principles of internal fixation

Common joint surgeries e.g. shoulder, Elbow, Hip, Stifle, Arthrodesis

Advance abdominal surgery

Advanced bowel resection/anastomosis techniques

Liver surgery

Nephrectomy and biopsy

Adrenalectomy

Advanced wound reconstruction

Head and neck surgery

Advanced surgery of the oral cavity, oropharynx and advanced dental surgery

Advanced nasal and nasopharyngeal surgery

Advanced dentistry and restorative dentistry

Surgery of the salivary glands

Ear - Total ear canal ablation

Thoracic and airway surgical diseases and emergencies

Thoracic surgery:

Thoracotomy

Interventional medical diagnostic techniques

Lung Biopsy

Liver Biopsy

Kidney Biopsy

ECT Unit Summary

Competence No.	Description	ECTS
Core competency 1	Professional key skills	1
Core competency 2	Clinical management and communications	1
Core competency 3	Analgesia and anesthesia	3
Core competency 4	Emergency and supportive care	3
Core competency 5	Diagnostic imaging/electrophysiology	2
Competence 6a OR	Medicine: Knowledge, decision making and skills	20
Competency 6b OR	General surgery: Knowledge, decision making and skills	20
Competency 6a and 6b	Combined Medicine and Surgery Programme: Knowledge, decision making and skills	20 (or more)
	TOTAL	30