



HARPER ADAMS UNIVERSITY
STUDENT OSCE EXAMINATION
GUIDANCE
2026-27

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Introduction

An Objective Structure Clinical Examination is a multi-station practical assessment. This examination is designed to assess your knowledge of a range of clinical skills, competencies, and the practical application of these in simulated clinical situations. As live patients are not used for this process simulations and models, that are designed to be as authentic as possible will be utilised. Skills assessed will form a sample of the Day One Skills, laid out by the RCVS, that are signed off within the Nursing Progress log.

Following 100% completion of your NPL, you will be eligible to sit your summative OSCE's in **week 11** of your final year at HAU. This examination covers the following topic areas:

- ❖ Laboratory Techniques
- ❖ Bandaging
- ❖ Pharmacy Injection
- ❖ Dispensing Medication
- ❖ Theatre Practice
- ❖ Supporting Anaesthesia
- ❖ Nursing Care
- ❖ Fluid Therapy
- ❖ Diagnostic Imaging
- ❖ Communication

Examination Preparation

Student Eligibility

- Students must be registered at Harper Adams University and have successfully progressed through the BSc/ BSc (Hons) Veterinary Nursing course into their final year of study.
- Students must be:
 - Enrolled with the RCVS
 - Have successfully completed 100% of their Nursing Progress log (NPL), to include the professional behaviour evaluations.
 - Have completed a minimum of 1800 hours of clinical experience.

How Can I Prepare?

- Resources for this assessment are provided on the Career Progression (A6009C17) VLE page. Please take time to look through each section and make use of the information, videos and activities provided. These resources provide a 'gold standard' approach to each task, but these are purely a guide. There are many correct methods to achieve the same goal, and it is important to focus on the individual skills being assessed and not the task scenario that may be demonstrated within the resources provided.
- To help you to develop your knowledge of the OSCE assessment and refresh your clinical skills, taught sessions will be provided during weeks 1-8 of your final year. You will be provided with focused tuition and access to clinical equipment and consumables within the clinical skills labs. This process allows students to practice and perfect skills required to demonstrate competency within their assessment. Attendance at these sessions is strongly recommended and will be monitored during the duration of this module.

- A consumables pack, containing bandage materials and sterile gloves, will be distributed to you at the beginning of the taught sessions to give you the freedom to practice independently. Please make use of this equipment, asking peers and colleagues to observe you as much as possible. Please ask if you require additional consumables to be provided.
- A formative 'mock' assessment will be undertaken in **week 2**, with a reduced number of tasks. This will give you an opportunity to experience the OSCE process, perform tasks under time constraint using the central timer under exam conditions, see the room layout, listen to the pre-assessment student briefing and experience examiner observation. Occasionally new tasks will be piloted within the mock; these will still be relevant to the RCVS DOS but may not be included within the task manual.

Written feedback for the tasks undertaken within the mock will be provided, to allow reflection, but there will be no mark awarded and predominantly this assessment is provided to help reduce concerns over the structure of the assessment. Timetables for this event will be disseminated via email, before the beginning of the academic year.

- Prior to the summative and re assessment events, 'drop in' practice will be provided, giving open access to the clinical space. All tasks will be laid out during these sessions. Timetables will be shared to allow students to book into the drop-in sessions at their leisure. Please make use of this opportunity, practice is the key to success!
- The OSCE task booklet (found on the VLE page for the Career Progression module) contains details of the OSCE tasks that will be randomly sampled to make up your OSCE assessment. Please ensure that you use the booklet that is relevant to your academic year (as noted on the front of the booklet). OSCE tasks are regularly revised and updated, but no significant changes will be made in the 4 weeks prior to the summative assessment. Please note: There are several different exam centres who provide variations of this assessment, to avoid confusion please ensure that you focus on the HAU specific task sheets.
- If possible, speak to your colleagues and qualified RVN's about their experiences of this assessment and ask them to observe you as much as possible.
- Exposing yourself to observation and judgement as much as possible will help to alleviate negative emotions on the day of your exam.
 - Record yourself performing a task and then review and evaluate the performance.
 - Ask your peers to observe you and make comments on your performance.
 - Ask staff, either in practice or an HAU to observe you during your practice sessions.
- Share any concerns with the HAU VN staff team. We are more than willing to arrange additional support where needed.
- Resources for emotional health and wellbeing support will also be provided during the run up to the OSCE assessment. Along with delivery of presentations and suggestions of appropriate management tools, the HAU emotional support and wellbeing team will provide one on one support as and when required. Please speak to the OSCE manager or your course tutor if this is something that you would like to engage with.

When will I know the time and date of my OSCE?

- Timetables for events will be prepared and disseminated, via email, at least 6 weeks prior to the event – minor adjustments can be made at this point to accommodate student's availability, if appropriate, so please inform the module leader immediately of any issues.
- Timetables will be shared with students once again 1-2 weeks prior to the event with instructions of exam regulations and general requirements for the day. Mitigating circumstance will be required should students be unable to attend at the time indicated on this timetable. Please refer to HAU assessment policy for further details.

On the day of the examination

What Do I Wear?

- **Uniform** - Students are expected to present in a professional clinical outfit. A full nurse's uniform or smart scrub suit. Simple black trousers and top are all acceptable for the mock ONLY. If uniform is not available scrubs can be loaned from the VN dept (please email the module tutor for further details). When selecting an outfit, please consider its appropriateness to wear in a professional and clinical environment and the impact of your clothing choice on your ability to perform tasks and maintain asepsis e.g. hoods, tassels, sleeves, zips and embellishments may make some tasks difficult (gloving and gowning). Poor clothing choices may also impact on your professionalism score within each task station.
- **Head coverings**, other than those worn for cultural or religious reasons, or as part of the clinical uniform, must be removed. Please access the link below for further details regarding religious clothing and beliefs considerations [LINK](#). Although this document outlines guidance for Veterinary Students, these policies will apply to the vet nursing OSCE assessment requirements at Harper Adams. If you have any questions or concerns, please speak to the module or course tutor for guidance.
- **Long hair**, to avoid contamination of the clinical environment, should be fully tied back and held off the face and above the neckline. Accessories should not be worn within the hair.
- **Coloured hair**- un-naturally coloured hair, although not encouraged, does not pose an infection control risk and as such is acceptable for this assessment.
- **Footwear** - Sturdy, smart, clean, flat, closed-toe footwear in a neutral colour e.g. black, brown must be worn. Canvas shoes are not suitable as they can be penetrated by dropped needles and are absorbent, increasing the risk of infection control breaches. Acceptable options include closed Crocs, clogs, water-resistant, wipeable trainers or shoes.
- **Jewellery**, including watches, must be removed. Piercings should be removed as covering with Elastoplast does not reduce the safety risk and is considered unsightly. If students are unable to remove jewellery, this may negatively impact on their ability to achieve marks in some tasks. Guidance on the adornment of religious jewellery can be found in the religious clothing document found within the link in the 'head coverings' section.
- **False eyelashes** – False eyelashes are deemed to be an infection control risk that may also impact the student's ability to perform their role, e.g. microscopy work, so are not permitted.
- **Nails** - should be clean and manicured to a short length. False, painted nails, gel nails and accessories are not deemed to be appropriate and should be removed prior to assessment.
- **Arms** - should be exposed from the elbow to the fingertips as some tasks require access to this area when demonstrating a specific skill. Adjustments can be made for those students who require arms to be covered, so please get in touch with the OSCE lead or learner support if this applies to you.

- **Tattoos** - Although not encouraged, are permitted. Tattoos considered to be offensive must be covered at all times.
- **Nursing pouch/ waist bag** – Although these can be very useful to carry your equipment in practice, these have been scientifically identified as an infection control risk due to them being a fomite. These bags are not permitted within the assessment.

When Do I Arrive?

- The location of the examination may vary so please refer to guidance included when assessment timetables are released.
- Students will be encouraged to arrive at least 20 minutes prior to their assessment time and to gather in the foyer.
- You will be collected by the Lead Examiner who will escort you to a briefing room prior to you going into the assessment room.
- A student briefing presentation will be conducted prior to commencement of the exams. This is approximately 10 mins in duration and will provide details of the examination process. Failure to attend this briefing will result in you being unable to sit the assessment, so please ensure that you arrive at the specified time.
- Please refer to the *Student Briefing* document for further details.

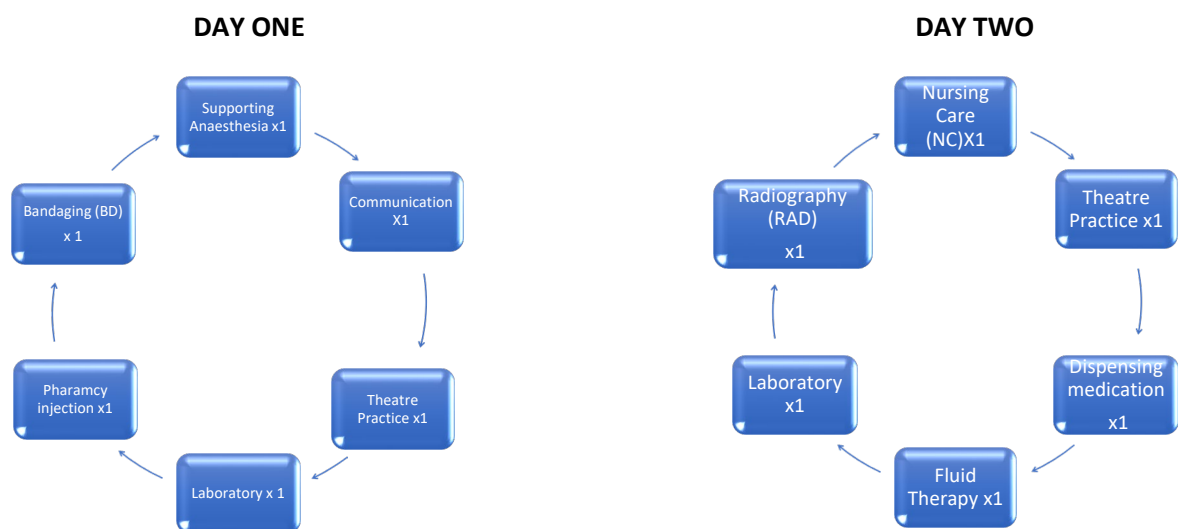
What should I Expect?

- This assessment will take place in one of the clinical skills labs at HAU over TWO separate days.
- Commonly there will be ONE task and ONE examiner in each of the OSCE stations, with an additional simulated client present in communication tasks.
- Over the TWO days you will be assessed in 12 clinical tasks, sampling skills from the RCVS DOS and the 'HAU OSCE Task Booklet,' covering the areas as identified above. Please see the image below that provides an example of an OSCE circuit.
- You will be allocated to a station by the Lead Examiner and given TWO minutes to read the task scenario, while seated outside the station.
- Each task will be assigned SEVEN minutes for completion, with the central timer announcing when you are able to begin.
- If you need a short comfort break during your assessment, this is permitted, so please inform the examiner. Breaks must be kept brief to a minimum to minimise the impact on other students within the assessment hall.
- Once you have completed your task you will move around the SIX stations until all SIX tasks have been assessed. This will be repeated on your second assessment day, with SIX new tasks. Signage and staff will be provided to support and direct you.
- During the assessment the examiner will observe you demonstrating a skill and marks will be awarded accordingly. Please see the 'marking criteria' section below for further information.
- If you finish a station early and have checked that you have completed everything you may leave the station and wait quietly on the seat outside of the station until the timer directs you to the next station. You are not permitted to re-enter a station once you have left it.
- Occasionally examiners will be subject to a quality assurance evaluation, so you may notice another member of staff within the room. Please do not be alarmed by this, these personnel will be assessing the examiner not you.

- Each assessment day will last approximately 90 minutes in total.
- There will be lots of staff on hand to help to guide you through this process and a visual and audible electronic timer will be used also.
- Discrete audio and video recording of candidates may be required in some OSCE stations. This recording will be used as part of the quality assurance process at a later date and deleted after results have been released and appeals deadlines have been reached. You will be required to provide your consent for this at the briefing prior to beginning your assessment.

Example of OSCE circuit

NB: Although the twelve topic areas that are identified will be consistent for every exam, this image is an **example** of the task lay out for each day. The position of each task may vary depending on multiple factors.



Academic integrity

- HAU academic integrity and misconduct policy will apply to these assessments. Please access the QR code below for further information [LINK](#)
- Please **do not** bring bags coats and personal belongings with you. Mobile phones and Smart devices are not permitted within the assessment and must be turned off and left in the lockers provided on arrival.
- You may bring with you a clear bottle of water (with labels removed). A pen, calculator and nursing scissors can also be carried into the assessment although these will all be provided at the stations.
- **Please ensure you always have your student card on your person.**

Disruptive Student's

- Students will be supported, during the event, to navigate the emotional impact of this practical assessment.
- If a student's emotional response or behaviour is deemed to be impacting upon other students within the assessment circuit, and/or the examining team have concerns regarding the

emotional wellbeing of a student. Following HAU '[Exam Rules](#)' the lead examiner will reserve the right to withdraw students and remove them from the assessment room.

- For students undertaking the first day of the assessment, if able they will be invited to sit the remaining SIX tasks on their second day but not be given the opportunity to revisit missed tasks.
- Students will obtain a zero mark for the tasks that have not been assessed.
- For mitigating circumstances, please refer to the section above.
- There will be a member of the wellbeing team within the Vet Ed Centre and on hand, as required, to support students before, during and after the assessment.

Health and Safety

- During the assessment a qualified first aider may not be in attendance within the examination area, so in the event of an accident or near miss please speak to the lead examiner or one of the examining team immediately. A first aider can be contacted by calling the number identified below

FIRE AND FIRST AID EMERGENCIES CALL MAIN BUILDING RECEPTION ON - 01952 815599 or 5599.

- For minor injuries a first aid kit can be found in the corridor outside VG28 (to the left of the TV screen) on the ground floor of the Vet Ed Centre.
- A member of the examiner team will assist you to record any injuries in the accident book.
- Fire alarms are routinely tested at HAU on Wednesday mornings but should not sound during your assessment.

In the event of a fire please activate the nearest fire alarm. If the alarm is sounding, please follow the instruction of the examiners, leaving all belongings and make your way out of the nearest exit at the back of the building.

The fire muster point is on the grass outside the CERC building.

Student Support and Assessment Considerations

Reasonable Adjustments

Due to the practical nature of this assessment and the need for candidates to practically demonstrate clinical competence, the OSCE assessment has been designed, where possible, as a universally inclusive assessment, with consideration of different learning styles and requirements. It is not always possible to consider all student needs so **If you believe that you will have difficulty completing any of the OSCE tasks due to additional needs or issues with equipment provided e.g. allergy or any other unavoidable challenge, then please notify the module leader as soon as possible, to allow adjustments to be made where appropriate.**

This process is detailed below:

- Discussion will be held with HAU Learner Support and Examinations Office regarding those students identified to have special education or other needs/ disabilities that may require reasonable adjustments or special provisions. Adjustments will be implemented where possible and will be appropriate to ensure inclusion and accessibility within the assessment.
- Extra time is universally provided and, due to the use of a central timer and impact on other students, significant additional time cannot be offered. Please speak to learner support if more information is required regarding extra time.

- Coloured paper will not be provided; however, any students who would like to use a coloured overlay are permitted to do so. To maintain integrity of the assessment this must be written in as a reason adjustment so please inform the OSCE lead should you require this adjustment to be implemented.
- Due to the practical nature of this assessment readers and scribes are not considered appropriate. Assistive technologies like immersive reader can be accessed as required, so please enquire if you would like to explore this option as an alternative technique.
- Students who use 'Loops' or noise cancelling ear buds, are permitted to do so, however, to maintain integrity of the assessment this must be written in as a reasonable adjustment, and the plugs will be checked at registration on your assessment day. **Please inform the OSCE lead should you require this adjustment to be implemented.**
- Students who would like to bring a small, discrete fidget toy to the assessment, are permitted to do so, however, to maintain integrity of the assessment this must be written in as a reasonable adjustment, and the toy will be checked at registration on your assessment day. **Please inform the OSCE lead should you require this adjustment to be implemented.**
- A 'reasonable adjustment' document will be compiled and shared with examiners to ensure adjustments are made as required and examiners are supportive of student needs.
- Once this document has been developed students will be required to agree to the adjustments prior to undertaking the assessment.
- Any students bringing additional equipment into the assessment that has not been officially permitted through a written reasonable adjustment plan may be in breach of academic conduct. Please follow the QR code link below for details

[LINK](#)

Mitigating Circumstances.

If you are unable to attend your assessment or if you believe the certain circumstances have unduly affected your performance, then please refer to the HAU Mitigating Circumstances document contained within the HAU assessment policy. [Mitigating circumstances link](#)

This document contains information regarding

- The grounds on which mitigating circumstances can be claimed.
- The categories of mitigating circumstances.
- The procedures associated with each category.
- Acceptable evidence in support of mitigating circumstances.
- Access to supporting evidence.

If you require any support with this process, please speak to your course tutor.

Exam Marking, Results and Appeals

Marking Criteria

- Examiners will observe you demonstrating a skill under exam conditions and mark each step, highlighted in the task sheet, according to your performance e.g. yes- you achieved this step or no- you did not.
- Steps are weighted depending on their importance e.g., safe practice, aseptic technique etc. If you fail to achieve one or more of the heavily weighted steps within the task you are more likely to fail the task.
- Each station is marked out of 100, but the percentage pass marks for each task will vary due to several different criteria, therefore it is not possible to share pass marks for each station with students.

Exam Results

- Students are required to pass a minimum of **8 out of the 12** collated stations to pass the assessment overall. A pass in this assessment along with a pass in all other assessments within your final year of studies will entitle you to obtain your 'license to practice' from the RCVS.
- Examiner comments and marks are analysed and equated to allow any discrepancies to be addressed and appropriately moderated before ratification.
- Results will be released to students in line with the dates issued in HAU academic timetable, once moderation and ratification have been undertaken at a HAU Subject Assessment Board meeting. Please refer to the academic timetable for specific dates.

Exam Appeals

- All students and examiners are encouraged to report any environmental, equipment or process issues that they deem to have negatively impacted or advantaged the student performance to the senior examiner immediately after the assessment. Students who report such incidence following receipt of their results will not be considered.
- All students have the right to appeal their mark and appeals are required to be submitted in writing, in accordance with the [HAU appeals](#) process. Please see the link in blue and relevant documentation regarding this process.

Reassessment

- If a student is unsuccessful in their OSCE they will be entitled to a ONE reassessment of the FULL 12 tasks. Partial assessment is not conducted.
- Please refer to the Module Descriptor for the reassessment strategy for this module
- Currently, reassessments do not incur a fee.
- If a student is unsuccessful on their reassessment attempt, they will be put forward for a restudy of the module within the next academic year. This will give the student TWO further attempts at this assessment. Please note that module restudies hold a monetary charge.

Contact information

If you have any questions or queries regarding preparation for the OSCE's or the assessment itself, please do not hesitate to contact me.

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