



International School  
of Veterinary  
Postgraduate  
Studies

**Veterinary Technicians’  
Foundation Certificate in Feline Nursing**

**VTFCert (FeINsg)**

**SYLLABUS AND LEARNING OBJECTIVES**

## **FELINE NURSING –**

### **VTFCert (FeINsg)**

#### **SYLLABUS**

This syllabus is designed as a guideline to the key areas that the candidate is expected to understand. The learning objectives provide a clear insight of how the learning aims and syllabus will be addressed.

Please note, examination questions may cover any area of the syllabus. As not all areas of the syllabus are covered to the same extent within the modular training programme, examination candidates are advised to read around the syllabus to develop a critical awareness of best practice, current issues and new insights.

#### **(S1) Feline Friendly Practice and Principles of Feline Behaviour**

- Basic understanding of feline behaviour
- Common behavioural issues and how they relate to practice (including pica)
- Considerations and issues of multi-cat households
- Making the practice 'cat-friendly': protocols and procedures that can be put into place
- Running feline nurse clinics
- Appropriate and empathetic handling techniques for cats

## **(LO1) Key learning objectives for S1:**

- 1.1 Describe the normal behaviour of cats, to include their ancestry, development and non-domestication
- 1.2 Recognise signs of fear, anxiety and defensive 'aggression' in cats
- 1.3 Describe feline communication techniques and normal social behaviour, to include the anatomy and physiology that is specifically involved in this; outline the effects this can have in a clinical environment
- 1.4 Outline common behavioural issues that may be seen in domestic cats and provide appropriate advice for owners
- 1.5 Explain the relevance of pica in cats and how this may indicate a behavioural or medical issue
- 1.6 Summarize key behavioural issues in multi-cat households and how to minimise these
- 1.7 Explain the criteria for developing a cat-friendly practice and the specific protocols and procedures that should be in place
- 1.8 Outline the importance of feline nurse clinics and explain how to implement these throughout different life stages of the cat from kitten to geriatric
- 1.9 Describe appropriate handling principles to reduce fear and stress within the practice environment

## **(S2) Principles of Feline Nursing**

- The clinical examination and feline-specific considerations

- Life stage care
- Feline infectious disease including preventative measures such as vaccination
- Nutritional considerations for feline patients including assisted feeding
- Use of nursing care plans and how they can improve the care of feline patients
- Laboratory considerations for feline patients
- Feline physical rehabilitation

**(LO2) Key learning objectives for S2:**

- 2.1 Assist the clinician during a full clinical examination of a cat, utilising cat-friendly handling principles, and recognising normal and abnormal findings
- 2.2 Formulate a plan detailing the different care requirements for cats throughout their life stages
- 2.3 Devise a feeding care plan for an anorexic cat and describe how to implement and monitor this
- 2.4 Outline the different types of feeding techniques available and choose the most suitable technique for each patient
- 2.5 Formulate a nursing care plan for a sick cat and use this to illustrate how a bespoke plan can enhance care for the patient
- 2.6 Describe methods for collecting blood samples for haematological and biochemical analysis
- 2.7 Outline common infectious diseases including feline immunodeficiency virus (FIV), feline leukaemia virus (FeLV), 'cat flu' (feline calicivirus, feline

- herpesvirus) and feline infectious peritonitis (FIP) seen in domestic cats, and the specific practice and nursing considerations associated with these
- 2.8 Describe how infectious diseases are spread and develop appropriate infection control protocols to prevent spread
- 2.9 Discuss the vaccination recommendations and appropriate guidance that should be provided to owners, specific to the geographic location you are situated in **(NOT EXAMINED)**
- 2.10 Develop a physical rehabilitation plan for a feline patient to include manual therapies and therapeutic exercises

### **(S3) Anaesthesia and Analgesia**

- Premedication
- Induction and intubation of feline patients
- Maintenance and monitoring of anaesthesia
- Pain scoring in feline patients
- Classes of analgesic drugs
- Principles of selection and administration of analgesia to feline patients
- IVFT – including calculations, crystalloids and colloids

### **(LO3) Key learning objectives for S3:**

- 3.1 Formulate an anesthesia plan, taking into consideration individual patient characteristics

- 3.2 Identify different types of endotracheal tubes and describe their use
- 3.3 Discuss basic through to advanced patient monitoring and the advantages and disadvantages of multi-parameter monitoring for specific cases
- 3.4 Identify common complications in anaesthesia
- 3.5 Compare methods of analgesia, including opioids, NSAIDs, and local anaesthetics
- 3.6 Explain the use of pain scoring in cats and be able to implement pain scoring in clinical practice
- 3.7 Explain different fluid replacement options available in cats; perform all types of fluid administration calculations
- 3.8 Describe anaesthetic considerations affecting patients with respiratory disease
- 3.9 Describe the pathophysiology underlying cardiac disease, and identify how anaesthetic protocols can be modified for cardiac patients

#### **(S4) Principles of Emergency and Critical Care in Feline Patients**

- The initial approach to the emergency feline patient – triage, initial assessment
- Cerebro-cardiopulmonary resuscitation and RECOVER guidelines
- Supporting the feline patient in a critical care setting: monitoring (ECG, BP, pulse oximetry, TPR etc.)
- Assessment, recognition, and treatment of shock in feline patients

- Emergency laboratory techniques and interpretation–point of care testing and point-of-care ultrasound (POCUS)
- Approach to the road traffic accident (RTA) cat

**(LO4) Key learning objectives for S4:**

- 4.1 Describe how to effectively triage an emergency and know when to seek immediate help
- 4.2 Summarize the RECOVER guidelines for the current recommendations for CCPR for feline patients
- 4.3 Discuss basic monitoring of a critical patient including key parameters such as SPO2, heart rate, respiratory rate, blood pressure, pulse quality and urine output
- 4.4 Recognise signs of shock in a feline patient
- 4.5 Identify the monitoring equipment that can be used to assess venous blood gas, lactate, glucose and describe the use of point of care ultrasound; recognise normal and abnormal results
- 4.6 Discuss the main complications associated with road traffic accidents in cats and how to investigate and treat these

**(S5) Feline Body Systems 1**

- Assessment of feline patients with respiratory disease
- Assessment of feline patients with neurological disease

- The reproductive cycle of the feline patient
- Assessment of common parturition problems and post-partum conditions in the feline patient
- Assessment of the kitten post-partum

**(LO5) Key learning objectives for S5:**

- 5.1 Explain the typical presentation and nursing care required for cats with respiratory disease including feline asthma, pneumonia, pneumothorax and pyothorax
- 5.2 Outline how the neurological examination can assist with neurolocalisation
- 5.3 Summarise the appropriate nursing care for cats with a variety of neurological conditions including vestibular disease, seizures, and cognitive dysfunction
- 5.4 Explain the clinical presentation, diagnostic techniques used and nursing care requirements for common endocrinopathies including diabetes mellitus and hyperthyroidism; describe how to effectively monitor patients with these conditions
- 5.5 Recognise the clinical signs associated with feline diabetic ketoacidosis, the treatment required and how to provide appropriate nursing care to these patients
- 5.6 Describe normal feline reproduction including seasonality of oestrus; compare feline reproductive cycles and anatomy to canine reproductive cycles and anatomy

- 5.7 Identify the most common complications associated with parturition and explain when to intervene and how to resuscitate kittens
- 5.8 Discuss common postpartum problems including eclampsia, mastitis, metritis in the queen and congenital disorders in kittens, detailing how to detect these problems and outlining treatment protocols

### **(S6) Feline Body Systems 2**

- Assessment and management of feline patients with renal disease
- Assessment and management of feline patients with urinary disease (including idiopathic cystitis and urinary obstruction)
- Assessment and management of feline patients with gastrointestinal disease
- Assessment and management of feline patients with hepatic disease
- Assessment and management of feline patients with haematological disorders

### **(LO6) Key learning objectives for S6:**

- 6.1 Discuss the importance of being able to classify feline renal disease according to IRIS staging, and how to manage and monitor cats with IRIS CKD Stages 1 to 4
- 6.2 Describe the signs associated with common upper and lower urinary diseases diagnosed in cats
- 6.3 Explain the pathophysiology of feline idiopathic cystitis and how to counsel owners of cats that are affected with this condition

- 6.4 Explain the pathophysiology of urethral obstruction and recognise signs and complications associated with this condition
- 6.5 Describe the most common acute and chronic gastrointestinal diseases in cats including presenting signs
- 6.6 Discuss management and nursing care of gastrointestinal upset and common gastrointestinal disorders including food responsive enteropathy and inflammatory bowel disease
- 6.7 Explain the pathophysiology of the most common hepatobiliary diseases in cats including lymphocytic cholangiohepatitis, neutrophilic cholangiohepatitis, triaditis and hepatic lipidosis, and describe how to investigate, manage, and monitor these conditions
- 6.8 Describe common haematological disorders seen in cats to include clinical signs, diagnostic techniques, and nursing considerations

### **(S7) Feline Oncology**

- Biology of cancer and paraneoplastic disease
- Ethics of cancer treatment in cats
- Assessment and treatment of oncological emergencies
- Cytology: sample preparation
- Health and safety considerations

### **(L07) Key learning objectives for S7:**

- 7.1 Discuss the biology of cancer and paraneoplastic disease in cats
- 7.2 Describe the principles, challenges, and ethics of cancer treatment in cats
- 7.3 Outline surgical and radiation therapy options available for local control of tumours
- 7.4 Explain how systemic management of tumours can be achieved through chemotherapy and targeted therapy
- 7.5 Identify the clinical signs associated with oncological emergencies and how to address these
- 7.6 Discuss the side effects associated with commonly used chemotherapeutic agents

### **(S8) Feline Surgical Principles**

- Principles of surgical asepsis and theatre protocol
- Suture materials and patterns, surgical instruments, and tissue handling
- Principles of surgical planning
- Assessment of haemostasis
- Pre-, intra-, and post-operative considerations
- Neutering and population control
- Common soft tissue surgical procedures
- Common orthopaedic procedures

**(LO8) Key learning objectives for S8:**

- 8.1 Describe the principles of surgical asepsis and how appropriate theatre protocol relates to this
- 8.2 Describe different suture materials and patterns
- 8.3 Identify a range of surgical instrumentation for a variety of soft tissue and orthopaedic procedures; explain appropriate care and maintenance of these instruments
- 8.4 Explain appropriate tissue handling techniques and their importance
- 8.5 Discuss the principles of surgical planning for feline patients and outline the importance of appropriate planning
- 8.6 Revise the main pathways of haemostasis in feline patients and discuss options for haemorrhage control during surgery
- 8.7 Outline the preoperative, intraoperative, and postoperative considerations for feline patients
- 8.8 Discuss the impact of neutering on population control and feline welfare
- 8.9 Outline common soft tissue surgical procedures performed in feline patients to treat conditions including dystocia, ureteral and urethral obstruction, gastrointestinal foreign body, pyothorax and aural polyps
- 8.10 Outline common orthopaedic procedures performed in feline patients to treat conditions including fractures, hip luxation, and cranial cruciate ligament rupture

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