## ACMVET4X17 Nurse foals

#### Application

This unit of competency describes the skills and knowledge required to care for newborn foals during the neonatal period.

The unit applies to veterinary nurses who work under the supervision of a registered veterinarian.

Veterinary nurses who provide care for foals apply specialised knowledge of foal anatomy, physiology, behaviour, and growth and developmental parameters to recognise normal and abnormal presentations. They use this knowledge to make informed assessments of foal health and to support appropriate nursing interventions.

Strategies for the delivery and assessment of this unit of competency must show evidence of the use of guidance provided in the Companion Volume: User Guide: Safety in Equine Training.

**Licensing, legislative, regulatory requirements**

Legislative and regulatory requirements apply to the permitted scope of veterinary nursing practice and vary according to state/territory jurisdictions. Users of this unit must confirm current requirements with the relevant regulatory authority before delivery.

#### Pre-requisite unit ACMEQU212 Handle horses safely

#### Unit sector

Veterinary Nursing (VET)

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| **Elements** *Elements describe the essential outcomes.* | **Performance criteria**  *Performance criteria describe the performance needed to demonstrate achievement of the element.* |
| 1. Assess and maintain health of neonatal foals | 1.1 Observe and assess neonatal foal behaviour and development  1.2 Assess foal’s passive immune status  1.3 Recognise foals at risk of developing illnesses  1.4 Use humane, safe work and manual handling techniques to handle and restrain foals for routine procedures |
| 2. Perform a physical examination of an equine neonate | 2.1 Obtain and record foal and foaling history  2.2 Perform physical examination of foal  2.3 Record examination findings using industry standard terminology |
| 3. Care for and handle sick or compromised foals | 3.1 Assess and control work health and safety (WHS) risks and apply infection prevention and control (IPC) protocols when carrying out foal care procedures  3.2 Catch, hold and restrain sick or compromised foals using safe horse-handling techniques  3.3 Provide nursing assistance for compromised foals  3.4 Assist with assessment to determine whether special nursing and intensive care is required  3.5 Assess foal maturity status |
| 4. Provide initial care for critically ill foals | 4.1 Provide temperature control for critically ill foals  4.2 Feed critically ill or compromised foals  4.3 Assist veterinarian before and during referral to neonatal intensive care unit |
| 5. Identify the clinical signs of common foal diseases in the early neonatal period | 5.1 Identify and assess signs of common foal diseases  5.2 Record and report observations using industry standard terminology |
| 6. Assess foal growth and development to six weeks of age | 6.1 Identify normal growth and development of foals  6.2 Identify common abnormalities in growth and development of foals |

#### Foundation skills

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| **Learning** | **Reading** | **Writing** | **Oral communication** | **Numeracy** |
| 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 |

**Assessment Requirements**

**Performance evidence**

An individual demonstrating competency must satisfy all of the elements and performance criteria in this unit.

There must be evidence that the individual has cared for a minimum of two newborn foals, including:

* appropriately restraining a foal
* teaching a weak foal to rise
* providing temperature support
* moving a compromised foal
* providing limb support
* providing respiratory support
* providing nutritional support

**Knowledge evidence**

An individual must be able to demonstrate the knowledge required to perform the tasks outlined in the elements and performance criteria of this unit. This includes knowledge of:

* safe and humane foal handling techniques
* principles and practices of work health and safety (WHS) and infection prevention and control related to the care and handling of foals
* normal and abnormal behaviour for neonatal foals
* normal and abnormal health parameters for neonatal foals
* aspects of foal growth and development to be assessed, including:

growth rate

weight gain

limb conformation

illness

dam’s condition and ability to produce milk

* common foal diseases and indicators of each

meconium retention

septicaemia

neonatal maladjustment syndrome/hypoxic ischaemic syndrome

localised infections

neonatal seizures

infectious and non-infectious diarrhoea

gastroduodenal ulcers

haemolytic disease (NI)

ruptured bladder

septic arthritis (joint ill)

umbilical infection and/or herniation

congenital and genetic disorders

hypoglycaemia

rhodococcus equi

* nutritional requirements and options for impaired foals
* nursing assistance and techniques, including:

restraining a foal

teaching a weak foal to rise

providing temperature support to a compromised foal

providing limb support

providing respiratory support

providing nutritional support

* techniques for safely transporting critically ill foals to neonatal intensive care unit (NICU)
* resuscitation techniques and equipment
* principles of animal welfare and requirements of animal welfare legislation relevant to nursing care of newborn foals and foals with compromised health issues

**Assessment conditions**

Skills must be demonstrated in a workplace or an environment that accurately represents real workplace conditions.

Assessment must ensure access to:

* newborn foals and foals up to six weeks old
* equipment and resources typically available in a veterinary practice
* a registered supervising veterinarian
* organisational policies and procedures, current legislation, regulations and relevant codes of practice relevant to providing care to newborn foals

Assessors of this unit must satisfy the requirements for assessors in applicable vocational education and training legislation, frameworks and/or standards.

#### Unit mapping information

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| **Code and title current version** | **Code and title previous version** | **Equivalence status** | **Comments** |
| ACMVET4X17 Nurse foals | ACMVET414 Nurse foals | Equivalent | Changes to Application wording. Removed ‘in a veterinary practice’ as caring for foals may take in a variety of contexts under the supervision of a veterinarian.  Legislative, licensing and regulatory language has been clarified – legislation does not specifically apply to veterinary nurses, it applies to veterinarians and consequently to the scope of work that is permitted to be undertaken by a veterinary nurse and required levels of supervision.  Element 2 re-sequenced to Element 6 as is post the neo-natal period of foal care, impacting all other elements.  PC3.1 (previously 4.1 and 4.2) combined and reworded for clarity (i.e. is not carrying out foal care according to WHS procedures, rather following WHS procedures when carrying out foal care)  PC5.1 change ‘symptoms’ to ‘signs’  KE reordered to align with E/PC and remove duplication (types of assistance including respiratory and nutritional support; nursing techniques for respiratory support and feeding – combined to ‘assistance and techniques’ |

### Overview information

#### Modification History

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| **Release** | **Comments** |
| 1 | This unit of competency was first released in ACM Animal Care and Management Training Package Release 7.0. |

**Mandatory workplace requirements:**   
Assessment of performance evidence may be in a workplace setting or an environment that accurately represents a real workplace.