

EMS HANDBOOK

FOR VETERINARY STUDENTS ON FARM PLACEMENT




Next Generation





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HANDBOOK INTRODUCTION

The British Cattle Veterinary Association (BCVA) have produced this handbook to assist our member veterinary practices in supporting their EMS students. We have invited practices to edit this handbook as they see fit, so the information is specific to each individual placement.

We understand that EMS placements may be daunting however, BCVA have designed this handbook to work with practices to help you feel prepared during your stay. We encourage practices to send this handbook out to you before your placement as it contains information that you may find useful prior to your arrival. Our handbook covers everything, from what to pack and where to meet on your first day, to biosecurity tips and health and safety advice for when out on farm.

There are a few forms at the back of the handbook that your placement provider may recommend you complete and return to the practice's placement contact.



HOW TO FIND US

We welcome you as part of our team at:

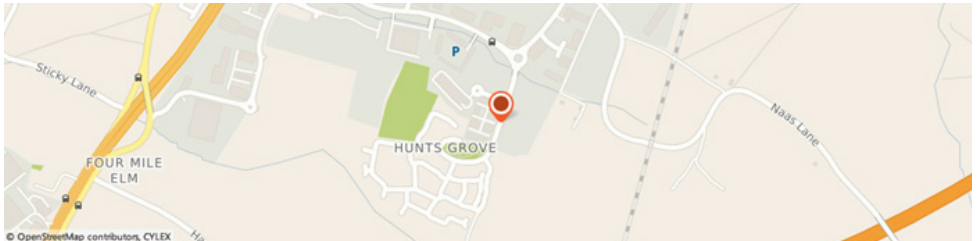
Please meet at the following practice address:



[Insert your own practice logo above]

Our “what3words” location is:

Please park your car: _____



[Insert your own practice location map above]

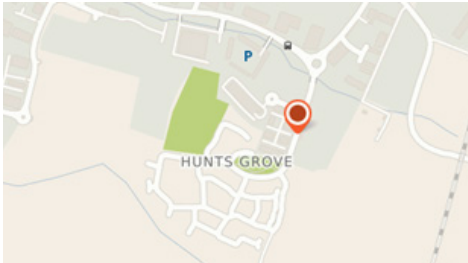


[Insert a street view image of your own practice above]

HOW TO FIND OUR BRANCH PRACTICES

Branch practice details:

Our “what3words” location is: _____



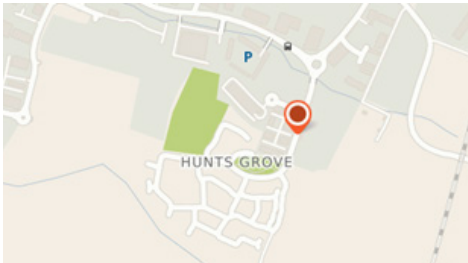
[Insert your own practice location map above]



[Insert a street view image of your own practice above]

Branch practice details:

Our “what3words” location is: _____



[Insert your own practice location map above]



[Insert a street view image of your own practice above]

PLACEMENT DETAILS

You will be with us from *DD/MM/YEAR* to the *DD/MM/YEAR*.

Please arrive on your first day at(am) for your placement induction.

[We recommend carrying out an induction on the first day. This handbook can be used to work through, and it is a good opportunity to discuss the practice's history and ethos as well as answer any questions the student may have.]

If you have not been with us before, please come to reception and ask to see the following EMS provider contact:

Their role in the team is:

We look forward to supporting your learning and helping you get the most out of your placement whilst you are here. During your stay if you have any problems, concerns or complaints, please contact:

(if different from above)

On telephone number:

Their role in the team is:

If this person is not available, please call the main office telephone number on (if different from above):

[We recommend that all practices allocate at least one person in their team to be the primary point of contact for a student during their stay. This may be for example either the practice's EMS placement co-ordinator, a director, a nominated veterinary mentor, an office member or the practice manager. This person should be who the student can contact, for example if they need more information, need to call in sick, in the event of cancellation or in the case of an emergency.]

USEFUL INFORMATION

WiFi Code:

- WiFi Name:
- WiFi Password:

Student Login for Practice Management System (if applicable):

- Username:
- Password:

Access to Vet's Diaries:

- Who to ask:
- Where to find them:

Link to Practice website:

Link to "Meet the Team":

In the case of an emergency please contact: **999**

To inform the EMS provider of an emergency (once the situation is controlled) contact:

The nearest A&E department or hospital is:

The nearest pharmacy is:

The nearest doctor's surgery is:

The nearest dental surgery is:

USEFUL CONTACTS

During your placement we encourage you to communicate with our veterinary team to co-ordinate your attendance on visits with them. Where their contact details are included below, they are more than happy for you to call and message during your stay. If you are unsure where to meet, perhaps ask them to send you the “What3Words” location or a “dropped pin” on google maps.

Name	Practice role (e.g. vet, manager, vet tech etc.)	Telephone number	Practice location/Office (e.g. reception/upstairs office/branch practice name)

Other practice policies: _____

PLACEMENT FORMAT

Each practice is different in-terms of their EMS delivery as well as their practice structure, however all will inevitably be busy. This part of the handbook should help indicate how you can help take responsibility for the organisation of your time on placement as well as removing any uncertainty of where you should be.

We recommend that practices fill in the following timetable(s) for the entirety of your stay. This means that for each day of your placement you are allocated to an initial call in the morning. This is to ensure that you at least know who you should be meeting, where that should be and at what time. We find this works best if you communicate with the allocated person the day before to double check the details of the visit. This can also help with preparatory study. If you know what you may be doing, then this will give you the opportunity to read up on such cases or topics beforehand.

We would then suggest that you continue to either stay with that vet, vet tech, TB tester or foot trimmer for the entirety of the day (if suitable) or ask that staff member or the office as to which calls you should go to next.

It may be that occasionally you are allocated to “emergency calls”. This means you remain in the practice and wait for emergencies to come in. Make sure the office staff and or the available vet know the plan though, so if a call comes in you don’t miss the opportunity to go too. If during this time you find yourself with nothing to do, why not ask if you can shadow and, or assist other staff members? You can learn a lot about how a practice runs by observing all team members including the office administration staff, the laboratory technician, the pharmacist, the practice manager and the receptionists. In our experience people will be more than happy to accommodate this request where they can.

Pick an appropriate time to ask their permission and if they are unable to accommodate your request this may be due to the sensitivity of their work or other time pressures. However, at least by having those conversations someone may be able to find an alternative job you can help with or observe instead.

INDUCTION

University educators, practicing vets and veterinary students have reported that students settle into their placements better and are more likely to become a valued member of the team, during their stay, where an induction is carried out. When everyone knows what is expected of them, miscommunication and confusion is avoided.

[The following points of conversation are a useful starting point for the induction, but practices may edit this section as they see fit.]

Please use the following amenities and find them as described *[please include further information where relevant]*:

- Toilets: _____
- Showers (if available): _____
- Washing machine: _____
- Washing facilities: _____
- Kitchen: _____
- Work area: _____
- Break room: _____
- Other: _____

Our practice dress code is: _____

You may borrow the following kit during your stay *[e.g. waterproofs/nitrile gloves/scanner screen]*.

- _____ located in the _____
- _____ located in the _____
- _____ located in the _____

Please sign ALL items IN/OUT with the following staff member: _____

It is **NOT** appropriate to remove drugs from the pharmacy. If you need to, for study aids, they **MUST NOT** leave the building and **MUST** be signed IN/OUT with the following staff member: _____

[Please cross through this section if your practice do not allow this].

PLACEMENT TIMETABLE

Your placement timetable may be subject to change so please check prior to arrival each day.

[The placement contact may chose to circulate this to all staff members, so everyone knows what is expected of them as well as the student's where-about's. The office team may find it useful to have a copy printed out and displayed in the office. We would also recommend allocating time for a feedback session.]

WEEK ONE

	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
Time of first visit	8am				
Client name	Bob Jones				
Farm name	Manor Farm				
Address	Manor Lane, Dorset, DT1 234				
What3Words location	Elephant, treacle, house				
Person you are meeting	Sam Smith				
Their job role	Vet				
Reason for visit	Routine fertility visit - dairy				

[Copy and repeat if student is staying for more than one week.]

WHEN IT IS QUIET

During your placement there may be times when it is quiet and you aren't sure what to do. Here is a useful lists of suggestions to keep you busy!

[Practices should edit this list as they see fit, and consider adding a list of jobs that always need doing that a student could help with. The jobs list and the resources list are all suggestions and are not recommendations or endorsements by BCVA.]

Jobs to help with:

- It always goes down well if you put the kettle on and offer the team a cuppa!
- Clean and repackage surgery kits.
- Check stock and storage areas, tidy and restock as required (check with whoever organises the pharmacy as stock may need to be booked onto their practice management system before going on the shelves).
- Help process any outstanding lab work (under supervision and as instructed).
- Help with office filing.
- Other jobs include:
-

If there are no jobs to do you could use this time to access useful learning resources or see if the practice have copies of journals or interesting books you could read.

Resource suggestions:

- RCVS Knowledge online: to view open access and free access veterinary resources.
- Publications to read include: Cattle Quarterly, Cattle Practice, Vet Record, In Practice, Vet Times, UK-Vet Livestock, Veterinary Practice Today and many more!
- Podcasts include: BCVA'S Cattle Cast, AHDB's Podcasts, VetChat, That Vet Life, Thrive DVM Podcast, The Veterinary Viewfinder Podcast, Podcast a Vet and many more.
- Other suggested resources include:
-

OUT OF HOURS POLICY

We recommend discussing the practices out-of-hours (OOH) policy with your placement contact at your induction. Most farm animal practices conduct their own OOH emergency service, and in our experience most EMS host practices would be happy for students to attend these visits, but please do check with regards to the practice's policy. Attending OOH visits is optional and not seen as a requirement by the universities.

If you can attend OOH you are likely to get a lot out of it. Please coordinate with the on-call vet before their duty starts. Let them know which number they should reach you on, and perhaps even make this available to all the team, for example via a WhatsApp group or on the office white board so you can be reached easily if a call comes in.

Remember the practice is an operational business and it may not always be an option for you to attend. In which case we recommend you follow-up cases with the vet, during the day, instead.

If you do go to an OOH visit and get limited sleep, then be careful to ensure that you are not driving tired. Communicate with your placement contact if you need time off in the day to recover.

Make sure you have a working head torch and a charged phone with you too.



USEFUL THINGS TO PACK?

Waterproof Trousers

Waterproof Tops

Welly Boots



A Bucket

A Brush

A Sponge



Packed Lunch

Snacks

Flask & Water Bottle



Head Torch & Batteries

Phone Charger

Notebook & Pen



Get "What3Words" App

In Car Sat Nav

Or, Handsfree Phone Nav System



Stethoscope

Thermometer

Watch With A Second Hand



Learning Objectives

University Feedback Form

BCVA EMS Handbook Forms



Sun Cream

Sun Hat/Cap if required

Hand Moisturiser



Hand Sanitiser

Face Wipes



Wooly Hat

Warm Clothing Layers



WHAT'S GOING ON?

If you are new to the area, we hope you get a chance to explore in your free time and enjoy your stay. The team have compiled a list of recommended places to visit whilst you are in the area.

Best places to eat in the area:

- _____

Best places to go for a walk or a run:

- _____

Best local landmarks:

- _____

Nearest supermarket/shops

- _____

Nearest gym:

- _____

Nearest swimming pool:

- _____

Nearest fuel station:

- _____

Nearest electric car charging station:

- _____

The following client meetings/courses are taking place during your stay too, so please feel free to let the office staff know if you would be interested in attending any of them.

Upcoming practice events include:

- _____
- _____

BIOSECURITY CONSIDERATIONS

Where the practice has a specific biosecurity policy in place this should be included for further reading. Whilst on farm you should also abide by the client's own biosecurity policies too where stipulated.

Upon entry to farms you should always ensure that you are actively seeking to avoid the risk of introducing disease on to and between premises. A strict biosecurity procedure should not only protect the patient and client but also protect you too, from potential zoonoses.

It is important that you maintain a high standard of cleanliness and disinfect (with a Defra approved disinfectant) on and off the farm holding. You may find that you save time by using your own bucket and brush when disinfecting after a visit, so you don't have to wait for the attending vet to finish first. When an infectious disease is suspected or present on farm disinfect your overalls still, but ideally also use a completely new set at the next visit, if you carry a spare.

Some farms will have known diseases present, such as Johne's disease or digital dermatitis that could be in the faecal matter that you walk through on farm, but they may not be at the forefront of your mind at the time, when you are there to see an unrelated sick animal for example. Also, disease may not be detectable at all, so it is important to remember that time taken to disinfect properly is expected and not time wasted.

You must arrive on all farms with clean hands, arms, overalls, boots, equipment and vehicle. Wearing disposable gloves is recommended, it may be possible to ask for some at your induction so you have a ready supply that fit you.

Help keep the veterinary surgeon's car clean and tidy, make sure you clean and dry your bucket before placing it back in the vehicle, and keep your wellies and wet waterproofs in a bag. Waste disposal facilities will be available in the vet's vehicle or on farm where appropriate. Please ask if unsure.

HEALTH AND SAFETY CONSIDERATIONS

Some universities will require the placement contact to sign an EMS student placement agreement which will provide more detail with regards to Health and Safety. But for any questions please discuss this with your placement contact or the practice manager (please see page 8 for more useful information and contacts in the case of an emergency).

Our following staff members are trained in First Aid:

- _____

Our following staff members are trained in Mental Health First Aid:

- _____

In the UK, veterinary practices are subject to a number of health and safety regulations designed to protect both staff and clients. These laws are primarily outlined by the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974 (HSWA) and are supported by more specific regulations such as the Control of Substances Hazardous to Health (COSHH) Regulations 2002, Manual Handling Operations Regulations 1992, and Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) at Work Regulations 1992.

Health and Safety at Work Act 1974 (HSWA): This is the overarching legislation that requires employers to ensure, as far as is reasonably practicable, the health, safety, and welfare of their employees. Veterinary practices must create a safe working environment, assess and manage risks, and provide adequate training and supervision.

Risk Assessments: Veterinary practices are required to carry out risk assessments to identify potential hazards, whether that's handling animals, dealing with chemicals, or moving equipment. They must then implement control measures to mitigate those risks.

Students should also take into account their own wellbeing and should consider their own safety during the placement, taking all chances to mitigate and minimise risk. Where relevant they may need to carry out a pre-placement risk assessment and this should be discussed with the placement provider. Students should also consider personal health and safety, for example ensuring they have suitable PPE, wear suitable footwear to avoid slips, trips and falls, are aware of zoonotic disease risks, have received guidance and training on safe animal handling, manual handling and handling of veterinary drugs and chemicals and know where to seek first aid for mental and physical health.

ZOONOTIC DISEASES

It is important to be aware of the zoonotic diseases that may be present on farms. Below is a summary of key zoonotic diseases and examples of how they can be transmitted. For further information on zoonotic diseases found in the UK please visit: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/list-of-zoonotic-diseases/list-of-zoonotic-diseases>.

- **Cryptosporidiosis:** Faecal-oral route, through contact with contaminated water or infected animal's faeces.
- **Leptospirosis:** Direct contact with infected urine, tissues or contaminated water. The bacteria can enter the body through the skin or mucous membranes.
- **Salmonella:** Direct contact with infected animals or their faeces, contaminated food or water.
- **E.Coli:** Faecal-oral route, through contact with contaminated food, water or surfaces.
- **Campylobacteriosis:** Direct contact with infected animals (particularly poultry and cattle) or consumption of contaminated food or water.
- **Orf:** Direct contact with lesions or infected animals (especially sheep and goats).
- **Ringworm:** Direct contact with infected animals or contaminated surfaces.
- **Toxoplasmosis:** Direct or indirect contact with infected sheep, aborted material, infected secretions, contaminated clothing and surfaces. Contact with infected cat faeces or consumption of undercooked meat from infected animals.
- **Q fever:** Contact with infected animals, aborted material, infected secretions including urine, faeces and birth fluids. Or, consumption of unpasteurised milk. Also, transmitted by inhalation of contaminated dust.
- **TB:** Direct contact with infected animals (including alive and during post-mortem examination) or by consuming infected food or water. For example, consuming unpasteurised milk.
- **Avian Influenza:** Direct contact with infected birds or their secretions. Sharing the same air space with infected birds.

General preventative measures:

- **Personal protective Equipment:** Wear gloves, boots and disinfectable, protective clothing.
- **Hygiene:** Wash hands frequently with soap and water, and use alcohol-based hand sanitisers where not available.
- **Safe handling of animals:** Avoid unnecessary close contact with sick animals. Where gloves and protective coverings to protect any cuts or abrasions on your skin.
- **Monitoring:** Follow the farmer's and vet's direction when identifying and managing animals that may be at higher risk of carrying zoonotic diseases. Also take responsibility for your own safety, especially where you maybe higher risk of contracting a zoonotic disease.
- **Vaccination:** Ensure you are up-to-date on recommended vaccinations, for example tetanus.

EXTERNAL HELPLINES AND SUPPORT

Your EMS placement provider and university will be able to offer support, help and advice when needed, but if you wish to seek confidential advice there are many external resources available to the veterinary community. If you wish to seek support some of the following websites and helplines listed below may be of use, but this is not an exhaustive list and where specific assistance is required helplines such as Vetlife will be able to signpost you to specific help if it is not something offered by themselves.

- **Vetlife:** www.vetlife.org.uk or call: 0303 040 2551
- **Samaritans:** www.samaritans.co.uk or call 116 123
- **British Veterinary Chronic Illness Support:** www.bvcis.com
- **British Veterinary LGBT+:** <http://bvlgbt.org>
- **BVA Menopause Hub:** www.bva.co.uk/take-action/good-veterinary-workplaces/menopause-hub/
- **Daisy Network (support for women diagnosed with POI):** www.daisynetwork.org

Other suggestions include:

.....

.....

.....

CONFIDENTIALITY CONSIDERATIONS

It is important to remember that when on farm you are representing both your university and our practice and should always conduct yourself in a professional manner. Each practice is different but in general the universities we worked with suggest photographs and videos are NOT taken at any time whilst on your placement, and unless exceptional circumstances are discussed with the placement contact the use of phones during the placement is strongly discouraged.

Students should seek further clarification from their placement providers during their induction as to what the practice's policies may be if this is not clear. Or, where there may be exceptional circumstances, for example, note taking or receiving an important phone call, student's are encouraged to discuss this with their placement contact to avoid any misunderstandings.

It is important to consider that during and after your placement you should respect the confidential nature of the work you have conducted both with regards for the client and the practice. This should take into account visits and meetings you have attended, discussions you have been party to and any conversations or phone calls you have overheard.



PRE-PLACEMENT PAPERWORK

Please complete this form and kindly return it to your placement contact at your induction.

Name: _____

University: _____

Year of study: _____

I have attended this practice before: YES/NO

I have read and understood the EMS Handbook: YES/NO

In case of an emergency please contact (name): _____

Emergency contact telephone number: _____

Are there any adjustments that you require or would help you learn during your stay?:

Learning objectives for this placement:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

Signed: _____

Date: _____

FEEDBACK SESSIONS

University educators report that feedback sessions are highly valued activities, by both the universities themselves and the students. Practitioners are encouraged to meet with students regularly during their placement (ideally once a week) to discuss the student's progress and identify areas for improvement. This is also an opportunity for students to feedback to their placement co-ordinator too.

EMS is a fantastic opportunity for vet students to develop key day one practical skills (see pages 25 to 27) and these feedback sessions may highlight which areas need to be focussed on.

Feedback session details:

- Date: _____
- Time: _____
- Place: _____
- With (name & role): _____

Areas for discussion:

- Student's learning objectives

- What is going well (two-way discussion encouraged)

- Areas for improvement (two-way discussion encouraged)

- Action plan & changed learning objectives

[You may find it useful to go through the BCVA's practical day one skills requirements list, found at the back of this handbook.]

POST PLACEMENT PAPERWORK

Please complete this form and kindly return it to your placement contact at the end of your placement.

Name: _____

University: _____

Year of study: _____

During your placement what did you enjoy the most?

During your placement what did you find challenging?

Did you complete all your learning objectives?

If not, what could have been done differently?

Do you have any further comments or feedback for the practice?

Signed: _____

Date: _____

PRACTICAL DAY ONE SKILLS REQUIREMENTS

The following is a list of practical skills which is considered important for graduates entering work in cattle practice. The list has been split into “essential” and “desirable” skills.

This list is focused on skills that build trust and credibility with clients such as animal handling, examining, and treating sick animals and coping in an emergency until support arrives.

It is important to acknowledge that alongside these practical skills there are other key skills such as professional attributes and core knowledge which will be required for success in farm animal practice.

Essential day one skills for a farm animal practitioner:

1. Understand and demonstrate biosecurity. Arrive well-presented with correct personal protective equipment (PPE) and demonstrating appropriate levels of cleanliness.
2. Be able to handle and restrain an animal to be examined safely and effectively and understand the responsibility for other persons in attendance. This includes being able to:
 - assess the safe operation of cattle handling systems (such as crushes) when used for veterinary work
 - put on a halter and tie a quick release knot
 - restrain a cow for stomach tubing
3. Be able to perform a clinical examination appropriate to the presenting signs. This is to include:
 - thoracic and abdominal auscultation
 - rectal and reproductive tract examination including vaginal examination
 - creating a differential diagnosis list in your head to prepare for making a plan of action
4. Assess the nutritional status of an animal; be able to body condition score and apply the concept to the examination.
5. Be able to assess an obstetrical problem, for example a calving or prolapse. Be able to use a calving aid.

PRACTICAL DAY ONE SKILLS REQUIREMENTS

6. Following assessment, be able to safely perform sedation and recognise when sedation could be beneficial, e.g., safe restraint.
7. Be competent in the performance of local anaesthesia, including regional techniques and epidurals. Be able to administer for the following procedures:
 - castration
 - disbudding/dehorning
 - uterine replacement
 - caesarean section
 - abdominal surgery
8. Be able to apply the principles of aseptic surgical techniques to carry out basic surgical procedures.
9. Be able to humanely euthanase an animal whilst ensuring personal safety and safety of assistants.
10. Be able to administer treatment to an animal via all routes of administration. These include:
 - subcutaneous injection
 - intramuscular injection
 - intravenous injection (including the use of a flutter valve)
 - stomach intubation of cow and calf
 - intramammary infusion
11. Be able to find the cervix and manually palpate the uterus, ovaries, and ovarian structures.
12. Be able to collect a blood sample to carry out diagnostic investigations.
13. Be able to strip milk from the udder and take an aseptic milk sample.
14. Be able to perform haemostasis of acute trauma.

PRACTICAL DAY ONE SKILLS REQUIREMENTS

Desirable day one skills for a farm animal practitioner:

1. Be able to perform local anaesthesia in the form of paravertebral nerve blocks and Intravenous Regional Anaesthesia (IVRA) for the performance of abdominal surgery and digital amputation, respectively.
2. Be able to routinely trim a foot and identify obvious lesions. Be familiar with different types of foot blocks available and be able to apply a preferred type of foot block adequately.
3. Know how to use an ultrasound scanner with a linear rectal probe and be able to interpret the image.
4. Be able to rectally examine an animal and pregnancy diagnose manually from 60 days. Appreciate the importance of practice. Have the confidence to recheck later if required.
5. Catheterise a calf for fluid administration.

When conducting the essential and desirable practical skills, it is important to recognise where your personal limitations are and when to request assistance.

This is a prioritised list and therefore not exhaustive. For more information on the evidence base behind this list please see reference:

Wood S, Sellers E, Vallis R, Baillie S. Prioritising practical skills for farm animal veterinary graduates using a Delphi technique. *Vet Rec.* **2023**; e2643. Available here: <https://bvajournals.onlinelibrary.wiley.com/share/5U5HE7YWQVIYGJYEXPPC?target=10.1002/vetr.2643>

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