

What is a Suitably Qualified Person (SQP)?

An SQP is a category of professionally qualified persons who are entitled to prescribe and/or supply certain veterinary medicinal products under the Veterinary Medicines Regulations.

It is the duty of an SQP to ensure that the statutory requirements in respect of the prescription and/or supply of certain veterinary medicinal products are respected. The SQP is responsible for ensuring this irrespective of how the product is supplied, e.g. supply from a registered retail premises, postal supply, from a website etc.

What categories of medicine can an SQP prescribe and/or supply?

An SQP is entitled to prescribe and/or supply specific categories of product that fall within the scope of the qualification they have obtained and the registration they hold – see table later. The range of veterinary medicinal products available for SQPs to prescribe and/or supply fall within the following distribution classifications:

- POM-VPS (Prescription Only Medicine – Veterinarian, Pharmacist, SQP)
- NFA-VPS (Non-Food Animal – Veterinarian, Pharmacist, SQP)
- AVM-GSL (Authorised Veterinary Medicine – General Sales List).

What are the different types of SQP?

To qualify as an SQP a person must undertake relevant training and pass examinations before becoming eligible to supply VPS veterinary medicines. They must be included on the current SQP register of an approved registration body in order to act as an SQP. At the time of writing (September 2009) the Animal Medicines Training Regulatory Authority (AMTRA) (www.amtra.org.uk) is the only such body holding a register for these professionals.

All student SQPs must complete a base module and may then choose additional modules that will determine the category of SQP qualification they obtain. The different module options are:

- FAM – Farm Animal Module
- EQM – Equine Module
- CAM – Companion Animal Module.

There are currently seven categories of SQP:

SQP Type	Modules Passed	Permissible Medicines
R-SQP	FAM + EQM + CAM	All VPS Medicines
G-SQP	FAM + EQM	VPS – farm animals & equines
K-SQP	FAM + CAM	VPS – farm & companion animals
E-SQP	EQM + CAM	VPS – equines & companion animals only
L-SQP	FAM	VPS – farm animals only
J-SQP	EQM	VPS – equines only
C-SQP	CAM	VPS – companion animals only

As a qualified veterinary nurse do I need to become an SQP in order to dispense prescriptions completed by veterinarians?

No, you may dispense a prescription under the direction of a veterinary surgeon. You only need to become an SQP if you wish to be able to prescribe and/or supply VPS products independently. Veterinary surgeons who allow people other than themselves to dispense prescriptions have a legal duty to ensure that the person is competent to do so.

I am a veterinary nurse (VN). How do I become an SQP?

Qualified veterinary nurses who are on the current RCVS register can add to their qualifications to become C-SQPs through a relatively simple top-up/conversion process. This will enable them to prescribe and/or supply POM-VPS products and supply NFA-VPS products for companion animals without veterinary surgeon intervention. Once qualified as a C-SQP the VN may sit additional modules to enable them to prescribe and/or supply VPS medicines for horses and/or farm animals. In this context, supply would become the professional responsibility of the prescribing/ supplying veterinary nurse. The veterinary nurse top-up/conversion examination was developed by AMTRA and Harper Adams University College.

What will the add-on/conversion qualification entail?

Each candidate must enrol with AMTRA. The assessments for a qualified VN wishing to become a C-SQP will be conducted by Harper Adams who will award the necessary academic credits.

The assessment contains a case study with a description of a scenario and also some short questions to cover knowledge of other areas of the medicines legislation relevant to SQP e.g. legal aspects of medicine storage. A VN will be required to present their original VN certificate and a photocopy of it as proof of achievement in the areas for which they have already been given credit.

If the veterinary nurse also wishes to prescribe and/or supply medicines to horses and/or farm animals, then the candidate will need to take the appropriate modules.

I am a non-qualified nurse, can I become an SQP?

Non-qualified/partially qualified nurses and receptionists can become an SQP but they will need to enrol with AMTRA as a new student SQP, then take the AMTRA examination for new SQP students, as they do not have a prior veterinary nursing qualification. Only fully qualified VNs qualify for the top-up/conversion route to the C-SQP qualification.

Further Information:

For further information on distribution categories of veterinary medicinal products and on duties of prescribers and suppliers please see VMG Note 3 Veterinary Medicinal Products – Prescription, Distribution Categories and Supply www.vmd.gov.uk/General/VMR/vmgn/VMGNote03.pdf.

For further information on the role and responsibilities of an SQP, or for information on completing SQP training, please see the AMTRA website. www.amtra.org.uk.

**You can also phone the VMD
on 01932 336911 for any
additional assistance related
to veterinary medicines.**

Information correct at time of writing SEPTEMBER 2009.

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ASSURING THE SAFETY, QUALITY &
EFFICACY OF VETERINARY MEDICINES



Becoming a Suitably Qualified Person (SQP)



The Veterinary Medicines Directorate is an Executive Agency
of the Department for Environment, Food & Rural Affairs