

PROFESSIONAL STANDARD

A professional standard is a document, which describes professional activities and provides the competency requirements for professional qualifications and their levels, i.e., a set of skills, knowledge and attitudes required for successful work performance.

A professional standard is a basis for:

- 1) compiling curricula and training programmes, which meet the requirements of the labour market;
- 2) assessing competence of people, incl. self-assessment and compliance assessment in awarding professional qualifications;
- 3) describing and promoting jobs;
- 4) career planning and lifelong learning;
- 5) identifying training needs and planning training;
- 6) writing job descriptions and recruiting employees;
- 7) comparing competencies at international level (through professional certificates).

This entry-level professional standard constitutes a basis for respective vocational education curricula.

Professional title	Estonian Qualifications Framework (EQF) Level
Veterinary assistant	4

Part A DESCRIPTION OF PROFESSION

A.1 Description of work

The duty of a veterinary assistant is to assist a veterinarian in the performance of various manipulations. He/she communicates with clients and ensures smooth running of the veterinarian facility, participating productively in teamwork. His/her main tasks include performing diagnostic procedures on animals, caring for animals, and performing treatment procedures under supervision of the veterinarian. A veterinary assistant works independently in situations, which are normally predictable but may be subject to change. He/she organises his/her work, adapts it to new situations and takes responsibility for

<p>the performance of his/her duties. The work elements and duties of a veterinary assistant are listed in Annex 1.</p>
<p>A.2 Working environment and specifics</p> <p>A veterinary assistant can work in a veterinarian clinic or in various animal husbandry buildings and facilities. The profession also requires working in outdoor conditions. If necessary, a veterinary assistant works during nights, days off, and public holidays. The main risks in the work of a veterinary assistant include work-related injuries and harmful health effects of various biological (bacteria, viruses, fungi, etc.), chemical (medicinal products, disinfectants) and physical (injuries caused by animals, radiation) factors. The profession of a veterinary assistant can entail mental and emotional stress.</p>
<p>A.3 Tools</p> <p>The main tools of a veterinary assistant include profession-specific IT solutions, diagnostic and sterilization equipment, diagnostic and other appliances, skin-puncturing appliances that cause brief pain for patients (venous cannulas, syringe needles), animal restraints (muzzles, ropes, belts), etc.</p>
<p>A.4 Necessary personal characteristics: abilities and personality</p> <p>Personal characteristics that support working as a veterinary assistant include stress tolerance, emotional stability, communication skills, empathy and ability to learn, as well as ability to respond quickly to changing situations. The profession requires reliability, a sense of responsibility, politeness, discretion, and loyalty. An employee in this profession should have physical stamina and should use precise and coordinated movements.</p>
<p>A.5 Documents required for working in the profession</p> <p>None</p>
<p>A.6 Possible job titles</p> <p>Veterinary assistant, assistant veterinarian, veterinary technician, veterinary attendant</p>
<p>A.7 Professional education</p> <p>Persons employed as Level 4 veterinary assistants normally have secondary education and professional skills acquired in the course of work, or through vocational training at a vocational educational institution.</p>

Part B

COMPETENCY REQUIREMENTS

B.1 Structure of the profession and competencies required for award of professional qualifications

A proof of all competencies (2.1 – 2.11) is required for award of these professional qualifications.

B.2 Competencies

2.1 Core competencies

EQF Level 4

Performance indicators

- 1) A veterinary assistant establishes good relations with clients and colleagues and maintains a positive atmosphere. His/her communication style is tuned to meeting clients' needs and achieving satisfaction and he/she is capable of successful communication with persons of all levels, adapting his/her communication style to suit particular situations and persons. A veterinary assistant demonstrates respect for differences (cultural or religious special needs, ethnic origins, sexual orientations, etc.). He/she communicates in a clear, concise and correct manner both in speech and in writing.
- 2) A veterinary assistant listens to others, consults with others, and also initiates communication. He/she adapts to the team, demonstrating interest in and support for colleagues, being understanding and considerate towards them. A veterinary assistant analyses his/her feelings and thoughts.
- 3) A veterinary assistant is capable of tolerating various circumstances and situations, being appreciative of criticism and able to learn from it. He/she is able to work efficiently and manage his/her emotions even in a stressful environment.
- 4) A veterinary assistant monitors and maintains a high standard of quality in his/her work.
- 5) He/she acts in a systematic, methodical and orderly fashion and appropriately follows any instructions. He/she is capable of demonstrating initiative.
- 6) He/she appreciates new ideas and development trends, and adapts to changing circumstances. He/she is able to learn and capable of internalising new duties, methods and techniques. A veterinary assistant uses orderly thought processes – he/she understands new information and is capable of professional development.
- 7) During work, he/she is conscious of species-specific differences in animal behaviour and considerate of animal welfare. He/she treats animals responsibly and benevolently.

Core knowledge

- 1) Good Veterinary Practice (GVP)
- 2) Computer use
- 3) Estonian language level B2 and preferably at least one foreign language
- 4) Human first aid
- 5) Animal Protection Act
- 6) Nature Conservation Act
- 7) Infectious Animal Disease Control Act
- 8) Veterinary Activities Organisation Act
- 9) Waste Act

Assessment methods: practical assignment or interview or combined method

2.2 Working at the reception desk of a facility

EQF Level 5

Performance indicators

- 1) Work of a receptionist/administrator
 - a. Scheduling of appointments according to conventions and rules of the facility and complaints described by animal owners.
 - b. Posting information on patient records according to statements of animal owners and submitted documents; creating new patient records or updating and ordering existing records.
 - c. Verifying existence of animals in respective registers and identifying animals.
 - d. Compiling an initial medical history and relaying it to the veterinarian according to conventions and rules of the facility.
 - e. Explaining conventions and rules of the facility to clients, based on GVP (Good Veterinary Practice), and providing basic emergency first aid if necessary.
 - f. Advising clients on basic animal restraining techniques in consideration of occupational safety requirements.
 - g. Receiving in-patients and releasing them to owners as instructed by the veterinarian.
 - h. Providing animal owners with information about in-patients in accordance with conventions and rules of the facility.
 - i. Advising clients on home care of patients as instructed by the veterinarian.
 - j. Managing the correspondence of the facility according to the records management procedure of the facility.
 - k. Maintaining good order, cleanliness and a pleasant environment in the facility. Minimising risk of infection by using cleaning agents and disinfectants.
 - l. Ensuring safety of the working environment in accordance with conventions and rules of the facility.
 - m. Advising clients on animal care, feeding, behaviour, training and health according to applicable legislation, good practice requirements and competence.
- 2) Sales work
 - a. Ordering and selling goods and non-prescription pharmaceuticals, settling payments with clients in accordance with conventions and rules of the facility.
 - b. Providing clients with information on goods and non-prescription pharmaceuticals sold, based on the information released by manufacturers.
 - c. Monitoring stocks and 'use by' dates, storage conditions and handling requirements of goods and non-prescription pharmaceuticals based on manufacturers' requirements.

Knowledge

- 1) Diseases and diagnostics, incl. infectious diseases and prevention of such diseases
- 2) General principles of surgery
- 3) First aid for animals
- 4) Identification options established by law
- 5) Animal documents (pedigree certificate, international pet animal passport, vaccination certificate, contract of purchase and sale, and any other contracts used in Estonia in relation to animals)
- 6) Good Veterinary Practice (GVP)
- 7) Working environment safety requirements
- 8) Restraint methods
- 9) Data protection
- 10) Computer software used in the facility
- 11) Cleaning agents and disinfectants and respective methods
- 12) Principles of animal feeding, behaviour and care
- 13) Principles of pharmacology

Assessment methods: practical assignment or written test or interview or combined method

2.3 Working in reception	EQF Level 4
Performance indicators	
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Maintaining good order, cleanliness and a pleasant environment in the reception room of the facility; minimising risk of infection by using cleaning agents and disinfectants. 2) Disposing of refuse and waste generated by the facility in accordance with applicable legislation. 3) Monitoring proper working order of equipment and fixtures in the facility, organising maintenance or repairs as required. 4) Assisting the veterinarian in medical procedures. 5) Restraining patients in keeping with occupational safety requirements, animal protection requirements, and species-specific characteristics of animals. 6) Ensuring safety of the working environment in accordance with conventions and rules of the facility. 	
Knowledge	
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Facility equipment and principles of usage of such equipment 2) Occupational safety requirements 3) Legal provisions concerning waste management 4) Methods of restraining different species of animals 5) Animal Protection Act 6) Veterinary procedures that can be performed by an assistant 	
Assessment methods: practical assignment or written test or interview or combined method	
2.4 Performance of diagnostic procedures	EQF Level 4
Performance indicators	
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Assisting the veterinarian in collection of samples for analysis or collecting, labelling and storing samples for analysis as instructed by the veterinarian. 2) Organising forwarding of samples as instructed by the veterinarian. 3) Taking radiographs in consideration of diagnostic goals. 4) Preserving radiographs according to internal procedure rules of the facility. 5) Assisting the veterinarian in performing diagnostic procedures as instructed by the veterinarian. 6) Monitoring proper working order of diagnostic equipment, fixtures and instruments, based on manufacturers' requirements. 7) Monitoring stocks of materials required for diagnostic procedures in the facility and ordering new materials. 8) Ensuring safety of the working environment in accordance with conventions and rules of the facility. 	
Knowledge	
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Principles of laboratory diagnostics 2) Principles of X-ray diagnostics and radiology 3) Occupational safety requirements 4) Principles of clinical diagnostics 7) Facility equipment and principles of usage of such equipment 5) Requirements for postal parcels 	
Assessment method: practical assignment	
2.5 Animal care	EQF Level 4
Performance indicators	
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Finding, preparing and equipping suitable rooms for patients, considering animal species, health status, and isolation requirements. 2) Monitoring general welfare and condition of patients and informing the veterinarian regularly of the status of patients. 3) Filling in patient charts and treatment records as instructed by the veterinarian. 	

<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 4) Feeding, watering and walking patients as instructed by the veterinarian. 5) Cleaning and washing animals and trimming hairs as necessary and in consideration of the specific traits of species and breed. 6) Performing general care procedures: clipping claws, maintaining hoofs, cleaning ears, etc. 7) Ensuring cleanliness and orderliness according to conventions and rules of the facility, and reducing risk of infection. 8) Disposing of refuse and waste according to legislation. 9) Washing and disinfecting reusable bedding materials, complying with requirements for prevention of infectious diseases. 10) Ensuring safety of the working environment in accordance with conventions and rules of the facility. 11) Monitoring proper working order of fixtures and equipment in in-patient premises and other care rooms and organising maintenance or repairs as necessary. 	
<p>Knowledge</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Animal Protection Act 2) Infectious Animal Disease Control Act 3) Infectious diseases and prevention of such diseases 4) Animal breeds and species 5) Waste management legislation 6) Principles of animal feeding, behaviour and care 7) Cleaning agents and disinfectants and respective methods 	
<p>Assessment methods: practical assignment or written test or interview or combined method</p>	
<p>2.6 Performing treatment procedures under supervision of a veterinarian</p>	<p>EQF Level 4</p>
<p>Performance indicators</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Administering prescribed pharmaceuticals. 2) Cleaning, dressing and managing wounds. 3) Performing prescribed treatment and physiotherapy procedures (incl. plaque removal and mouth care, enema, ear and nose flushing, etc.) as instructed by the veterinarian or assisting the veterinarian in such procedures, assisting during birthing. 4) Ensuring cleanliness and orderliness according to conventions and rules of the facility, and reducing risk of infection. 5) Ensuring safety of the working environment in accordance with conventions and rules of the facility. 6) Disposing of refuse and waste according to legislation. 	
<p>Knowledge</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Administration methods for pharmaceuticals 2) Infectious diseases and prevention of such diseases 3) Principles of therapy 4) Principles of wound treatment, dressing techniques 5) Animal breeds and species 6) Principles of gestation and birthing 7) Aseptic and germicide agents 8) Physiotherapy procedures 	
<p>Assessment methods: practical assignment or written test or interview or combined method</p>	
<p>2.7 Preparation of surgeries and assisting a veterinarian</p>	<p>EQF Level 4</p>
<p>Performance indicators</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Cleaning and disinfecting the surgery room. 2) Cleaning, disinfecting and assembling surgical instruments. 3) Verifying proper working order of tools and equipment (autoclave, hot-air cabinet, inhalation 	

appliance, etc.), organising equipment maintenance or repairs as necessary. 4) Monitoring stocks of materials, tools and instruments. 5) Preparing patients for surgery: a. Restraining patients as appropriate for the nature of surgery; b. Preparing the site of surgery: shaving, cleaning and disinfecting; c. Ensuring welfare of patients (upholstery, maintaining body temperature, etc.). 6) Assisting the veterinarian during procedures. 7) Caring for patients after surgery (cleaning, dressing, bandaging, placing means of wound protection, etc.). 8) Monitoring the status of patients after surgery and providing the veterinarian with regular updates. 9) Ensuring cleanliness and orderliness according to conventions and rules of the facility, and reducing risk of infection. 10) Ensuring safety of the working environment in accordance with conventions and rules of the facility. 11) Disposing of refuse and waste according to legislation.	
Knowledge 1) Aseptic and germicide agents 2) General principles of surgery (surgical instruments, types of wounds, suture materials, etc.)	
Assessment methods: practical assignment or written test or interview or combined method	
2.8 General anaesthesia monitoring	EQF Level 4
Performance indicators 1) Monitoring the status of patients under general anaesthesia and records necessary data (body temperature, breathing, pulse rate, times of administration of pharmaceuticals, eye reflexes, etc.). 2) Administering pharmaceuticals as instructed and supervised by the veterinarian. 3) Performing cardiac massage and artificial respiration according to species and size of patients. 4) Moving patients to suitable rooms, boxes or cages for recovery from anaesthesia. 5) Monitoring patients during the recovery period and notifying the veterinarian if necessary.	
Knowledge 1) Principles of anaesthesia and analgesia 2) First aid for animals	
Assessment methods: practical assignment or written test or interview or combined method	
2.9 Providing animal owners with pharmaceuticals	EQF Level 4
Performance indicators 1) Selling non-prescription pharmaceuticals in accordance with conventions and rules of the facility. 2) Advising animal owners on home administration and storage of pharmaceuticals. 3) Releasing prescription pharmaceuticals prescribed by the veterinarian.	
Knowledge 1) Pharmacology 2) Legislation regulating handling of pharmaceuticals	
Assessment methods: written test or interview or combined method	
2.10 Laboratory tests	EQF Level 4

Performance indicators	
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Performing haematological, biochemical, urine, faeces, parasite, bacteriological, cytological and virology tests using diagnostic tools and equipment. 2) Verifying proper working order of lab equipment. 3) Monitoring stocks of accessories and materials, organising procurements as necessary. 4) Documenting and preserving test results and forwarding them to the veterinarian. 5) Ensuring cleanliness and orderliness according to conventions and rules of the facility, and reducing risk of infection. 6) Ensuring safety of the working environment in accordance with conventions and rules of the facility. 7) Disposing of refuse and waste according to legislation. 	
Knowledge	
1) General knowledge of laboratory tests	
Assessment methods: practical assignment or written test or interview or combined method	
2.11 Marking of productive animals	EQF Level 3
Performance indicators	
1) Marking bovine animals, sheep, goats or pigs as necessary and in accordance with applicable legislation.	
Knowledge	
1) Legislation concerning identification of agricultural animals	
Assessment methods: practical assignment or written test or interview or combined method	

Part C

GENERAL INFORMATION AND ANNEXES

C.1 Information on the preparation and approval of the professional standard, on the body awarding professional qualifications, and reference to the location of the professional standard in classifications	
1. Identification of the professional standard in the register of professions (code of the profession)	11-04032011-01/2k
2. Profession and vocations in the profession	Veterinary medicine Veterinary assistant Level 4
3. Similar professions and vocations	Veterinarian, nurse
4. Authors of the professional standard: names of individuals and organisations	Piret Koor, Tiina Toometi Kliinik Priit Koppel, Estonian Veterinary Association Küllli Marrandi, Järvamaa Vocational Education Centre Janne Orro, Estonian Small Animal Veterinary Association Ago Pärtel, Veterinary and Food Board Aita Sauemägi, National Examination and Qualification Centre Toomas Tiirats, Estonian University of Life Sciences Tiina Toomet, Tiina Toometi Kliinik
5. Body approving the professional standard (name of the professional council)	Professional Council for Food Industry and Agriculture
6. Number of the decision of the professional council	9
7. Date of the decision of the professional council	04.03.2011
8. Term of validity of the professional standard	Valid until 29.12.2015
9. Version of the professional standard	First edition
Reference to Estonian Classification of Economic Activities (EMTAK)	PROFESSIONAL, SCIENTIFIC AND TECHNICAL ACTIVITIES, "Veterinary activities", code 75
10. Reference to Classification of Occupations (AK 1999, ISCO 88)	Major group 3, code 324 "Veterinary assistants"
11. Reference to European Qualifications Framework (EQF)	
C.2 Professional title in foreign languages	
English	Veterinary Technician, Veterinary Nurse, Veterinary Assistant
Russian	Ветеринарный фельшер
Finnish	Klinikkaeläin hoitaja

C.3 Annexes
Annex 1: Work elements and duties
Work elements and duties of veterinary assistants
1. Working at the reception desk of a facility
1.1. Work of a receptionist/administrator
1.1.1. Scheduling appointments
1.1.2. Posting information on patient records, updating existing information and/or opening new records
1.1.3. Patient identification in relevant registers
1.1.4. Compiling an initial medical history and relaying it to the veterinarian
1.1.5. Explaining conventions and rules of the clinic to clients
1.1.6. Advising clients on basic pet restraining techniques
1.1.7. Admitting animals to the clinic and subsequently releasing them to owners
1.1.8. Providing appropriate information on animals admitted to the clinic
1.1.9. Advising clients on home care of patients after treatment
1.1.10. Managing correspondence
1.1.11. Maintaining good order, cleanliness and a pleasant environment
1.1.12. Ensuring general safety of the working environment
1.1.13. General advising of clients (depending on competency)
1.2. Sales work
1.2.1. Sale and ordering of goods sold in the facility
1.2.2. Providing clients with information on products sold
1.2.3. Monitoring stocks, 'use by' dates, storage conditions and handling requirements of goods
2. Working in reception
2.1 Ensuring cleanliness and order of the reception room, minimising risk of infection
2.2 Disposing of refuse and waste
2.3 Monitoring proper working order of equipment and fixtures, organising maintenance or repairs as required
2.4 Assisting the veterinarian in medical procedures
2.5 Restraining patients
2.6 Ensuring safety of the working environment
3. Performance of diagnostic procedures
3.1 Assisting the veterinarian in collecting samples for analysis or independently collecting, labelling and storing samples for analysis
3.2 Organising forwarding of samples for analysis
3.3 Taking radiographs
3.4 Storing radiographs
3.5 Assisting the veterinarian in diagnostic procedures
3.6 Monitoring proper working order of diagnostic tools, equipment and instruments

3.7 Monitoring the stocks of materials required for diagnostic procedures, ordering replenishments as required
3.8 Ensuring general safety
4. Animal care
4.1 Finding and preparing suitable rooms for patients
4.2 Monitoring general welfare and status of patients
4.3 Filling in patient charts/treatment records
4.4 Caring for patients – feeding, watering, walking
4.5 Cleaning and washing of patients, trimming hairs as necessary
4.6. Performing general care procedures – claw clipping, hoof care, ear cleaning, etc.
4.7 Ensuring cleanliness and order
4.8 Disposing of refuse and waste
4.9 Washing and disinfecting reusable bedding materials
4.10 Ensuring general safety
4.11 Monitoring proper working order of fixtures and equipment in in-patient premises and other care rooms, organising maintenance or repairs as necessary
5. Performing treatment procedures under supervision of a veterinarian
5.1. Administration of prescribed pharmaceuticals
5.2 Wound dressing and care
5.3 Performing prescribed treatment and physiotherapy procedures (plaque removal, mouth care, enema, ear and nose flushing, etc.), assisting during birthing
5.4 Ensuring cleanliness and order, minimising risk of infection
5.5 Ensuring general safety
5.6 Disposing of refuse and waste
6. Preparation of and assistance at surgeries
6.1 Cleaning and disinfecting surgery rooms
6.2 Washing and disinfecting surgical instruments
6.3 Verifying proper working order of tools and equipment (autoclave, hot-air cabinet, inhalation appliance, etc.), organising equipment repairs and maintenance as necessary
6.4 Monitoring stocks of materials, tools and instruments
6.5 Preparing patients for surgery
6.5.1 Restraining patients
6.5.2 Preparing the site of surgery: shaving, cleaning and disinfecting
6.5.3 Ensuring welfare of patients (upholstery, maintaining body temperature)
6.6 Assisting the veterinarian during procedures
6.7 Caring for patients after surgery (cleaning, wound dressing, etc.)
6.8 Monitoring patients' status after surgery, informing the veterinarian
6.9 Ensuring cleanliness and order, minimising risk of infection
6.10 Ensuring general safety
6.11 Disposing of refuse and waste
7. General anaesthesia monitoring

7.1 Monitoring the status of patients under general anaesthesia and recording necessary data
7.2 Administering pharmaceuticals as instructed and supervised by the veterinarian
7.3 Performing cardiac massage and artificial respiration as necessary
7.4 Moving patients to suitable rooms/boxes/cages for recovery from anaesthesia
7.5 Monitoring patients during the recovery period
8. Providing animal owners with pharmaceuticals
8.1. Selling non-prescription pharmaceuticals
8.2 Advising animal owners on home administration and storage of pharmaceuticals
8.3 Releasing prescription pharmaceuticals prescribed for treatment
9. Technical performance of laboratory tests
9.1. Performing haematological, biochemical, urine, faeces, parasite, bacteriological, cytological and virology tests
9.2 Verifying proper working order of laboratory equipment
9.3 Monitoring stocks of accessories and materials, procuring as necessary
9.4 Documenting and relaying test results
9.5 Ensuring cleanliness and order, minimising risk of infection
9.6 Ensuring general safety
9.7 Disposing of refuse and waste
10. Marking of productive animals
10.1. Marking ears of bovine animals, sheep, goats, or pigs