

Competency-Based Veterinary Education - Nursing

Entrustable Professional Activities (EPAs)



CBVE-N: Entrustable Professional Activities (EPAs)

Entrustable Professional Activities are essential activities that veterinary technicians/nurses perform in the workplace. These activities are described at a high level so that they can be performed and observed in variable contexts (e.g., different species, clients, settings).

EPAs are:

- Complex activities that require integration of multiple competencies from multiple domains and are performed in the authentic workplace environment.
- Observable activities with a defined beginning and end.
- Activities that require learners to take responsibility for their decisions where there are real consequences.
- Activities learners should be entrusted to perform independently at the time of graduation.

EPAs are not:

- Activities for which specialized training or experience beyond veterinary technician/nursing school is required in order to perform.
- Activities that are performed in a simulated environment.
- Simple skills or activities that require only one competency.

There are nine EPAs published within the CBVE-N Model. These EPAs are considered core for all veterinary technician/nursing graduates. Schools may create additional EPAs that are important to their local context, but the total number of EPAs should be limited (9-12) to ensure that each student can be assessed performing each EPA multiple times across clinical training.

EPAs can be used to provide formative and/or summative assessment opportunities for learners and often contribute to a program of assessment. Assessment of a learner's ability to perform an EPA represents a snapshot in time; EPAs are most effective when used across the clinical training experience in a variety of contexts and are useful in assessing longitudinal progression of an individual learner.

Entrustment-supervision (ES) scales are commonly used to assess a learner's ability to perform an EPA independently. ES scales can be employed retrospectively, where evaluators report the level of supervision required for the learner to perform the activity or prospectively, where evaluators report how much trust they would place in the learner if performing the same task again.

Guide to this section:

Each EPA is summarized and followed by a more detailed commentary about the activity to help readers understand the context. The relationship between each EPA and the domains of competence and competencies follows.

The most relevant domains of competence for each EPA are listed and depicted by large icons. The secondary domains are also listed and defined by smaller icons. Less relevant domains for a particular EPA are shown in gray.

Specific elements within the EPA are then listed along with the specific competencies that map to each element. This mapping is useful for developing assessment rubrics.

CBVE-N: Entrustable Professional Activities (EPAs)

1	Gathers a history, performs an examination, generates an initial problem list
2	Implement diagnostic plan and report results
3	Implement a management/treatment plan
4	Recognizes a patient requiring urgent or emergent care and initiates evaluation and management
5	Formulates relevant questions and retrieves evidence to advance care
6	Performs tasks associated with surgery
7	Performs general anesthesia and recovery of a stable patient including monitoring and support
8	Implements recommendations for preventive healthcare
9	Management of hospital systems including equipment, medical records, and inventory





EPA 1

Gathers a history, performs an examination, generates an initial problem list

DESCRIPTION OF ACTIVITY	Performs a history and exam on an individual animal or group and assimilates a case summary to present to the veterinarian
COMMENTARY	The history and examination should be tailored to the clinical situation and specific patient encounter. This data gathering serves as the foundation for evaluation and management. Expectations include integration of the scientific foundations of medicine with clinical reasoning skills to guide information gathering.
MOST RELEVANT DOMAINS	1: Clinical Reasoning and Decision-making 5: Communication
SECONDARY DOMAINS	2: Individual Animal Care and Management 3: Animal Population Care and Management 6: Collaboration 8: Financial and Practice Management
ELEMENTS WITHIN ACTIVITY	<p>Consultation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Obtains a complete and accurate history in an organized fashion [1.1, 1.2, 5.1] Demonstrates client-centered interview skills (establish rapport, attentive to verbal and nonverbal cues, client culture, socioeconomic factors, demonstrate active listening skills) [1.1, 1.4, 5.1, 5.2, 6.1] Identifies the client's complaint [1.4, 1.5, 5.1] Identifies pertinent history elements associated with common conditions [1.1, 5.1] Demonstrates cultural competence in interactions with clients, recognizing the potential for bias [1.4, 5.2, 6.4] <p>Examination</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Performs exam (individual animal or group) [1.1] Communicates findings [5.1, 5.2] Attends to patient welfare and client safety and comfort [1.4, 2.2, 3.3, 8.3] <p>Assimilate a Case Summary</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Creates a problem list [1.2] Accurately summarizes findings and presents to the veterinarian [5.1, 5.2, 6.2] <p>Documentation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Documents findings in the medical record [5.3, 8.2]





EPA 2

Implement diagnostic plan and report results

DESCRIPTION OF ACTIVITY	Understands and executes diagnostic plan as recommended by the veterinarian, obtains consent for diagnostic testing, collects appropriate diagnostic data, records and reports results.
COMMENTARY	Implementing a diagnostic action plan is an iterative, reflective process that requires continuous evaluation to mitigate sample and/or procedural errors.
MOST RELEVANT DOMAINS	1: Clinical Reasoning and Decision-making 5: Communication
SECONDARY DOMAINS	2: Individual Animal Care and Management 6: Collaboration 8: Financial and Practice Management 9: Scholarship
ELEMENTS WITHIN ACTIVITY	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Uses clinical reasoning skills to understand the prioritized differential diagnosis list [1.2, 9.1] • Explains working diagnosis and rationale for testing [1.2, 5.1, 5.2, 9.1] • Develops a financial estimate and obtains and documents informed consent [5.3, 8.1, 8.2] • Utilizing a team-based approach, delegates and executes the diagnostic tests/procedures and ensures quality standards are met [1.7, 2.1, 6.1, 6.2, 6.3, 8.4] • Records diagnostic test/procedure results in the medical record [5.3] • Identifies and reports abnormal findings [1.1, 5.3, 9.1] • Recognizes and troubleshoots aberrant results [1.1, 1.3, 8.4, 9.1] • Communicates updates to clients, as appropriate [5.1, 5.2, 6.3, 6.4, 9.2]





EPA 3

Implement a management/treatment plan

DESCRIPTION OF ACTIVITY	As recommended by the veterinarian, in the context of client considerations, implements the management/treatment plan for an individual animal or group (including referral or euthanasia when warranted) and monitors the response.
COMMENTARY	Implementation of the plan includes performance of procedures, patient monitoring, team collaboration and client education.
MOST RELEVANT DOMAINS	1: Clinical Reasoning 2: Individual Animal Care and Management 3: Animal Population Care and Management 5: Communication
SECONDARY DOMAINS	6: Collaboration 8: Financial and Practice Management 9: Scholarship
ELEMENTS WITHIN ACTIVITY	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Uses clinical reasoning skills to integrate medical, ethical, legal and economic factors, and client desires, when implementing a management/treatment plan [1.2, 1.4, 1.5, 3.1, 5.1, 8.1, 8.2, 9.1] • Explains treatment options to client and responds to questions [5.1, 5.2, 9.2] • Performs therapeutic interventions, including euthanasia when warranted [2.1] • Educates client or team to provide ongoing care for patients, and recognizes changes or concerns that trigger additional action [1.3, 2.2, 3.1, 5.1, 5.2, 6.1, 9.2] • Monitors patient's response and reports relevant information as it is available to enable updating of management/treatment plan [1.3, 5.2, 9.1] • Recognizes personal limitations, gaps in available information, and/or lack of resources and takes appropriate action [1.5, 1.7, 8.1] • Arranges for referral as directed by veterinarian [5.1, 5.2, 6.3] • Follows-up with clients or team to obtain updates in patient status, and determines compliance with recommendations, and/or capability to implement treatment plan. [5.1, 5.2, 6.1, 6.3, 9.2]





EPA 4

Recognizes a patient requiring urgent or emergent care and initiates evaluation and management

DESCRIPTION OF ACTIVITY	Recognizes a patient/situation that requires urgent or emergent care and triages based on severity. Initial emergency management should include procedures that support vital functions.
COMMENTARY	This activity requires both application of knowledge and psychomotor skills as well as the ability to function as part of a team, to know one's limitations, and to seek help when necessary. Initial evaluation of individual should include level of consciousness and adequacy of ventilation and circulation.
MOST RELEVANT DOMAINS	1: Clinical Reasoning and Decision-making 2: Individual Animal Care and Management 6: Collaboration
SECONDARY DOMAINS	3: Animal Population Care and Management 5: Communication 7: Professionalism and Professional Identity 8: Financial and Practice Management
ELEMENTS WITHIN ACTIVITY	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Quickly assesses a situation to identify patient(s) that might require urgent or emergent treatment [1.1, 1.5, 3.2, 7.2] • In the case of multiple patients, effectively triages patient care according to severity of condition [1.2, 1.5, 7.1, 7.2] • Evaluates patient status to determine and triage urgent problems [1.2, 1.5, 7.2] • Updates Veterinarian on emergent patient status and creates a nursing plan for emergency care [1.2, 5.1, 5.2, 7.2] • Updates client on the urgency of the patient's status and immediate management plans as recommended by the veterinarian [3.3, 5.1, 5.2] • As recommended by the veterinarian, initiates further emergency management to support vital functions such as: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ Provide oxygen ◦ Secure an airway and effective ventilation ◦ Establish effective circulation ◦ Provide effective pain relief and sedation for safe patient handling ◦ Correct life-threatening alterations (e.g. hypoglycemia, hypothermia) ◦ Control hemorrhage ◦ Stabilize fractures • Under the direction of the veterinarian, performs appropriate diagnostics to identify underlying etiologies for the urgent or emergent patient status and implements initial management plan [1.1, 2.1] • Discusses patient status and initial management plan (including euthanasia when warranted) with client and identifies client expectations [1.4, 3.3, 5.1, 5.2, 6.3, 6.4, 7.1] • Optimizes patient care by engaging team members, determining when to function as a leader or team member and working within personal limitations [1.7, 5.2, 6.1, 6.2, 7.5] • Documents initial patient assessment, interventions, diagnoses and management plan, and client communication in the medical record [5.3, 8.2] • Documents and monitors accruing charges and communicates to the veterinarian and client [5.1, 5.2, 5.3, 8.1]





EPA 5

Formulates relevant questions and retrieves evidence to advance care

DESCRIPTION OF ACTIVITY	Identifies questions and information resources. Critiques the quality of the evidence and assess the applicability to the clinical situation
COMMENTARY	The use of evidence-based practices and self-awareness are essential to identify and remedy/correct knowledge gaps. Life-long learning is an essential professional practice to promote quality patient and population care.
MOST RELEVANT DOMAINS	1: Clinical Reasoning and Decision-making 9: Scholarship
SECONDARY DOMAINS	7: Professionalism and Professional Identity
ELEMENTS WITHIN ACTIVITY	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Formulates focused pertinent questions based on situation evaluation [1.1, 9.1] • Appraises sources of information to evaluate the quality of the content [9.1] • Assesses applicability and generalizability of published studies to specific clinical situations [1.6, 9.1] • Identifies resources and uses information technology to assess accurate and reliable online medical information and retrieve animal/group information [7.4, 9.1] • Evaluates animal/group response to interventions and uses available evidence to adjust the veterinary nursing care plan [1.3, 9.1]





EPA 6

Performs tasks associated with surgery

DESCRIPTION OF ACTIVITY	Performs surgical preparation, intraoperative assistance and post-surgical duties
COMMENTARY	Attention to patient preparation to minimize contamination, knowledge of the procedure and regional anatomy, manual dexterity to competently and efficiently assist with the procedure, anticipate and respond to changes, and perform post-operative tasks.
MOST RELEVANT DOMAINS	1: Clinical Reasoning and Decision-making 2: Individual Animal Care 5: Communication 6: Collaboration
SECONDARY DOMAINS	4: Public Health 7: Professionalism and Professional Identity
ELEMENTS WITHIN ACTIVITY	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Formulates surgical nursing plan [1.2, 6.1] • Leads nursing team in perioperative tasks when appropriate [1.7, 5.1, 6.1, 6.2, 7.5] • Utilizes checklists to ensure essential perioperative tasks are performed [1.5, 2.1, 7.2] • Prepares self and surgical site for procedure [2.1] • Assures the availability and functionality of the appropriate surgical instrumentation and equipment [4.2, 6.3] • Practices aseptic technique and surgical assistant skills including proper tissue handling and hemostasis [2.1] • Disposes of all biohazard materials and supplies appropriately [4.2] • Implements post-operative care plan [1.2, 2.1, 4.2, 5.1, 5.2, 6.1, 6.3] • Recognizes and responds to changes in patient status [1.3, 1.5, 6.3] • Recognizes own limitations and asks for assistance when required [1.7, 5.1, 6.1, 7.1] • Documents surgical procedure, anesthetic record, post-operative care plan, and client communication in the medical record [5.3, 6.2]





EPA 7

Performs general anesthesia and recovery of a stable patient including monitoring and support

DESCRIPTION OF ACTIVITY	Induces, maintains and recovers a stable anesthetic patient (ASA 1 or 2), including monitoring vital functions and providing supportive care. Evaluates patient status, and coordinates a suitable anesthetic and analgesic protocol.
COMMENTARY	Applies knowledge of anatomy, physiology, pharmacology, and the procedure, and utilizes the psychomotor skills to execute the protocol safely. Recognizes and manages complications.
MOST RELEVANT DOMAINS	1: Clinical Reasoning and Decision-making 2: Individual Animal Care and management 5: Communication 6: Collaboration 8: Financial and Practice Management
SECONDARY DOMAINS	4: Public Health 7: Professionalism and Professional Identity 9: Scholarship
ELEMENTS WITHIN ACTIVITY	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Evaluates patient based on history, physical examination, results of diagnostic tests and procedures for suitability for anesthesia (ASA status 1 or 2 – a normal, healthy patient or a patient with mild systemic disease that does not result in functional limitations) [1.1, 1.3, 7.1, 9.1] Safely Implements a general anesthetic and analgesic protocol including premedication, induction, maintenance and recovery. [1.3, 2.1, 4.2, 7.2, 8.2, 8.3, 9.1] Shares plan with team members and answers questions [5.1, 5.2, 6.1, 6.2, 6.4, 9.2] Selects and prepares anesthetic support and monitoring equipment[8.4] Recognizes own limitations and collaborates with others as needed [1.7, 6.1, 6.3, 7.5] Follows legal requirements for use of controlled substances [5.3, 8.2] Maintains an anesthetic record including drugs, doses, route and time of administration, vital signs, important anesthetic and procedure events and complications [5.3, 8.2]





EPA 8

Implements recommendations for preventive healthcare

DESCRIPTION OF ACTIVITY	Considering the animal/group needs, the client's capabilities, and the care setting, executes and explains a preventive healthcare plan to optimize health and welfare, and to prevent spread of disease.
COMMENTARY	Prevention of disease is a core veterinary activity that protects the health of animals and the public.
MOST RELEVANT DOMAINS	1: Clinical Reasoning and Decision-making 2: Individual Animal Care and Management 3: Animal Population Care and Management 5: Communication
SECONDARY DOMAINS	4: Public Health 6: Collaboration 8: Financial and Practice Management 9: Scholarship
ELEMENTS WITHIN ACTIVITY	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Considers age, health status, and exposure risk when implementing preventive healthcare programs [1.1, 1.6, 2.2, 3.1, 4.1, 8.1, 8.3, 9.1] • Explains recommendations regarding disease screening [1.4, 2.2, 3.1, 4.2, 5.1, 5.2, 6.4, 8.1, 9.1] • Educates clients and stakeholders on disease prevention measures [1.2, 1.4, 2.2, 3.1, 3.3, 4.1, 4.2, 5.1, 5.2, 6.3, 9.2] • Performs preventive healthcare measures when legally permissible [1.7, 2.1, 3.1, 6.2, 8.2] • Documents recommendations and procedures in the record [5.3, 8.2]





EPA 9

Management of hospital systems including equipment, medical records, and inventory

DESCRIPTION OF ACTIVITY	Ensures compliance and quality control for medical records, inventory systems, medical equipment, and hospital protocols to enhance productivity.
COMMENTARY	Utilizes technical training and clinical knowledge to ensure the functionality of equipment, accuracy and completeness of medical records, appropriate inventory, and compliance with hospital protocols. These are required to achieve standardization of care, enhance patient outcomes, and sustain productivity.
MOST RELEVANT DOMAINS	5: Communication 6: Collaboration 7: Professionalism and Professional Identity 8: Financial and Practice Management
SECONDARY DOMAINS	1: Clinical Reasoning and Decision-making 4: Public Health 9: Scholarship
ELEMENTS WITHIN ACTIVITY	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensures appropriate utilization, function, and maintenance of medical equipment [1.5, 1.7, 7.2, 8.4, 9.1] • Communicates effectively with clients [1.4, 5.1, 6.3, 6.4, 9.2] • Performs financial transactions [5.3, 7.1, 8.1] • Manages Medical records [5.3, 8.2] • Meets requirements of regulatory agencies [4.1, 5.3, 8.2] • Manages Inventory [7.1, 8.4, 8.1] • Utilizes veterinary practice management software [5.1, 7.1] • Manages Appointments [5.2, 7.2] • Manages Controlled Substances [5.3, 7.1, 8.2] • Establishes and maintains protocols for safety, sanitation, and infection control [1.6, 4.2, 8.2, 8.3, 9.1] • Contribute effectively to and leadership of the Veterinary Health Care Team [1.7, 5.2, 6.1, 6.2, 6.3, 6.4, 7.5, 8.3]



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