

VETSKILL

LEVEL 3 DIPLOMA IN FARRIERY

APPROVALS COMMITTEE REPORT

Farriers Registration Council



Established under the
Farriers (Registration) Act 1975

JULY 2026

Report of the Farriers Registration Council
Established under the Farriers (Registration) Act 1975, as amended

APPROVAL COMMITTEE REPORT INTO VETSKILL LEVEL 3 DIPLOMA IN FARRIERY - JULY 2026

INTRODUCTION

1. The Approval Committee was asked to consider the paperwork provided by VetSkill outlining the proposition for a new qualification (Level 3 Diploma in Farriery). The committee consisted of:
 - Tom Smith FWCF GradDip ELR
 - Sarah Hamlyn MSc BSc BHSI (SM)
2. The FRC is charged under Section 11 (1)(b) and (c) of the Act with granting approval of any qualification which, as the result of an examination or End Point Assessment (EPA) taken in conjunction with a course of training approved by the Council under this section, is granted to candidates reaching a standard at examination or assessment indicating, in the opinion of the Council, that they have sufficient knowledge and skill to carry out the shoeing of horses.
3. The Council carries out these duties by appointing an Approvals Committee (AC) to carry out a programme of visits and inspections to the awarding bodies as may be required on its behalf. The AC has the delegated authority to make recommendations to the Council with regards to both approval or removing approval from an awarding body or EPAO where output standards have been compromised or practices give cause for concern.

HOW THIS REPORT WAS CREATED

4. The AC was provided with 22 documents by VetSkill.
5. The AC met with Sam Double (VetSkill CEO) virtually on Wednesday 8th July 2026 to ask questions and discuss the proposed qualification as a route to entry to the Farriers Register.
6. This report has been formed from the information provided by the documents and meeting with Sam Double. Some documents have been updated and provided following the meeting.

INTRODUCTION TO THE PROPOSED VETSKILL LEVEL 3 DIPLOMA IN FARRIERY

7. The current Level 3 Farrier Apprenticeship Standard in England relies heavily on the End Point Assessment (EPA), with all summative assessment taking place post-Gateway at the conclusion of the taught period of the current apprenticeship. VetSkill's proposal seeks to replace this approach with a Level 3 Diploma in Farriery that would both operate as a standalone qualification and form the integrated, mandated assessment framework within the apprenticeship standard.
8. The principal rationale advanced by VetSkill is that a qualification-based model would allow assessment to be distributed throughout the training programme rather than concentrated at the end. VetSkill argues that this would enable earlier identification of learners requiring additional support, provide more opportunities for formative feedback, and reduce the risk of learners reaching the end of their apprenticeship before deficiencies in knowledge, practical competence or professional behaviours are

identified. It also partially removes some of the pressure at the end of the apprenticeship. This is in line with a move to some on-programme assessment with the current apprenticeship reform in England.

9. VetSkill also cites evidence from its experience as the current Farrier EPAO, suggesting that a significant proportion of apprentices are not fully prepared for the End Point Assessment when they reach Gateway. The proposal therefore seeks to introduce progressive assessments with defined prerequisites, enabling learners to demonstrate knowledge, practical competence and professional behaviours incrementally before progressing to more advanced stages of assessment.
10. A further rationale is the desire to create greater consistency across the United Kingdom. While the apprenticeship standard currently operates in England, the proposed diploma could potentially be accredited by qualification regulators in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland. VetSkill considers that a single qualification framework could provide greater parity of training and assessment standards across the devolved nations and facilitate access to funding streams outside of the English apprenticeship system.
11. The proposal also aims to provide an alternative route into the profession for individuals who are not eligible for apprenticeship funding. By establishing a standalone qualification, colleges and training providers could potentially offer programmes to self-funded learners or those supported by employers outside the apprenticeship system.
12. Another significant element of the proposal relates to quality assurance. VetSkill proposes an enhanced oversight model involving centre (colleges) approval, moderation, external quality assurance, review of teaching resources and staffing and maintenance of a central Approved Training Farrier (ATF) risk register. VetSkill's view is that this additional layer of scrutiny would complement the existing Farriers Registration Council approval processes and provide greater visibility of training risks across the sector.
13. The proposal also highlights the perceived advantages of a qualification framework in responding to future legislative or regulatory changes. VetSkill argues that qualification content can be amended more rapidly than apprenticeship standards, which are subject to national review processes. This is also presented as particularly relevant in light of ongoing discussions regarding the Veterinary Surgeons Act.
14. In relation to the assessment design, the proposed diploma seeks to retain assessment of core farriery knowledge, practical skills and professional behaviours whilst redistributing assessments across the duration of training. The qualification includes centre-assessed case studies, shoemaking assessments and behaviour evaluations by the employer (ATF), alongside externally assessed knowledge examinations, professional discussions, trimming assessments and final shoeing assessments. VetSkill states that this approach is intended to promote deeper learning, encourage contextualised decision-making, and assess competence in environments and practices that more closely reflect the workplace.
15. Overall, the proposal is presented by VetSkill as a means of improving learner support, enhancing quality assurance, creating greater flexibility in delivery, increasing consistency across the United Kingdom, and providing a more progressive assessment structure while maintaining the professional standards required for registration as a farrier.

OBSERVATIONS

16. The AC found the review process to be both informative and constructive. The documentation provided by VetSkill established the overall structure of the proposed qualification, whilst the subsequent meeting provided valuable context regarding the educational philosophy, assessment strategy and quality assurance arrangements that underpin the proposal.
17. Throughout the review, the AC remained mindful that the purpose of the qualification is not simply to assess learners but to provide the FRC and the public with confidence that those successfully completing the programme have demonstrated the knowledge, skills and professional behaviours expected of a newly qualified farrier at the point of application for registration.
18. The AC noted that the proposed qualification represents a different educational approach from the current apprenticeship model; rather than concentrating assessment predominantly at the end of training, the qualification seeks to gather evidence of competence progressively throughout the learner journey. VetSkill explained that this approach is intended to identify learners requiring additional support at an earlier stage, enabling targeted intervention before learners' progress to the final stages of training. This is in line with a move to some on-programme assessment with the current apprenticeship reform in England.
19. The AC recognised that the proposed model also introduces a more comprehensive framework for educational quality assurance than currently exists under the End Point Assessment model. Centre approval, moderation, assessor standardisation, External Quality Assurance and risk-based monitoring each contribute to ongoing oversight of programme delivery. The AC considers that these arrangements have the potential to provide the Council with greater assurance regarding consistency of educational delivery across approved providers.
20. The AC also recognised the significant role proposed for ATFs within the qualification. Whilst workplace learning remains fundamental to the development of practical competence, the proposed arrangements seek to place greater emphasis upon educational support, quality assurance and engagement between providers, employers and the Awarding Organisation. The Committee considers that successful implementation of these arrangements will depend upon clear guidance, effective communication and appropriate support for ATFs throughout the transition to the new qualification.
21. The AC further noted that the proposed qualification has been designed with flexibility in mind. By separating the regulated qualification from apprenticeship funding arrangements, the proposal has the potential to support a broader range of educational routes whilst maintaining a common assessment framework.

RECOMMENDATIONS TO COUNCIL

22. Having completed its review of the documentation and considered the additional evidence presented during discussions with VetSkill, the AC makes the following recommendations to Council:
 - a) That Council recognises the educational rationale presented by VetSkill for the introduction of an integrated Level 3 Diploma in Farriery, particularly in relation to progressive assessment, ongoing educational quality assurance and enhanced support for learners throughout the training programme.

- b) That the Farriers Registration Council and VetSkill establish an appropriate mechanism for ongoing liaison during the initial implementation period. Such arrangements should facilitate discussion of quality assurance findings, emerging risks, examples of good practice and any matters identified through the Council's approval activities or VetSkill's own quality assurance processes.
- c) That the Council continues to monitor implementation of the qualification during its early years of delivery, recognising that the effectiveness of any new educational model is best evaluated through evidence gathered during practical operation.
- d) That the Council Approve this qualification as a mandated, integrated qualification to be eligible for entry to the Farriers Register.

SCOPE OF THIS REVIEW

- 23. The AC's review was undertaken with the primary objective of determining whether the proposed qualification appears capable of supporting the Council's statutory duty to admit only those individuals who have demonstrated the knowledge, practical skills and professional behaviours required for safe and effective farriery practice.
- 24. When considering the proposal, the AC sought to understand two areas in particular:
 - a) The first being whether the educational design of the qualification provides an appropriate framework through which learners can develop the knowledge, skills and behaviours expected of a newly qualified farrier.
 - b) The second was whether the assessment and quality assurance arrangements proposed by VetSkill provide sufficient confidence that successful completion of the qualification represents an appropriate threshold for eligibility to apply for registration.
- 25. The review also recognised that approval of a qualification extends beyond the content of the 'syllabus' in the assessment handbook. It necessarily includes consideration of governance, assessment methodology, centre approval, moderation, standardisation, external quality assurance, learner support and the arrangements through which consistency will be maintained across different providers.
- 26. Ultimately, the AC sought to examine the evidence presented to determine whether the proposed arrangements appear capable of meeting the standards expected by the Council.

REVIEW METHODOLOGY

- 27. The FRC were provided with twenty-two documents by VetSkill, including the draft Qualification Handbook, Centre and Provider Handbook, assessment documentation, quality assurance arrangements, Centre Assessment Standardisation Strategy (CASS), sample assessment materials and supporting documentation describing the proposed delivery model.
- 28. An initial review of the documentation identified a number of areas the AC felt required further clarification. Many related to educational design and implementation, whilst others concerned the practical operation of the qualification, quality assurance arrangements and the relationship between VetSkill and the Farriers Registration Council. The AC agreed that further discussion with VetSkill would be beneficial before

presenting its findings to Council. A virtual meeting was held on Wednesday 8 July 2026 between the AC and Sam Double, Chief Executive Officer of VetSkill. Prior to the meeting, the AC prepared a structured agenda together with a comprehensive series of educational, technical and regulatory questions to ensure that all queries were covered and discussed; these were shared the day before the meeting.

29. VetSkill provided detailed explanations regarding the rationale for the proposed changes, the intended learner journey, the assessment methodology, quality assurance arrangements and the governance mechanisms that would support implementation.
30. The AC found the discussion to be constructive and informative. VetSkill welcomed detailed scrutiny of the proposal and responded openly to the questions raised. Importantly, many of the explanations provided during the meeting added context that was not immediately apparent from the written documentation. As a result, the AC's understanding of both the educational intent and the operational design of the qualification developed considerably beyond that available from the written documentation alone.
31. This report reflects not only the AC's review of the submitted documentation but also the additional clarification and evidence obtained during the meeting.

OVERVIEW OF THE PROPOSED QUALIFICATION

a) Apprenticeship Reform and the Development of an Integrated Qualification

32. VetSkill explained that the proposal has been developed primarily in response to the ongoing reform of apprenticeships in England and, in particular, the introduction of integrated qualifications within apprenticeship standards, and a move to mandated integrated routes for professionally regulated apprenticeships .
33. Historically, the Level 3 Farrier Apprenticeship Standard has relied upon an End Point Assessment (EPA), with all summative assessments taking place only after the apprentice has completed their programme of training and passed through Gateway. VetSkill explained that, whilst this approach has provided an independent assessment of competence, it has also concentrated assessment activity at the conclusion of training, reducing opportunities to identify and address areas of weakness earlier within the learner journey and potentially adding substantial pressures to the learners at this time.
34. The proposed Level 3 Diploma in Farriery has therefore been designed as an integrated qualification in which assessment forms part of the learning programme rather than being treated as a separate activity undertaken only at its conclusion. VetSkill described this as an opportunity to redesign the educational pathway so that learners progressively demonstrate competence throughout their programme of training, consistent with the trajectory of travel of the Government's apprenticeship reform in England.
35. The AC noted that this represents a fundamental change in educational philosophy rather than simply a change in assessment methodology, consistent with the trajectory of travel of the Government's apprenticeship reform in England.

b) Progressive Development of Competence

36. A recurring theme throughout the discussion was the concept of progressive assessment. VetSkill explained that competence should be viewed as something that develops throughout training rather than something that is measured only at its conclusion. Under the proposed model, learners are expected to demonstrate achievement of defined elements of knowledge, practical skill and professional behaviour before progressing to subsequent stages of the qualification.
37. Rather than relying upon a single assessment event to determine readiness for registration, the qualification has been designed to accumulate evidence of competence throughout the learner's programme. VetSkill explained that this approach allows both learners and providers to identify areas requiring additional development at a much earlier stage and creates opportunities for timely educational intervention.
38. The intention is not to reduce the standard expected of newly qualified farriers but to distribute assessment more effectively throughout the programme, allowing competence to be demonstrated incrementally whilst maintaining a robust final assessment of practical capability.
39. The AC recognised that this approach reflects principles now commonly adopted within vocational education, where assessment is intended to support learning as well as confirm achievement.

c) Learner Support and Educational Intervention

40. VetSkill explained that one of the principal motivations for redesigning the assessment model was to improve the educational support available to learners. Drawing upon its experience as the current End Point Assessment Organisation for farriery apprenticeships, VetSkill described occasions where apprentices had reached Gateway before significant deficiencies in knowledge, practical competence or professional behaviours had become fully apparent. Whilst Gateway provides an important quality threshold, VetSkill considered that opportunities for educational intervention become increasingly limited once learners have reached this stage of their apprenticeship.
41. The proposed qualification therefore seeks to introduce assessment points throughout the programme, enabling learners who require additional support to be identified earlier. VetSkill explained that this creates opportunities for targeted intervention, remedial learning and additional workplace support before learners' progress to more advanced elements of the qualification.
42. The AC noted that this represents a shift from assessment as a retrospective measure of competence towards assessment as part of an ongoing educational process.

d) Routes into the Profession

43. Although the qualification has been developed to form the integrated qualification within the revised apprenticeship standard, VetSkill explained that it has also been designed to function as a standalone regulated qualification. This distinction was considered important by the AC.
44. VetSkill explained that a standalone qualification would provide greater flexibility for colleges and approved providers by enabling delivery through a range of educational routes, including traditional apprenticeships and placement-based learning. It was

suggested that this may increase access to professional training for individuals who are not eligible for apprenticeship funding whilst maintaining a common educational standard.

45. The AC noted that, irrespective of the route through which the qualification is achieved, successful completion would provide eligibility to apply for registration rather than automatic admission to the Register. Responsibility for registration would remain with the Farriers Registration Council in accordance with its statutory duties.

e) Consistency Across the United Kingdom

46. VetSkill also described the potential for the qualification to provide a more consistent educational framework across the United Kingdom. Whilst apprenticeship arrangements currently differ between England and the devolved nations, VetSkill explained that a regulated qualification has the potential, subject to the approval of the relevant qualification regulators, to be recognised more widely. This would allow common educational and assessment standards to be maintained whilst permitting funding arrangements to reflect the differing vocational education systems operating across the United Kingdom.
47. The AC recognised that this objective extends beyond the immediate implementation of the qualification but considered it to represent a positive consequence of adopting a regulated qualification rather than an apprenticeship-specific assessment model.

f) Quality Assurance as an Educational Process

48. A substantial proportion of the discussion focused upon quality assurance. VetSkill explained that one of the principal advantages of operating as an Awarding Organisation is the ability to oversee the quality of educational delivery throughout the learner journey, rather than solely at the point of final assessment as is currently the case as an EPAO.
49. The proposed model includes approval of centres before delivery commences, approval of staff involved in teaching and assessment, moderation of centre-assessed work, standardisation activities, External Quality Assurance visits, review of assessment decisions and ongoing monitoring of educational delivery.
50. VetSkill described this as moving quality assurance "upstream", enabling educational concerns to be identified and addressed before they become assessment issues. Similarly, the introduction of a risk-based quality assurance framework would allow additional support and monitoring to be directed towards centres or ATFs where greater oversight is considered necessary.
51. The AC considered this explanation helpful in understanding why quality assurance features so prominently throughout the qualification documentation. Rather than being viewed solely as regulatory oversight, VetSkill presented quality assurance as an integral component of educational improvement and maintenance of consistent national standards.

g) Responsiveness to Professional Change

52. VetSkill also explained that the proposed qualification has been designed with future adaptability in mind. Unlike apprenticeship standards, which are subject to nationally prescribed review processes, regulated qualifications can generally be amended more

readily in response to developments within the profession. VetSkill considered this particularly relevant given the continuing evolution of veterinary science, equine welfare, legislation and discussions surrounding future regulation of activities associated with farriery.

53. The ability to review and amend qualification content without requiring wholesale revision of an apprenticeship standard was presented as one of the advantages of the proposed model. The AC noted that this would allow positive changes to be made when issues arise with assessment methods in a more timely fashion, when in agreement with all stakeholders.

h) Summary - Qualification

54. Having considered both the written documentation and the explanations provided during the meeting, the AC concluded that the proposed qualification is founded upon a modern educational philosophy rather than representing a simple revision of the current apprenticeship assessment arrangements.
55. The underlying principles consistently described by VetSkill were those of progressive assessment, earlier educational intervention, enhanced quality assurance, greater flexibility of delivery and improved consistency of educational standards.
56. The AC considered that an understanding of these principles provides important context for the detailed review of the assessment strategy, quality assurance arrangements and programme delivery considered in the following sections of this report.

ASSESSMENT STRATEGY

57. Having considered the educational philosophy underpinning the proposed qualification, the AC explored how these principles are translated into practice through the assessment strategy. VetSkill explained that the assessment strategy has been designed to gather evidence of learner competence progressively throughout the programme rather than relying predominantly upon a single assessment event at the conclusion of training. Whilst final practical assessments remain an important component of the qualification, the proposed model seeks to ensure that learners have already demonstrated competence across a range of knowledge, practical and professional outcomes before reaching the final stages of assessment.
58. The AC noted that the qualification incorporates a variety of assessment methodologies, including centre-assessed case studies, reflective practice, shoemaking assessments, online knowledge examinations, professional discussions and externally assessed practical tests. VetSkill explained that the choice of assessment method reflects the particular learning outcomes being assessed and seeks to provide learners with multiple opportunities to demonstrate competence using methods that are appropriate to the knowledge, skills or behaviours and are more reflective of the workplace.
59. Throughout the discussion, VetSkill emphasised that assessment should not be viewed solely as a mechanism for determining pass or fail outcomes. Instead, assessment forms part of the educational process, providing evidence of learner progress whilst identifying those requiring further support before progressing to subsequent stages of the qualification.

a) Assessment Throughout the Learner Journey

60. The AC explored the relationship between the various assessment components and the overall learner journey. VetSkill explained that progression through the qualification has been designed to be cumulative, with learners expected to demonstrate competence within defined areas before progressing to more advanced assessments. This staged approach is intended to ensure that weaknesses are identified and addressed before learners reach the final practical assessments.
61. The AC noted that this represents a departure from the traditional apprenticeship model, where significant elements of assessment are concentrated towards the end of the programme.
62. Learners are allowed a maximum of four attempts (first attempt plus up to three re-sits) for each element. Should a learner fail the re-sit a support plan is agreed with the learner before the subsequent re-sits.

b) Assessment Methods

63. The AC discussed the individual assessment methods in detail. VetSkill explained that written case studies and reflective activities have been included to encourage learners to justify clinical reasoning, demonstrate professional judgement and reflect upon their own decision-making. Professional discussions are intended to explore a learner's understanding of practical decisions rather than simply assess factual recall, whilst online knowledge examinations provide a consistent mechanism for assessing theoretical understanding across all providers.
64. Practical assessments continue to form a central component of the qualification. VetSkill explained that the final trimming and shoeing assessments remain critical demonstrations of practical competence, although they now sit within a wider assessment framework rather than representing the primary source of evidence regarding occupational competence.
65. The AC recognised that this approach reflects an attempt to balance practical demonstration of skill with wider evidence of professional knowledge, reasoning and behaviour.

c) Professional Discussion

66. Particular discussion took place regarding the proposed use of remote professional discussions. VetSkill explained that remote delivery has been adopted to improve flexibility and accessibility whilst reducing unnecessary travel for both learners and assessors. The AC explored how consistency between remote and face-to-face delivery would be maintained. VetSkill advised that professional discussions would be undertaken using standardised assessment documentation and assessor guidance, with quality assurance processes supporting consistency of delivery. It was further explained that remote delivery provides opportunities for assessment activity to be recorded, facilitating moderation and quality assurance where appropriate. Both face to face and remote professional discussions will be recorded for moderation and quality assurance.
67. The AC noted that the intention was for professional discussions to largely take place face to face, but that this approach has potential advantages from a quality assurance perspective whilst recognising the importance of ensuring parity between different modes of assessment.

QUALITY ASSURANCE

- 68. Quality assurance formed one of the principal areas of discussion throughout the meeting. VetSkill explained that one of the most significant differences between the proposed qualification and the current apprenticeship assessment arrangements is the level of educational oversight available to an Awarding Organisation throughout programme delivery.
- 69. Unlike an End Point Assessment Organisation, whose principal responsibility lies in assessing competence at the conclusion of training, an Awarding Organisation has continuing responsibility for assuring the quality of delivery throughout the learner journey.

a) Centre Approval

- 70. VetSkill explained that providers would be required to obtain formal approval before delivering the qualification. This process extends beyond organisational approval and includes consideration of staffing, facilities, assessment planning, internal quality assurance arrangements and the provider's ability to deliver the qualification in accordance with VetSkill's requirements.
- 71. The AC noted that this represents an opportunity to identify potential concerns before learners are enrolled onto the qualification. Two of the three colleges are approved VetSkill centres currently.

b) Standardisation and Moderation

- 72. The AC sought clarification regarding how consistency of assessment decisions would be maintained across different providers. VetSkill explained that all centre-assessed work would be subject to moderation, with particular emphasis placed upon the initial implementation of the qualification. Standardisation activities, assessor training, networking events and ongoing guidance would be used to develop consistent assessment practice between providers. It was further explained that moderation should be viewed not solely as a mechanism for identifying errors but also as an educational process through which assessment decisions become increasingly consistent over time.
- 73. The AC considered this explanation particularly helpful in understanding the relationship between moderation, assessor development and continuous quality improvement.

c) Risk-Based Quality Assurance

- 74. The AC discussed the proposed risk-based approach to quality assurance in some detail. VetSkill explained that newly approved centres would initially be classified as presenting a higher level of quality assurance risk. Consequently, assessment decisions made by these providers would receive enhanced moderation and increased support during the early stages of delivery.
- 75. As confidence develops in the consistency and reliability of assessment decisions, quality assurance activity would become proportionate to the level of identified risk. Conversely, where concerns arise, additional monitoring, moderation and support could be quickly introduced.

76. The AC recognised that this approach enables educational resources to be directed towards those providers where they are likely to have the greatest benefit whilst maintaining oversight of all centres.

d) External Quality Assurance

77. VetSkill explained that External Quality Assurers would undertake ongoing monitoring of providers, review assessment decisions, support standardisation activities and provide advice where improvements are required.
78. Recognising the relatively small size of the farriery profession, the AC sought clarification regarding recruitment and management of External Quality Assurers, including potential conflicts of interest. VetSkill acknowledged these challenges and explained that appropriate governance arrangements would be required to ensure independence and consistency whilst recognising the practical realities of recruiting experienced individuals from within a relatively small professional community such as farriery.

e) Approved Training Farriers

79. The AC discussed the role of ATFs within the proposed quality assurance framework. VetSkill explained that the proposed qualification introduces greater oversight of ATFs than currently exists. This includes maintenance of an ATF risk register together with arrangements to monitor workplace learning environments and identify areas where additional support or intervention may be required.
80. The AC considered that this represents a broader educational approach to workplace supervision than has traditionally been associated with apprenticeship delivery.

SUMMARY - ASSESSMENT STRATEGY AND QUALITY ASSURANCE

81. The AC found that the assessment strategy and quality assurance arrangements form an integrated system rather than separate processes. Assessment has been designed to provide evidence of learner competence throughout the programme, whilst quality assurance arrangements seek to support consistent educational delivery across providers through moderation, standardisation, External Quality Assurance and risk-based monitoring.
82. Although many operational details remain subject to implementation, the AC considered that the discussions with VetSkill provided considerably greater clarity regarding the educational intent of the qualification than was apparent from the written documentation alone.

PROGRAMME DELIVERY, WORKPLACE LEARNING AND GOVERNANCE

a) Programme Delivery

83. The AC sought to understand how the qualification would operate in practice across different approved providers and workplace learning environments. VetSkill explained that the qualification has been designed to provide a common educational framework irrespective of the route through which it is delivered. Whilst the revised apprenticeship standard is expected to remain the principal route into the profession within England, the qualification has also been designed to support learners undertaking placement-based programmes or alternative employer-supported routes.

84. The AC discussed how providers would structure delivery throughout the programme and recognised that colleges will inevitably develop schemes of work and assessment plans that reflect their own time-tabling, staffing and resources. VetSkill confirmed that, whilst delivery models may differ between providers, each centre would be required to demonstrate that its programme enables learners to achieve all learning outcomes and assessment requirements. Schemes of work and assessment plans would therefore form part of the VetSkill approval process prior to delivery commencing.
85. The AC considered that this approach allows providers an appropriate degree of flexibility whilst maintaining consistency of educational outcomes.
86. The anticipated duration of the qualification was also discussed. VetSkill explained that the proposed programme has been designed around the current apprenticeship timescale of approximately forty-two months, recognising that the development of practical competence requires sustained workplace experience alongside formal education.
87. The AC noted that further clarification will be required regarding expectations for learners undertaking placement routes to ensure that equivalent opportunities exist for workplace learning and practical skill development.

b) Recognition of Prior Learning and Transition Arrangements

88. The AC explored the arrangements proposed for learners who are already progressing through the current apprenticeship standard. VetSkill explained that transition arrangements would be developed in accordance with recognised principles of Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL). The intention is that existing apprentices should not be disadvantaged by the introduction of the qualification and that evidence of learning already achieved should be recognised wherever appropriate, however, this would need to be agreed with Skills England and the Training Providers and is only possible if the apprenticeship retains the same Standard number.
89. The AC recognised that implementation of these arrangements will require careful planning, particularly for apprentices approaching the latter stages of their programmes. Consideration will need to be given to ensuring that learners are assessed fairly whilst maintaining confidence that all candidates have demonstrated the occupational competence required for registration.
90. The AC noted that detailed transition guidance will be of particular importance to colleges, employers and learners should the qualification be approved.

c) Approved Training Providers

91. The role of the ATF formed an important part of the discussion. VetSkill explained that the workplace remains central to the development of practical competence and professional behaviours. The qualification therefore continues to place considerable importance on the role of the ATF in supporting learner development throughout the programme.
92. The AC explored the mechanisms through which consistency between ATFs would be maintained. VetSkill advised that the proposed model extends beyond the existing arrangements by introducing greater oversight of ATFs through risk-based monitoring, quality assurance processes and closer engagement with providers. Rather than

viewing the workplace solely as a placement environment, VetSkill described the ATF as an integral contributor to the learner's educational journey.

93. The AC also discussed the Professional Behaviour Tool, recognising that workplace observations inevitably rely upon professional judgement. VetSkill explained that ATF judgements would not be considered in isolation but would sit alongside other sources of assessment evidence and would be supported through guidance, standardisation and quality assurance processes.
94. The AC recognised that professional judgement will always form an element of workplace assessment and considered that consistency of interpretation will depend upon effective guidance, training and moderation throughout implementation.

d) Relationships Between Colleges, Employers and VetSkill

95. The AC sought to understand how communication would operate between the various organisations involved in delivery of the qualification. VetSkill described a collaborative model in which colleges, ATFs and the Awarding Organisation each contribute to the learner's development whilst maintaining clearly defined responsibilities.
96. Colleges would remain responsible for educational delivery and internal quality assurance. ATFs would provide supervised workplace learning and contribute evidence relating to professional behaviours and practical development. VetSkill would oversee centre approval, moderation, External Quality Assurance, standardisation and regulatory compliance.
97. The AC considered that this represents a more integrated approach than currently exists under the End Point Assessment model, where interaction between the various organisations is generally concentrated around Gateway and final assessment.
98. Throughout the discussion, VetSkill consistently described quality assurance as a collaborative process intended to support educational improvement rather than simply monitor compliance.

e) Governance and Regulatory Oversight

99. The AC explored the relationship between VetSkill and the Farriers Registration Council. VetSkill confirmed that successful completion of the qualification would not result in automatic registration. Rather, achievement of the qualification would provide eligibility to apply for registration, with the FRC retaining responsibility for determining admission to the Register under the Farriers Registration Act. Whilst educational standards are determined through the qualification and its associated quality assurance arrangements, responsibility for professional registration remains with the statutory regulator.
100. Discussion also took place regarding the interaction between VetSkill's quality assurance processes and the Council's approval responsibilities. VetSkill explained that, as an Awarding Organisation, it would routinely monitor educational quality through centre approval, External Quality Assurance and moderation. However, these arrangements are intended to complement, rather than replace, the FRC's own oversight responsibilities.
101. The AC considered that continued communication between VetSkill and the Council will be essential, particularly during the early implementation of the qualification. Regular dialogue would enable quality assurance findings, emerging risks and

examples of good practice to be shared between both organisations whilst ensuring that each continues to fulfil its respective responsibilities.

f) Registration and Public Protection

102. The AC discussed the relationship between educational achievement and professional registration. VetSkill explained that learners must be appropriately registered as students throughout their training and that only those who have successfully completed all components of the qualification would become eligible to apply for registration to the Farriers register.
103. The AC recognised that, whilst educational achievement forms the basis upon which eligibility for registration is established, the ultimate purpose of the qualification is to provide confidence that newly qualified farriers have demonstrated the knowledge, practical competence and professional behaviours necessary for safe independent practice.

g) Summary - Programme Delivery

104. The AC found that the proposed delivery model extends beyond the introduction of a new qualification and represents a broader framework for the education, assessment and quality assurance of student farriers. VetSkill consistently described an approach in which providers, ATFs, External Quality Assurers and the Awarding Organisation each contribute to a coordinated system of educational delivery and quality assurance. Responsibility for professional registration, however, remains firmly with the FRC.