

PG CABW 2025-2027

PRELIMINARY ECTS Veterinary Behaviourist

Course programme	Odisee Companion Animal Behaviour and Welfare Programme Postgraduate course Veterinary Behaviourist (VB)
Course module title	PG CABW – VB-M1 - Ethology of companion animals
Level of course module	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Postgraduate level 6/7
Year of study module is delivered	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Academic year 2025-2026
Number of ECTS credits allocated to the module	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 8 credits = appr. 200 to 240 study hours
Summary of key learning outcomes of the module	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Introducing the concepts and essential subject matters necessary for an in-depth understanding of the biological bases of animal behaviour in general and the biology, ontogeny, phylogeny and ethogram of companion animals in particular.2. Develop an understanding of human animal interactions and appraisal of how these affect the behaviour and welfare of companion animals as a basis to advise professionals and non-professionals on how to achieve good animal welfare and human-animal relationships and prevent problems.
Specific learning outcomes of the module	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Students will know and understand the subjects covered in this module and be able to:<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Demonstrate the current understanding of the biology and ethology of dogs, cats, and the species of their choice from the category's small mammals or horses.2. Interpret communicative behaviour. Recognise, evaluate and report on the behavioural state of an animal, including normal behaviour and behaviour indicative of a positive and negative emotional state and ill-health.3. Demonstrate an understanding of how the processes of behavioural ontogeny and phylogeny affect the behaviour of specific species, evaluate their importance for the development of normal behaviour, the prevention of abnormal behaviour and optimizing individual welfare.4. Critically evaluate the interaction between 'nature' and 'nurture' in general and how these influence the development of behavioural disorders in domestic animals.5. Express an understanding of how the processes of domestication, natural and artificial selection affect the behaviour of animals.6. Express an understanding of the physiology of the stress response and its effect on animal behaviour and welfare.

	<p>Including how the interaction between the environment and emotions are associated with the behaviour expressed by animals.</p> <p>7. Express an understanding of the different attitudes of humans towards companion animals throughout the history and in the present society. How attitudes towards companion animals affect the human animal bond/relationship, human-animal interactions, the behaviour and welfare of people and companion animals in a variety of situations.</p>
Content of the module	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The field of applied ethology and its importance in relation to animal welfare. • The principles of ethology including: general principles of behaviour genetics and the evolution of behaviour. The process of domestication and its effect on behaviour. The concept of dominance. • Basic principles in the field of companion animal welfare and their relevance to providing optimal quality of life for dogs and cats. • The biology and behaviour of dogs, cats, small mammals and horses including: body structures, movement, sensory physiology and abilities, motivation and organization of behaviour, nutrition and health. • The ontogeny and phylogeny of behaviour of dogs, cats, small mammals and horses, including: the process of domestication of the specific species, sensitive periods, socialisation, attachment, breeds and breed differences. Behavioural development. The effect on the behaviour of the specific species resulting from the interaction between biological, genetic, environmental influences and the domestic environment. • The ethogram of normal behaviour of dogs, cats, small mammals and horses, including: communicative behaviour, social behaviour, sexual behaviour, ingestive behaviour, eliminative behaviour, locomotive behaviour, maternal behaviour, behaviour indicative of a positive and negative emotional state. • Anthrozoology the science studying the interaction between humans and animals and its relevance to companion animal behaviour and welfare. • The psychology of the human-animal bond and its effect on the behaviour and welfare of humans and companion animals, including: the human animal bond in historical and cultural perspective and tests and measurements to evaluate the human-animal bond.
Planned learning activities and teaching methods	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Distance learning consisting of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Recorded lectures ○ Reading lists

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Peer-to-peer learning activities ○ Self-assessment quizzes
Assessment methods and criteria	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Formative assignment ● Individually composed summative assignment and oral exam
Essential study materials	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Course book ● Course materials provided by the lecturers.
Module coordinators	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Jolanda Pluijmakers (jolanda.pluijmakers@odisee.be) and David Appleby (david.appleby@live.com).
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