

PG CABW 2025-2027

PRELIMINARY ECTS Veterinary Behaviourist

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| Course programme | Odisee Companion Animal Behaviour and Welfare Programme Postgraduate course Veterinary Behaviourist |
| Course module title | PG CABW – VB M7: Clinical procedures: Putting theory into practice |
| 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 2026-2027 |
| Number of ECTS credits allocated to the module | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Total: 7 credits = appr. 175 to 210 hours |
| Summary of key learning outcomes of the module | <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Acquisition of effective counselling and communication skills necessary for the diagnosis and treatment of common behaviour and welfare problems in companion animals (dogs and cats)2. Acquisition of practical skills in the handling, training and practical application of training aids and of behaviour modification techniques using case studies. |
| Specific learning outcomes of the module | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Students will know and understand the subjects covered in this module and demonstrate:<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Ability to critically evaluate the needs of the relevant species and how these may be provided.2. Identification of and adherence to the appropriate animal health and welfare legislation, associated codes of practice and other legislation relevant to the animals being considered.3. Practical application of knowledge related to gathering evidence from all sources of information about the behaviour of companion animals and the problem(s) for which advice is being sought. This might for example be by direct observation, discussion with owner/keeper, assessments supplied by veterinary surgeons or case histories. Critical evaluation of the quality of this evidence, distinguishing between competing causes, assumption and explanations for the behaviour and the ability to act appropriately to remedy areas of concern or deficiency of information.4. Ability to evaluate the impact of external and internal factors, including husbandry/management practices and handling, on behaviour and welfare problems and on |

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| | <p>those for which help is being sought and areas of concern identified.</p> <p>5. Ability to devise the most appropriate, structured, legally compliant, and humane treatment regime (training exercises, training aids and behaviour modification techniques) likely to effectively address the problem(s) and concerns identified in the animal's particular set of circumstances.</p> <p>6. Ability to adjust handling of an animal to its needs.</p> <p>7. Ability to demonstrate and teach appropriate and effective handling exercises, training exercises and behaviour modification techniques whilst protecting against their misuse and ensuring owners/keepers protect the welfare of the animal.</p> <p>8. Awareness of psychopharmacological and other interventions to address problem behaviours and the ability to liaise with the relevant professionals after obtaining appropriate informed consent.</p> <p>9. Ability to set realistic goals, time scales for monitoring progress and assessment of success in individual cases.</p> <p>10. Ability to discuss an agreed treatment regime with the owner/keeper and others involved with the animal for which advice is being sought.</p> <p>11. Ability to rectify areas of misunderstanding, confusion or concern where appropriate.</p> <p>12. Ability to explain to the owner/keeper/carer of the animal, through written guidelines or other appropriate systems of feedback, the areas of concern regarding their animal's behaviour or welfare that have been identified. Their possible causes and the rationale behind the treatment regime selected to remedy these and any associated issues.</p> <p>13. Identification of professional, ethical or other issues that arise when working with an animal, owner/keeper or other individual and take appropriate action to address these.</p> <p>14. Maintenance of records on each animal so that it is possible to critically reflect on the appropriateness and success of different treatment regimens and identify any improvements to practice that could be made.</p> <p>15. Ability to perform a risk assessment.</p> |
| Content of the module | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The essential elements and requirements for the process of behaviour counselling related to behavioural diagnoses. Assessment of the multiple aspects of each case, such as behaviour, temperament, functioning of the animal, environment and medical conditions in practice. • Causes of common behaviour problems in companion animals, such as: undesirable behaviour, anxiety, fear and phobias related behaviours, aggression and repetitive |

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| | <p>behaviours. How to identify and critically evaluate causes and contributing factors in practice.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Methods for gathering and recording information relevant to behavioural diagnosis of behavioural problems and how to critically evaluate that information. • Case studies of common behaviour problems in dogs and cats. • The principles of effective counselling and how to apply to facilitate and maintain behavioural change. • Effective communication skills, in the collection of relevant information and provision of advice in face-to-face consultations, communication via phone, writing reports and behaviour modification programs. • The interactions appropriate in professional relationships and how to apply these in practice. • The common professional, legal, ethical or other issues that need to be considered or may arise before, during and after a consultation and the actions appropriate to address them. • The construction of appropriately structured treatment regimens that are likely to be effective for the behaviour problems identified. • Common behaviour modification strategies used in the treatment of behaviour problems in companion animals. • How to identify situations where further action may be necessary, including ways in which compliance with an extended treatment regime may be encouraged, the behaviour modification plan requires alteration and when rehoming or euthanasia are indicated. • Conducting a risk assessment of aggressive animals. • Practical application of the insights of psychology, neuroscience/cognitive science and principles of ethology and learning theory to the prevention, diagnosis and treatment of common behaviour and welfare problems using case studies and group work. • Practical application of management strategies, handling techniques, training techniques, training aids and behaviour modification techniques using case studies and group work. • Practical exercises in the communication skills pertinent to behaviour counselling. |
| Planned learning activities and teaching methods | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Distance learning consisting of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Online workshops ○ Reading lists ○ Case studies: peer-to-peer ○ Individual mentoring sessions |
| Assessment methods and criteria | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continuous evaluation: Active participation during all workshops is obligatory. • Formative assignment |

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| | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Summative assignment• Oral exam |
| Essential study materials | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Course book• Course materials provided by the lecturers |
| Module coordinators | Jolanda Pluijmakers (jolanda.pluijmakers@odisee.be) and David Appleby (david.appleby@live.com) |
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