PG ABT 2026-2028

PRELIMINARY ECTS Animal Behaviour Technician

Course programme	Odisee Companion Animal Behaviour and Welfare Programme **Postgraduate course Animal Behaviour Technician**
Course module title	**PG CABW – ABT M6: Clinical procedures: Behavioural diagnosis and treatment of common behaviour problems in companion animals**
Level of course module	• Postgraduate level 6
Year of study module is delivered	• Academic year: 2027-2028
Number of ECTS credits allocated to the module	• 5 credits = appr. 125 to 150 study hours
Summary of key learning outcomes of the module	1. Acquisition of the theoretical background regarding the development of companion animal (dogs and cats) behaviour problems their effect on welfare, how to prevent and diagnose these, based on the relevant scientific literature and clinical experience. 2. Acquisition of the theoretical knowledge of the treatment of common behaviour and welfare problems in companion animals (dogs and cats). Theoretical knowledge of how to address behaviour problems and welfare problems of individual animals, through the development of suitable environments, management, the use of treatment regimes maximally adjusted to the requirements and circumstances of individual cases to make it likely for the treatment to be effective, based on best practice and scientific evidence.
Specific learning outcomes of the module	• Students will know and understand the subjects covered in this module and demonstrate: 1. In-depth knowledge of the scientific literature regarding the development of companion animal behaviour problems, their effect on welfare and how to prevent them. 2. Understanding of the essential elements for behavioural diagnosis during the process of behaviour counselling and how to assess multiple aspects of cases presented, such as behavioural development, temperament, functioning of the animal, environment, and medical conditions.

	3. Theoretical knowledge of how to recognise, evaluate and report on the biological state, emotional state and behaviour that most commonly contribute to the caseload of a companion animal behaviour counsellor, including signals and signs indicative of states such as fear, nervousness, aggression, play, relaxation and factors as medical conditions, physiological status, temperament, developmental history, coping strategy. 4. Knowledge of the impact of external influences on an animal's behaviour, the problem(s) and areas of concern identified and those for which help is being sought. This to include: immediate surroundings, wider environment, environmental pressures, ethological requirements, previous learning experiences and owner attitude and influence. 5. Understanding of the principles and rationales behind the use of the range of behavioural modification techniques. How to select and use those appropriate for individual cases, for the treatment and prevention of common behaviour problems. 6. Understanding of how the principles of learning theory are applied to humane training methods to achieve agreed goals. 7. Planning and managing humane approaches to addressing inappropriate behaviour, behaviour problems and welfare problems of companion animals. 8. Understanding of how to devise and implement structured behaviour modification and training programs, identify and set realistic goals and time scales for implementation, monitoring progress, assessment of success and the appropriate response to feedback. 9. Understanding of the ethics of complementary and alternative interventions, non-prescription or prescribed therapies or products. 10. Understanding of critically evaluating issues concerning the safety, efficacy and reliability of complementary and alternative or non-prescription or prescribed therapies or products. 11. Understanding and ability to justify why a particular treatment regime has been selected to address the problem(s) identified, against any other possible regimes. 12. Understanding of how animal behavioural therapy related to the management, training, rehabilitation and prevention of behaviour and welfare problems is applied when caring for an animal, assisting or advising other people or organisations. 13. Identification of the appropriate animal health and welfare legislation, associated codes of practice and other legislation relevant to the cases being considered and communication of this to other people or organisations.

	14. Understand the legal position of animal behaviour technician, clinical animal behaviourist, the veterinary behaviourist, veterinary surgeon and others regarding (behavioural) diagnosis, treatment, provision of advice, prescription and use of drugs.
Module content	• The interaction between health, (problem) behaviour, emotions and the welfare of companion animals. • The role of motivational emotional systems in the development of behaviour problems. • 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. • Causes of common behaviour problems in companion animals, such as: undesirable behaviour, anxiety, fear and phobias related behaviours and aggression. How to identify and critically evaluate causes and contributing factors. • Methods for gathering and recording information relevant to behavioural diagnosis of behavioural problems and how to critically evaluate that information. • Relevant aspects of neuroscience, cognitive science, principles of ethology, learning theory in relation to the behavioural diagnosis of common welfare and behaviour problems in companion animals. • Management strategies used in and prior to the treatment of behaviour problems in companion animals. • The symptoms of ill-health and pain and the interplay between diseases and common conditions influencing behaviour and associated veterinary terminology. • The behavioural and emotional consequences of medical conditions including pain. • The evidence for and against a medical component contributing to competing explanations of behaviour. • The ethics and legal position of the animal technician, clinical animal behaviourist, veterinary behaviourist, veterinary surgeon and others regarding factors such as, (behavioural) diagnosis and client confidentiality. • Case studies of common behaviour problems in dogs and cats. • The interactions appropriate in professional relationships and how to apply these in practice. • 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 when writing reports and behaviour modification programs. • 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. • The mode of action of non-prescriptive and prescriptive treatments, such as nutrition, pheromones and nutraceuticals in animal behaviour therapy, there role and correct application, constraints and contra-indicators to their use. • The ethics and legal implications of the use of non-prescriptive and prescriptive products, the position of the animal behaviour technician, clinical animal behaviourist, veterinary behaviourist, veterinary surgeon and others regarding the diagnosis, prescription and use of drugs, non-prescriptive and prescriptive products and provision of advice. • Appropriate application of the insights of neuroscience, cognitive science and principles of ethology and learning theory to the treatment of common behaviour problems and welfare problems in companion animals. • 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.
Planned learning activities and teaching methods	• Distance learning consisting of: o Recorded lectures o Reading lists o Peer-to-peer learning activities
Assessment methods	• Two formative assignments • Two summative assignments • Two oral exams
Essential study materials	• Course book • Course materials provided by the lecturers

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