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 M2 - Learning theory and animal training**
Level of course module	• Postgraduate level 6/7
Year of study module is delivered	• Academic year 2025-2026
Number of ECTS credits allocated to the module	• 6 credits = appr. 150 to 180 study hours
Summary of the key learning outcomes of the module	1. Acquiring and demonstrating an in-depth understanding of learning theory. Be able to explain how the principles underlying learning affect behaviour, emotions and welfare. 2. Be able to explain the theory underlying training techniques, learned problem behaviours and basic behaviour modification techniques. 3. Acquiring the practical skills needed to correctly handle dogs and cats and modify their behaviour through the appropriate selection and application of training techniques and training equipment. 4. Acquiring the communicative skills to provide training instructions.
Specific learning outcomes of the course module	• Upon successful completion of the module the student will: 1. Be able to articulate their understanding of the theory of animal learning, cognitive abilities, training techniques and basic behaviour modification techniques. 2. Demonstrate an understanding of the theory underlying learned problem behaviour. 3. Understand the rational for the use of different training techniques, training aids and behaviour modification techniques and how they affect behaviour and animal welfare. 4. Be able to critically assess the strength and weakness of training techniques and training aids and behaviour modification techniques. Propose and justify the selection of the most appropriate technique or training aids used to achieve the formulated training goal or behaviour modification. 5. Posses the theoretical knowledge and practical skills to use training techniques and training aids effectively and correctly.

	6. Be able to develop, review and update training plans for individual animals and their handlers. 7. Be able to train animals and instruct and demonstrate to professionals and non-professionals on how to train their animals in accordance with a training plan. 8. Advise a system to scientifically evaluate the effectiveness of behaviour modification, set goals and respond appropriately.
Content of the module	• The neurobiology of learning and memory. • The theory of animal learning, including: habituation, sensitisation, classical conditioning, operant conditioning, stimulus control of behaviour, the integration of learning experiences with emotional processing and resultant behavioural organisation. • Animal cognition: insight and social learning, social competence and animal intelligence. • Basic procedures and techniques used during a broad range of training techniques and basic behaviour modification techniques including: habituation, systematic desensitization, operant and classical counter conditioning. • Practical skills in appropriate handling of dogs and cats • Observing and interpreting the behaviour of dogs and cats and their handlers. How to communicate with the animal and handler and implement the observations in the development of a training plan and during a training session. • Developing the skills to apply basic procedures and techniques used during a broad range of training techniques and training aids in practice.
Planned learning activities and teaching methods	• Distance learning consisting of: ○ Recorded lectures ○ Reading lists • Online practical workshops consisting of: ○ The interpretation of the behaviour of dogs and cats ○ Demonstration/observation of handling and training procedures ○ Tutorials on training and handling skills and providing training instructions ○ Peer-to-peer learning activities and feedback ○ Case studies
Assessment methods and criteria	• Continuous evaluation during workshop week • Formative assignment • Individually composed written and practical summative assignment • Online MC exam

Essential study materials	• Course book • Course materials provided by the lecturers.
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