

## FINDING WORK PLACEMENTS



Work placement is a compulsory component of the New Zealand Diploma in Veterinary Nursing and you must have sourced at least one work placement at a companion animal veterinary clinic before the start date to maintain your enrolment. Once you have received your enrolment offer, start looking for at least one companion animal veterinary clinic to complete your work placement. You will also need at least 45 hours of placement in an animal facility in your first year, such as at the SPCA, boarding kennels or catteries, doggy day care facilities for example.

When do placements need to start?

You should start your placements in March if possible. The earlier the better as it ensures you have enough time to complete the hours needed for the year. Work placements should ideally be one day a week (especially for full time students), or in blocks of weeks. Blocks of placement can be challenging for full time students on top of study. You may need to be flexible to find a mutually convenient time with the clinic.

How to approach potential veterinary clinics: We always recommend that you send an email to the veterinary clinic asking if you could be considered for a work placement. Explain that you are enrolling into the NZ Diploma in Veterinary Nursing Year One and provide a short summary about yourself. Include a brief CV if you have one. It can be good to offer to come into the clinic to observe for a couple of days so that the clinic staff can meet you first. Treat these days like an interview! If you don't hear back from the veterinary clinic within a week, telephone the veterinary clinic and ask to speak to the practice manager or the senior veterinary nurse to see if they have received your email. You may need to arrange an appointment to discuss whether the veterinary clinic can offer you a placement.

Be sure to get the Work Placement Confirmation form filled in – you will need to input these details into our work placement management system.

## KEEPING WORK PLACEMENTS

- Once you have secured a work placement, contact the veterinary clinic closer to the time you are about to start and confirm start and finish times.
- Check where they would like you to park your car, if this applies. Do not park in the veterinary clinic car park unless instructed to, this is for clients.
- Be on time and stay until the time that you've been scheduled to finish. Don't arrive late and/or ask to leave early. If you have children, you may need to organise childcare to ensure you can do full days.
- Wear your Otago Polytechnic uniform - polo shirt (animal facilities) or scrub top (vet clinics), along with your name badge, long pants and closed in shoes, short nails, and long hair tied back.
- Show initiative and get involved whenever possible, even if you are just helping to clean and tidy up. Suggestions may include restocking syringe and needle supplies from the storeroom, refilling cotton wool balls, wiping down benches and cupboard doors, checking and cleaning out litter trays/cages, undertaking washing and drying. Aim to add more and more tasks to your list each week as you become more confident.
- Always phone your work placement and let them know if you are sick or unable to attend. Remember that repeated non-attendance may lead clinics to cancel your placement and offer it to another student.
- Always ask if you are unsure of anything and say if you need help to complete a task that you're unsure of.
- Never take animals out of cages unless asked to.
- We recommend you consider taking in morning tea (a packet of nice biscuits or some home baking) as a thank you occasionally during your work placement in recognition of the support the veterinary clinic is providing you.