



Otago Polytechnic

School of Animal Health

NZ 4389 Diploma in Veterinary Nursing (Level 6) Year One

Programme Information

Programme Content

Year 1 of the programme is made up of eight 15-credit courses.

- Veterinary Nursing Practice
- Animal Husbandry & Behaviour
- Anatomy & Physiology
- Companion Animal Practicum I
- Introduction to Surgery & Diagnostics
- Introduction to Anaesthesia and Analgesia
- Introduction to Medical Nursing
- Companion Animal Practicum II

The theory courses are criterion-referenced, which means you will be graded A+, A, A-, B+ and so forth. You must obtain a minimum grade of 50% (C-) for each learning outcome to pass.

The practicum courses are competency based, so grades can be either pass or fail.

The first four courses must be passed before completing Practicum II, and the Anatomy and Physiology course must be passed before completing the three 'Introduction to...' courses. All year one courses must be completed and passed to enter year two of the programme.

Each of the two practical courses (Practicum I and Practicum II) are assessed using a range of evidence, including demonstration of skills such as animal handling and restraint, laboratory, anaesthesia and medical nursing skills, evidence of work placement attendance and engagement, professionalism, feedback from your supervisors in placement and written reflections on your learning.

Key Work Placement Information

Before commencing any work placement, you must have completed the Passport to Safety module which covers basic health & safety, hazards in the animal/veterinary facility and expectations of professional behaviour in the placement. Work placement hours will not be counted until this is completed. You will be introduced to this module in the first week of the programme or before.

Planning work placement in your first year:

- **Full-time students** require a minimum of 205 vet clinic placement hours and a minimum of 45 animal facility hours in the first year.
- **Full-time students:** due to lack of availability of vet clinic placements in many areas, you are strongly encouraged to start your vet clinic hours early (end Feb-March) and continue regular placement throughout the year. Do not wait until mid-year to start clinic placement as you may find that placements are not available.
- **Part-time students** require a minimum of 80 vet clinic placement hours in the first year, and a minimum of 45 animal facility hours.

- You may complete the required hours in more than one clinic or animal facility.
- Work placement can be completed in blocks, but for full-time students one day per week placement is preferable.

It's important to know that veterinary clinics start early and can finish late. If you have children, you may need to consider planning childcare or school runs, as you will be expected to do full days when you are on work placement.

	Practicum I	Practicum II
When this is completed	Full time students: Semester one Part time students: Year one	Full time students: Semester two Part time students: Year two
Animal facility hours	45	N/A
Veterinary clinic hours	80	125
Minimum Hours to pass:	125	125

For full time students, you should confirm a vet clinic placement before the February start date. If you have not got a clinic placement by the start date you must let us know. We don't want you to be in a position where you have enrolled and paid for the programme and cannot complete it.

Part-time students have slightly longer to find vet clinic placement, as only 80 hours are required in the first year. Part time students should aim to confirm their 20 or more hours of vet clinic placement by the end of June at the latest.

Dunedin based students

Veterinary clinic placements in the wider Dunedin area are severely limited so if you enroll you must be committed to travel outside of Dunedin (including Balclutha and Mosgiel) to complete the required placement. You must not approach Dunedin clinics yourself. Our work placement coordinator manages all placements for the Dunedin clinics.

If you cannot go outside of Dunedin due to family or other commitments, please contact us as soon as possible to discuss. You may qualify for one of the few Dunedin based placements that are available. Note this is decided according to need and can only be guaranteed for the first year.

Suitable Facilities

The focus of this qualification is small animals, i.e. cats, dogs, rabbits, guinea pigs, birds, rats and mice.

Suitable animal facilities may include the SPCA, boarding kennels and catteries, small animal petting zoos, doggy day care. It must be set up as a commercial facility, not a home-based enterprise. If you are unsure whether the facility meets the criteria, please check with your tutor first. Equine or rural facilities are not suitable.

All veterinary clinic placements must be focused on companion animals as above. You may complete your work placement in a clinic which deals with both rural and companion animals if you are working with the companion animals. Rural and equine clinics are not suitable.

Full time vs Part time

The full-time programme takes two years to complete. It often appears as an attractive alternative to studying part-time over four years. However, the full-time option is **full-time**. You must have the capacity to study for 35-40 hours each week for study and work placement.

- If you are unsure if you will be able to sustain this, you should enroll part-time.
- If you need to work more than 10-15 hours per week, you should study part-time.
- If you have young children, sports commitments, or own a farm you should study part time.

We see many students who apply for full-time study with us and then withdraw or transfer to part time due to the pressures of study and work/home life.

If you find that you cannot keep up with study please contact us early to discuss options to support you.

Block Courses

For full-time students, you will attend two compulsory block courses, and one further block course later in the year which you may or may not need to attend.

Part time students attend the first block course only in the first year.

We run the block courses in four venues, either Dunedin or Christchurch in the South Island or Wellington or Tauranga in the North Island. Each block course lasts 2-3 days and is held from 9-4.00 approximately.

The dates will be available on our website once confirmed.

Skills to be successful

We take pride in our support of students who are studying off campus. Your tutors will guide you through your learning with weekly updates on where you should be up to, schedules for study and assessment due dates, and online classes.

We have an excellent Student Success team who can assist with learning, wellbeing, IT, Māori, Pasifika, disability and queer support.

However, we can only do so much. Skills you need are commitment, good time management and the ability to stick to a regular study schedule including enough hours to properly cover the learning resources and assessments. Lastly, you need lots of self-motivation. Working at home on a laptop means it's easy to become distracted by social media and idle web-surfing, so you also need to be disciplined to avoid distraction.

The veterinary industry is rewarding but can be physically and emotionally demanding at times. You need to be physically and mentally well yourself to ensure you can deal with the ups and downs of the clinic environment. If you wish to discuss this prior to enrollment, please get in touch.

Programme Expectations

Your tutors monitor your weekly progress through the online resources. You are expected to study regularly and keep up with your study timetable but can set your own study routine to suit you. Full-time students are expected to attend a weekly scheduled online meeting unless on work placement. If you have not been active online, we will contact you to see if there are any problems. If you are struggling to keep up, we will contact you to discuss the reasons. If you have work or personal problems which are preventing you from studying effectively, we may refer you to Student Success. The main thing we ask is that you communicate with us and let us know as early as possible so that we can help. If you stop engaging with the course and we don't hear back from you after several attempts at contacting you, we will withdraw you.

All assessments have due dates which are available at the start of the year. If you cannot meet an assessment due date for a valid reason such as illness or bereavement, let us know and we can provide an extension. We may require evidence such as a medical certificate.

If an assessment is not submitted by the due date, and you do not have an extension, the assessment will not be marked. This may result in you failing a course.

If you fail an assessment, we will contact you to discuss the reasons and refer you for support from Student Success.