New Zealand Diploma in Rural Animal Veterinary Technology (Level 6)

Placement Starter Guide

Welcome to work placement! Practical placement is a compulsory part of your programme and provides the opportunity to develop confidence, practical skills, and real-world experience in rural animal healthcare settings.

As part of this programme you are required to complete:

- A minimum of 125 hours farm placement
- A minimum of 625 hours rural or mixed veterinary clinic placement

Placements may be completed:

- Weekly
- In blocks
- Across multiple workplaces

This can be arranged in consultation with your placement providers and within programme timeframes.

Many learners gain future employment opportunities through placement, so approach each day professionally and make the most of every opportunity to learn.

Finding Your Placement

You are responsible for organising your own work placements.

We recommend starting early, as some farms and veterinary clinics may already support learners from multiple programmes or providers.

Finding Farm Placement

When approaching farms:

- Introduce yourself professionally
- Briefly explain your programme and placement requirements
- Discuss possible placement days and availability
- Be realistic about travel, seasonal workload, and physical demands

Finding Veterinary Clinic Placement

When approaching veterinary clinics:

- Introduce yourself professionally
- Briefly explain your programme and placement requirements
- Ask whether they would be willing to meet with you to discuss placement opportunities

It is helpful to include:

- A brief CV
- Referees
- Any placement information requested by the programme

Professional communication and initiative make a strong first impression.

Once your placement has been arranged:

- Confirm your start date and hours
- Clarify where to park
- Check whether there are any specific workplace requirements

Before You Start Placement

Before attending placement, ensure you have:

- Completed the required introductory programme components
- Reviewed your practicum workbook and skills requirements (given to you at block course one)
- Completed your Emergency Contact Form
- Organised:
    - Otago Polytechnic polo shirt
    - Name badge
    - Clean overalls and gumboots

Your First Day

Farm Placement

On farm placement:

- Arrive on time
- Wear appropriate clothing and footwear
- Bring clean overalls and gumboots
- Follow all farm health and safety instructions
- Use good stock sense and remain aware of your surroundings

Farms are busy working environments and tasks may vary significantly day to day depending on weather, season, and workload.

Veterinary Clinic Placement

On clinic placement:

- Arrive on time
- Introduce yourself at reception or to the appropriate staff member
- Bring all required clothing and equipment
- Be prepared to listen, learn, and ask questions

Most clinics will provide:

- A workplace tour
- Health and safety induction
- Information about clinic routines and expectations

Remember that clinics are busy working environments. Observe how the team operates and follow instructions carefully.

Expectations During Placement

During placement you are expected to:

- Be punctual and reliable
- Dress professionally
- Follow all workplace health and safety procedures
- Maintain confidentiality at all times
- Treat staff, clients, and animals respectfully
- Follow instructions and ask questions when unsure

- Take initiative where appropriate
- Participate actively in learning opportunities

Examples of helpful placement tasks may include:

- Cleaning and tidying
- Restocking supplies
- Laundry and equipment cleaning
- Preparing equipment
- Assisting with animal handling under supervision

Remember that practical skills improve with repetition. Continue practising tasks even after they have been signed off.

Communication & Professionalism

Good communication is essential during placement.

You should:

- Let your supervisor know what you are currently learning
- Discuss upcoming assessments early
- Communicate any video evidence requirements in advance
- Ask for feedback regularly

Many learners find it useful to arrange a regular check-in time with their supervisor to discuss:

- Progress
- Skills development
- Areas to improve
- Upcoming assessment requirements

Treat placement like a real workplace. Professional behaviour and reliability are extremely important.

Video & Assessment Evidence

Some assessments may require video or photographic evidence of practical skills.

When collecting evidence:

- Ensure this has been discussed with your supervisor beforehand
- Do not disrupt normal workplace operations
- Only perform tasks you are confident and competent completing
- Follow workplace protocols at all times
- Ensure assessment work remains your own independent work

Planning ahead is extremely important. Review upcoming assessment requirements early so workplaces have adequate notice.

Confidentiality

You must maintain confidentiality at all times during placement.

Do not:

- Share client or patient information
- Discuss workplace matters outside placement
- Post placement information, images, or videos on social media
- Make negative comments about workplaces, staff, clients, or animals

Professional confidentiality is an essential part of working in the animal health industry.

Sick Days & Absences

If you are unable to attend placement:

- Contact your placement provider as soon as possible
- Follow any workplace expectations regarding absence reporting
- Communicate professionally and promptly

Do not attend placement if unwell and potentially infectious.

Tips for Success

Successful learners are usually the ones who:

- Show initiative
- Ask questions
- Stay engaged
- Help with small tasks
- Accept feedback positively
- Maintain professionalism
- Take responsibility for their own learning

Placement is an opportunity to build confidence, practical experience, and industry connections.

Need Help?

If you have any concerns or questions during placement, please contact the School of Animal Health.

School of Animal Health
animalhealth@op.ac.nz
0800 762 786