Otago Polytechnic

Te Kura Oraka Kararehe | School of Animal Health

NZ Diploma in Rural Animal Veterinary Technology

Frequently Asked Questions

Kia ora and thank you for your interest in studying **Rural Animal Veterinary Technology** with Otago Polytechnic.

This document contains the most commonly asked questions about our Rural Animal Veterinary Technology programme.

We look forward to your application to enrol and will be happy to answer any further questions you have about the programme.

Mā te wā, bye for now

Steph

Steph Mann

Principal Lecturer and Programme Leader for NZ Diploma in Rural Animal Veterinary Technology

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1. I don't have academic entry requirement. Can I still enrol?

We will consider your application to study with us even if you don't meet our academic entry requirements, particularly if you are 20 years or older. We may require that your Numeracy and Literacy is assessed using the national online tool. You need to reach Step 4 or greater to be considered for enrolment into this programme. Alternately we may defer your study and transfer you to our level 3 Animal Care programme first. Please apply and we'll be in touch.

2. What does the programme consist of? What courses are in it?

The Animal Healthcare Assisting programme, rural animal strand is made up of 8, 15-credit courses, 6 of which are theory based:

- ANML5310 Fundamentals for Rural Veterinary Technicians
- ANML5311 Anatomy and Physiology
- ANML5312 Rural Animal Husbandry
- ANML5313 Rural Animal Health and Disease
- ANML5306 Practicum One
- ANML5314 Practicum Two
- ANML6309 Parasitology and Diagnostics
- ANML6310 Rural Animal Disease Management
- ANML6311 Rural Animal Medical, Surgical and Acute Support
- ANML6312 Professionalism and Sustainable Practice
- ANML6313 Practicum Three
- ANML6315 Practicum Four
- ANML6315 Practicum Capstone

The theory courses are "Criterion-based", which means you will be graded A+, A, A-, B+ and so forth. Theory assessments have a minimum pass requirement of C- (50%) for each learning outcome with a course. The practicum courses are competency-based, meaning they are assessed as either achieved or not yet achieved.

3. What does full-time study look like compared to part time?

The full-time programme is completed over one year and can seem appealing compared with studying part-time over two years. However, full-time study is a significant commitment, with an expected workload of around 40 hours per week across study, placements, and practical experience.

Part-time study is completed over two years and generally requires around 20 hours per week. This can vary depending on the season and the courses you are completing, with some periods being busier than others.

If you are working, have children, major sporting commitments, manage a farm, or have other significant responsibilities, part-time study is usually the better option. Rural placements and veterinary clinics often require early starts, weekday availability, and hands-on experience that cannot usually be completed on weekends alone.

Many students begin in the full-time programme expecting to fit study around evenings and weekends, but later transfer to part-time once they realise the workload involved.

Before choosing your study option, take time to realistically consider the time and energy you can commit to the programme.

4. What happens if I start full time, but can't keep up?

Depending on how far through the programme you are, we have a range of options to support you. For example, we can withdraw you from some courses and spread your study out over a longer period or transfer you from full-time to part-time. The further through the study year we are, the fewer our options are for doing this though, and after a certain point you will be ineligible for fee refunds.

5. How are the practical component assessed?

During your practicum courses, you are required to demonstrate competency across a range of practical skills. These range from basic animal handling and restraint through to laboratory skills, assisting veterinarians with more advanced procedures and technician led services.

You must also complete a minimum of 750 placement hours, including:

- At least 125 hours on farms
    - Dairy cattle and sheep farm placements are compulsory
    - Plus one other commercial farm species (e.g. pigs, deer, goats etc)
- At least 625 hours in a rural veterinary clinic

Some hours may be completed in other approved settings, such as veterinary pathology laboratories or alongside an AI technician, but these must be approved by us first.

Your placement hours, supervisor feedback, and practical skill assessments are reviewed throughout the year. In most cases, placement hours are collected naturally while completing your required practical skills, so the main focus should be on skill completion rather than simply logging hours.

Both practicum courses are competency-based and are assessed as either passed or not yet passed.

6. When do I need to have my work placements organised by? When do I tell them I will be starting?

Practicum placement begins shortly after your first block course in early August. This timing is intentional to ensure you have received a safe foundation of knowledge and skills before entering placement, in line with industry expectations.

It is important to understand that some of the practical skills required for the programme are seasonal. We will discuss practicum requirements, placement expectations, and the timing of seasonal skills in much more detail during block course, however planning ahead early will make it much easier to complete all requirements successfully.

7. Can I be cross credited for previous experience or other qualifications?

We look at this on a case-by-case basis.

The most common scenarios are occasions where assessment reduction can be applied with appropriate evidence from you.

Get in touch with us to discuss your options.

8. What block course/s do I have to attend? Where are the block courses?

There are **four compulsory block courses** that all ākonga | students need to attend during the duration of your study. We run the compulsory block courses in the South Island, based at Otago Polytechnic in Dunedin and a North Island location.

9. Are there any compulsory textbooks or other items I need?

There are no compulsory textbooks for this programme, although we will recommend useful reading throughout the year across many topics.

Otago Polytechnic has an excellent library, and off-campus ākonga | students can have books shipped to them free of charge. Many resources are also available as e-books.

Uniform

You will need to purchase the following Otago Polytechnic branded items from Arrow Uniforms:

- Otago Polytechnic name badge
- At least one Otago Polytechnic polo shirt
- Otago Polytechnic branded overalls*

You will also need:

- Waterproof gumboots with good tread, suitable for dairy shed work
- Waterproof, chemical-resistant dairy bib overalls (e.g. Kaiwaka, Betacraft, or Techniflex)
- A sun hat
- A warm hat

*If you already have suitable overalls through your workplace or employment, you do not need to purchase Otago Polytechnic branded overalls. However, your overalls must be clean and in good condition. You will still need to purchase an Otago Polytechnic sew-on patch from Arrow Uniforms and attach it to your overalls.

All uniform and equipment items must be clean, tidy, and in good condition for both placements and block courses.

10. What technical equipment will I need and how will I access online resources?

As an off-campus ākonga | student, you will need reliable internet access and regular access to a laptop, computer, or tablet. You will also need a mobile phone with internet access and a camera to support your study and placement requirements.

The programme is delivered primarily through Moodle, our online learning platform, where you will access course materials and submit assessments. You will also have online access to the Robertson Library and a range of other learning tools.

We use Microsoft Teams to communicate with you, deliver online lectures, manage placement information, and record placement hours.

Our lectures are delivered online, and regular attendance is expected as part of your commitment to the programme.

11. I'm not sure if I will be able to learn via distance. What support is there for me?

Our programme is delivered using a highly blended approach. This means you will be supported through a combination of online learning, regular lecturer interaction, and practical placement experiences.

We place a strong focus on supporting our off-campus ākonga | students and want you to know that distance learning is not the same as learning in isolation.

Your lecturers will guide you throughout the programme with:

- Weekly updates and study guidance
- Assessment reminders and due dates
- Online lectures and learning activities
- Microsoft Teams discussions and group interaction
- Forums for assessment-related questions

We encourage you to ask questions and stay connected — whether through Teams, email, or phone. Think of it as the digital version of raising your hand in class.

Otago Polytechnic also has a dedicated Student Success team who can provide support for a wide range of learning needs and supports.

12. Where to now?

Hang tight, we will be in touch when your programme starts. If you have any further questions, please email them to animalhealth@op.ac.nz