



TIPS ON FINDING YOUR WORK PLACEMENT

These notes may help you when you are sourcing a work placement at a companion animal veterinary clinic. The work placement is a compulsory component of the **New Zealand Certificate in Animal Technology (Level 5) (Rural Animal Technician)** (NZCAT RAT) programme.

Be aware that veterinary clinics take students for work placements in goodwill, there is no obligation for them to provide this for you. The work placement in a veterinary clinic is a privilege not a right.

Treat your three-day observation as a very long interview. Many of our students are then offered a position for their work placements.

While you are on your work placement it is important to remember that you are representing Otago Polytechnic and need to uphold the standards of professionalism expected of anyone working in a veterinary clinic.

When to start looking for a work placement and what you will need to do:

Once you have received your **Conditional Offer** into the NZCAT RAT programme, you need to start looking for farms and rural veterinary clinic to complete your work placements.

You cannot complete this programme without work placement on farms and at least one rural veterinary clinic. Work placements can be one day a week, or in blocks of weeks or a month. Many veterinary clinics are approached by a number of students from Otago Polytechnic and other providers. You may need to work with the veterinary clinic to find a mutually convenient time for your work placements.

Work placements will not commence until you have completed and passed your first course, Introduction to Rural Animal Technician.

How to approach potential veterinary clinics:

We always recommend that you send an email to the veterinary clinic asking if you could make an appointment with the appropriate person to discuss whether they would be prepared to have a student undertake work placement as part of the New Zealand Certificate in Animal Technology (Level 5) (Rural Animal Technician) (NZCAT RAT) programme at Otago Polytechnic.

You should provide a small summary about yourself and attach to the email:

- A brief **Curriculum Vitae (CV)**, including at least one referee that can vouch for you
- A copy of your current **Criminal Convictions History Report**
- A copy of all of the **Veterinary Clinic Work Placement documents**.

You are more likely to get a better response by asking for an appointment to discuss this, than if you just call in to the veterinary clinic. It also shows that you are demonstrating high levels of professionalism and also recognise that veterinary clinics are very busy places.

Make sure when you attend the appointment that you take copies of all the documents above, and be prepared to talk about yourself and why you are doing the NZCAT RAT programme.

If you do not hear from the veterinary clinic within a week, we suggest that you telephone the veterinary clinic and ask to speak to the practice manager or the senior veterinary nurse to arrange an appointment to discuss whether the veterinary clinic would be prepared to support you as a student requiring work placement.

It is very important that all communications with the veterinary clinic are made by you.

Do not be disheartened if the veterinary clinic advise they do not take students – this can happen, so be prepared to approach another clinic.

Remember to take with you to your appointment:

1. Your brief **Curriculum Vitae (CV)**, including at least one referee that can vouch for you
2. Your current **Criminal Convictions History Report**
3. The **Veterinary Clinic Work Placement documents**
4. A **smile** 😊

Always remember

You are a guest in the veterinary clinic, and it is a privilege not a right. Be aware should there be aspects of your work placement being unbeneficial to the veterinary clinic they can terminate their agreement to support your work placement at any time.

Once your work placement day/s and hours have been established it always pays to be prepared to do a little more than just the set hours. In your work placement veterinary clinic be prepared to provide some leniency when it comes to your hours particularly if there is a high workload or if there is an emergency or work just needs doing, it will really be appreciated if you stay on to assist even if it is hanging out the washing, cleaning out cages. This shows that you are passionate, interested and also prepared to pitch in – all qualities that a future employer of technicians and veterinary nurses will be looking for. By staying on to help also shows you recognise the commitment the veterinary clinic has provided in supporting you and that work placement is give and take.

Do always be punctual and bring clean overalls and gumboots.

Enjoy your work placement 😊

If you would like to ask us any questions, please do not hesitate to call the Otago Polytechnic School of Veterinary Nursing on **0800 762 786** and ask to speak with a Learning Advisor.

School of Veterinary Nursing
vetnursing@op.ac.nz
0800 762 786