



# Otago Polytechnic

School of Veterinary Nursing

NZ Certificate in Animal Technology (level 5) **Rural Animal Technology**

## Frequently Asked Questions

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

This document contains the most commonly asked questions about our Rural Animal 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

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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 25 years or older. We may require that your Numeracy and Literacy is assessed using the national online tool. You need to reach Step 5 or greater to be considered for enrolment into New Zealand Cert. Animal Technology, (level 5) Rural Animal Technology 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 Rural Animal Technology strand is made up of 8, 15-credit courses, 6 of which are theory based:

- AT541001 Intro to Rural Animal Technician
- AT542001 Rural Animal Husbandry and Welfare
- AT543001 Operate in the Animal Health and Veterinary Services Interface for Rural Animal Technicians
- AT544002 Diagnostics and Parasitology
- AT545001 Rural Technical Skills and
- AT546001 Rural Animal Disease Welfare,

and two practicums (AT547001 and AT548001) which assess the practical component of the programme.

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%). Most of the theory courses in this programme have two assessments which contribute to the overall course grade.

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

The full-time programme is taken over one year. It often appears as an attractive alternative to studying part-time over two years. However, the full-time option is not for the faint-hearted! There is an expectation of 40 hours per week dedicated to study and collecting your practical experiences.

If you are unsure if you will be able to sustain this, you should enrol into the part-time group.

If you are working, you need to be studying part-time.

If you have children, sports commitments (especially horses), own a farm you should be studying part time.

We see **many** students who apply for full-time study with us and need to transfer to part time throughout the year. Often, they are people who think they will be able to study in the evenings and weekends. In reality we all need down time! It is also important to understand that farmers and veterinary clinics are early starters. If you have childcare, kindy, school runs to make in the morning you will likely miss out on a large amount of clinic opportunities.

If you are considering your study options, you need to be realistic and honest with yourself.

#### 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 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 is the practical component assessed?

Each of the two Practicum courses have 24 skills in them that you need to demonstrate your competency in (ranging from basic animal handling and restraint, through to laboratory skills, and assisting the veterinarian in more complex skills), and a **minimum** requirement of 120 hours each, (e.g. a minimum of 240 hours for the programme), predominantly gathered in a rural animal clinic setting.

The minimum requirement of 120 hours for Practicum One consists of at least 40 hours on farms (equine facilities, dairy cattle farms, sheep farms are all compulsory, other species additional) and at least 80 hours with the rural veterinary clinic.

The remaining minimum of 120 hours for Practicum Two is collected solely with the veterinary team.

You can collect some hours in other settings, such as in a veterinary pathology laboratory or with an AI technician.

Each Practicum has four separate due dates. You need to submit a range of assessment evidence at every due date:

- 6 skills
- A reflection on your skills and learning that has taken place

Your logged hours and feedback from your veterinary clinic placement are assessed throughout the year as well.

Every skill has an evidence trail attached to it, consisting of at least two different forms of assessment evidence. These might be some written work to show your underpinning knowledge, photos, videos or industry verifications. The type of evidence required varies from skill to skill. Sometimes, for example, we need to know you can complete the process, so video evidence is ideal. Other times it might only be the end product which needs to be assessed, in which case a photograph is a better fit.

The logged hours are usually collected organically – that is to say, by the time you have practiced and collected your assessed practical skills, you will generally have met the minimum requirements for logging hours. Students are often concerned with logging hours, but the focus is on skills completion.

Both Practicum courses are “Competency-based” which means you will be graded either passed or not passed.

#### 6. When do I need to have my clinic placement organised by? When do I tell them I will be starting?

Clinic placement must be organised before the programme commences in early February. This is non-negotiable. If you have not got a clinic placement by the commencement date you will be removed from the programme.

Practicum One commences shortly after the block courses have been run and once your first assessment has been marked and returned to you, early **April**. The reason for this is to ensure we have been able to give you a safe grounding before you start. This is an industry-driven directive.

Your placement details will need to be logged online using InPlace. You will receive instructions on how to access / use InPlace once you are enrolled.

#### 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 scenario are occasions where assessment reduction can be applied with appropriate evidence from you. For example, if you have completed NZ Pony Club Assn C+ Rider Certificate or greater there are skills in Practicum One we can cross credit, but not very much in the way of your theory assessments.

Students who have studied the VNA strand or hold a NZ Diploma in Veterinary Nursing will have already met some requirements.

Students with agricultural qualifications or unit standards may also have enough evidence for us to grant reduction on parts of some assessments.

Some accredited courses, e.g., DairyNZ Body Condition Scoring or Zoetis Intramammary EduBit can be used as alternate evidence for assessed skills in the Practicums and at times sections of theory assessments.

We can work through this with you once you are fully enrolled and the programme has commenced.

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

There is **one compulsory block course** that all new students need to attend. It is 4-days long. We run the compulsory block courses in two venues. In the South Island it is based at Otago Polytechnic in Dunedin. In the North Island it is based in Carterton (Wairarapa). You need to attend one of these block courses. The dates are on our website.

As well as the block courses we run non-compulsory (but strongly recommended) Practicum Workshops. The practicum Workshops allow students to utilise our equipment and help to collect skills evidence for a range – but not all skills. In 2021 these were run in Dunedin and Wairarapa. The dates are to be confirmed for 2022, but they are held over 1-2 days in late winter / early spring.

We also have a range of industry partnerships that allow us to offer opportunities for you to complete short courses, often at no cost for attendance, with industry specialists, e.g., Zoetis New Zealand and MSD New Zealand. The industry training are 1-2 days long and may run at various locations throughout the country. For example, in 2021 we offered 4 Metri-training days with MSD in Dunedin, Christchurch, Wairarapa and Waikato. Students who attend and engage are given a certificate of attendance for their resume and can use the experience as an alternate form of evidence for part of the Practicum.

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

There are no compulsory textbooks, but we have a passion for them, so can recommend reading throughout the programme on almost every topic! We have a great library, which ships loaned books out for free to our extra-mural students. Many titles are available as e-books. Your membership to the Robertson Library is automatic as a student.

You will need to purchase Otago Polytechnic branded uniform items from Challenge Marketing:



- A name badge
- At least one Otago Polytechnic shirt (shown)
- Challenge Marketing also have Otago Polytechnic branded overalls\*

As well as the branded items, you will need:

- Appropriate gumboots for dairy shed work. These need to be waterproof and have good tread on the soles.
- Waterproof, chemical resistant pants or overalls
- A sun hat
- A warm hat

Optionally you can purchase work-boots for sheep and horse work (gumboots can be worn). These should have waterproof agent applied to them so they can be disinfected between farms and have good tread on the soles. You might also get yourself a waterproof, chemical resistant jacket.

\* If you have your own overalls or are supplied overalls as part of your employment, you do not need to purchase OP branded. However, overalls must be in good condition!

ALL items must be **scrubbed clean** and in good order for block course and placements.

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

You will need a constant, reliable internet source, laptop / computer or tablet and access to a mobile phone with internet access and camera to access and successfully complete your studies as an extra-mural / distance student.

We use the internet-based programme Moodle for your programme delivery and to upload assessments. You will have online access to the Robertson Library and a variety of tools.

We also use online apps, such as Microsoft Teams, and InPlace to connect with you, record your work placement details and log your placement hours. Our “face-to-face” lectures are delivered online. You are expected to attend lectures on a regular basis as part of your commitment to study.

#### 11. I'm not sure if I will be able to learn via distance. What support is there for me as an extra-mural / distance student?

We take a lot of pride in our pastoral care of students who are studying off campus. It is very important to us you recognise early on that learning by distance is not the same as learning in isolation. Your lecturers will be guiding you through your learning with weekly updates on where you should be up to, reminders for assessment submission due dates, online lectures and informal learning and group cohesion using Microsoft Teams. There are forums for asking assessment related questions that we encourage you to use. We are also only ever an email or call away – just like raising your hand in the classroom setting, but digitally instead. Otago Polytechnic also has a very strong Student Success team who can assist with many forms of learning disabilities.

#### 12. What are my employment prospects like after completing this programme?

If you're a hard-working, successful student, your prospects are good! However, the rural veterinary industry does vary in its uses of technicians from clinic to clinic, town to town across New Zealand. Often students are offered either seasonal or permanent employment while studying. We recommend that you talk to the clinics in your area to gauge an honest response to this question.

#### 13. Where to now?

You can apply to study with us online: <https://www.op.ac.nz/study/natural-sciences/veterinary-nursing/new-zealand-certificate-in-animal-technology-level-5-rural-animal-technician/>

If you have any further questions, please email them to [steph.mann@op.ac.nz](mailto:steph.mann@op.ac.nz)

We look forward to your application!

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