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Veterinary Physiotherapy

MSc and Postgraduate Diploma

Part-time course over two years

The RVC was the first UK institution to offer an MSc/Postgraduate Diploma in Veterinary Physiotherapy. This internationally renowned programme has been running since 2000 and to date over 120 veterinary physiotherapists have graduated from the course. This is an excellent opportunity for human physiotherapists seeking to apply their professional knowledge, experience and practical therapy skills to the treatment of animal patients.

The programme is run as a part-time course in which the directed study modules, together with the clinical training, are designed to provide veterinary physiotherapy training.

Students are encouraged to take a critical view of the underlying assumptions of accepted physical therapy practice, thus developing a rational approach to the practice of physiotherapy on animals.

Entry requirements

- Degree or diploma in human physiotherapy
- Membership of the Chartered Society of Physiotherapy (or equivalent EU body)
- Membership of the Health Professions Council
- Postgraduate experience in musculoskeletal medicine is normally preferred
- Previous animal handling experience with both large and small animals is essential
- An academic reference
- A reference from your current employer
- A reference from a stable owner, vet or category 'A' ACPAT member vouching for animal handling experience
- Appropriately qualified non-UK candidates will be considered, but will be required to provide evidence of comparable undergraduate physiotherapy training. Non-EU candidates will be liable for higher tuition fees.

Career prospects

All students who complete either the postgraduate diploma or MSc will be able to term themselves veterinary physiotherapists.

Veterinary Physiotherapists often choose to set up their own private practice, whilst others choose to work as members of multidisciplinary teams in veterinary hospitals and centres. Many graduates choose to continue to practise in the human field and to combine this with treating animal patients. Some postgraduate students continue with research in this developing field, whilst others become involved in teaching and consultancy activities.

Aim

To provide Chartered Physiotherapists with the opportunity to apply their professional knowledge, experience and practical skills to the treatment of animal patients.

Objectives

- On successful completion of the programme, students will be able to:
- explain the theoretical basis underpinning the practice of veterinary physiotherapy
 - apply the knowledge and practical skills they have already gained in human physiotherapy to animal patients
 - critically evaluate the efficacy and efficiency of their practice.

Course duration

The two year part-time programme starts each March. It is delivered as a series of modules one weekend per month over the first 18 months of the course. Students complete their clinical training over the two year duration of the course and Masters students undertake their project during the final six months of the course.

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Barbara Houlding

MSc Veterinary Physiotherapy 02

'This course is at the forefront of advancing effective clinical practice of physiotherapy in the veterinary science world. It is a good MSc course giving the opportunity to develop a depth of knowledge through research.'

Course content

Taught course

The integrated modules are as follows:

- An Introduction to Veterinary Therapy
- Comparative Anatomy and Biomechanics
- Behaviour and Pain Management
- Exercise Physiology, Biomechanics and Farriery
- Recognition and Management of Myopathies
- Orthopaedics and Rheumatology
- Neurology
- Physiotherapy Assessment and Techniques
- Physiotherapy Rehabilitation
- Revision and Research.

Clinical education

In addition to the taught modules, each student undertakes their practical training in the clinical environment over the two year duration of the course. This will take around 35 days to complete in total. The aims of clinical education are to enable graduates to work safely and effectively as Chartered Veterinary Physiotherapy Practitioners, providing students with the opportunity to experience the complex contexts of veterinary physiotherapy practice, in order to develop their skills through the implementation of a problem solving approach. Clinical education is designed to enable students to transfer their skills and knowledge across a variety of clinical settings and client groups thus facilitating the ability to respond to the changing demands of contemporary practice and fostering a commitment to lifelong learning.

The clinical syllabus comprises short courses for both large and small animals, placements at the RVCs hospitals and clinical placements with animal physiotherapists. Students will be required to maintain a log of clinical hours and will be responsible for ensuring that these hours have taken place prior to the final practical exam.

Research project

Each Masters student will be required to undertake an individual research project and to submit a report not exceeding 10,000 words in the form of a literature review and a scientific paper suitable for submission to a peer reviewed journal. The project will encompass a practical study on an approved aspect of veterinary physiotherapy and will be supervised by an experienced RVC expert.

Assessment

There will be three exams (two written, one practical) and two assignments that contribute to the award. In addition, there will be a number of formative assignments and in-course practical tests. For the MSc, a project report will be submitted and students will be examined orally.