

Wild Animal Health

MSc

Full-time course for one year

Offered in conjunction with the Institute of Zoology, London

ZSL

Institute of Zoology

LIVING CONSERVATION

Over the last 30 years, interventions for reasons of health, welfare and the conservation of free-living wild animals have been undertaken with increasing frequency. Such actions require specialist veterinary input, in assessing and controlling the risk of accidental disease introduction to wildlife, and to domestic animal and human populations associated with wildlife translocation. At the same time, emerging infectious diseases are recognised as a serious hazard for wild animals, and the domestic animal and human populations that interact with these species. In addition, a wide range of wild animals are now kept in captivity.

This subject area receives relatively little attention in the undergraduate veterinary curriculum. Consequently, there is a growing need for veterinarians with a relevant qualification that provides detailed knowledge of the management of wild animals, and the epidemiology, surveillance, treatment and control of diseases of both free-living and captive wild animals. This Master's course, the only one of its kind in the world, meets this need and has produced over 165 graduates (originating from 44 different countries) with wildlife health skills in the last 13 years.

Career prospects

Graduates from the course go on to work with captive and free-living wild animals as clinicians, pathologists, epidemiologists, academics and senior management in zoological collections, national parks, universities, rehabilitation centres and government departments worldwide, some proceeding to study for a PhD or DVetMed.

Michael Waters

Course Director

Senior Lecturer in Clinical Pathology
The Royal Veterinary College

Tony Sainsbury

Course Director

Lecturer in Wild Animal Health
The Royal Veterinary College and Institute
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Entry requirements

Applications are invited from EU and non-EU candidates with a degree from a recognised veterinary school.

Applicants from overseas will be required to provide evidence of proficiency in spoken and written English (see page 64). You must have at least one year's post-graduation experience in veterinary practice, and additional relevant work experience (e.g. at a zoo, wildlife rehabilitation centre, wildlife hospital) would be an advantage.

Aims

The course will:

- offer a sound foundation in the principles governing wild animal biological science, conservation biology, veterinary interventions in wildlife, wild animal management, and the surveillance, epidemiology, control and prevention of wildlife disease
- equip students with appropriate clinical veterinary skills for the physical and chemical restraint, diagnosis and treatment of captive and free-living wild animals.

Objectives

Upon graduation, students will have:

- a critical awareness of current problems in wildlife disease with implications for wildlife conservation and welfare, and a new insight into veterinary interventions for the management of captive and free-living wild animals
- the ability to demonstrate basic competence in wild animal veterinary techniques and preventative medicine
- a conceptual and practical understanding of how established techniques of research and enquiry are used to create knowledge and a comprehensive understanding of scientific skills, including critical review of the scientific literature, and design and analysis of laboratory or field studies

Course content

The course comprises:

- a taught component leading to examinations
- an individual research project leading to the final assessment

The MSc in Wild Animal Health is structured around a series of problem-based learning scenarios which encourage critical thinking, decision-making, exploration and inquiry, and awareness of current issues at the forefront of wild animal health. Insights into novel research and important systematic knowledge is given in lectures to complement the problem-based approach, while practical skills are taught through rotations and visits to selected advanced institutions.

Project

Each 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 wild animal health. The project may be undertaken at any place approved by the Institute/ College with the guidance of a course supervisor.

Assessment

Assessment will comprise written papers, course work (assignments and casebook), an individual research project report and an oral examination for all candidates, irrespective of their performance in other parts of the course. The project report must be submitted by mid-August and oral examinations are held in mid-September.

Duration

Full-time for one year

Puja Basu,
MSc Wild Animal Health 07

'Nothing can compare with the knowledge I have gained from the Wild Animal Health course. I never really thought one year could be such an eye-opener and give me so much awareness on such wide but related topics. But this course did just that and more! It is packed with action and I highly recommend it to anyone who has got their heart set on a career in "wildlifing"!

