

VM2102: ANIMAL BEHAVIOUR AND HANDLING

Effective Term

Semester A 2025/26

Part I Course Overview

Course Title

Animal Behaviour and Handling

Subject Code

VM - Jockey Club College of Veterinary Medicine and Life Sciences

Course Number

2102

Academic Unit

Veterinary Clinical Sciences (VCS)

College/School

Jockey Club College of Veterinary Medicine and Life Sciences (VM)

Course Duration

One Semester

Credit Units

3

Level

B1, B2, B3, B4 - Bachelor's Degree

Medium of Instruction

English

Medium of Assessment

English

Prerequisites

Nil

Precursors

Nil

Equivalent Courses

Nil

Exclusive Courses

Nil

Part II Course Details

Abstract

The course is intended to provide veterinary students with a foundation in animal behaviour, handling and training. The course will provide an introduction to the scientific study of behaviour, including the evolution of behaviour, and emotional

and behavioural health. Students will learn about the normal behaviour of species of key veterinary importance (cats, dogs, horses, cattle, small ruminants, pigs, and poultry, plus other species of importance in Hong Kong), including the assessment of body language for each species. Students will be taught about learning theory and how learning theory is used for effective (and ineffective) training. The course will also cover the principles of low stress handling for the key species as well as introducing low stress veterinary practice.

Course Intended Learning Outcomes (CILOs)

CILOs	Weighting (if app.)	DEC-A1	DEC-A2	DEC-A3
1 Describe the normal behaviour of domestic animals and the evolution of behaviour in these species.	40	x		
2 Assess the behaviour and temperament of an animal, and apply a safe, humane and low stress approach to handling and restraint	40	x	x	
3 Evaluate the restraint, training and management methods of species of veterinary importance, and advise on appropriate methods to improve safety and welfare.	20	x	x	x

A1: Attitude

Develop an attitude of discovery/innovation/creativity, as demonstrated by students possessing a strong sense of curiosity, asking questions actively, challenging assumptions or engaging in inquiry together with teachers.

A2: Ability

Develop the ability/skill needed to discover/innovate/create, as demonstrated by students possessing critical thinking skills to assess ideas, acquiring research skills, synthesizing knowledge across disciplines or applying academic knowledge to real-life problems.

A3: Accomplishments

Demonstrate accomplishment of discovery/innovation/creativity through producing /constructing creative works/new artefacts, effective solutions to real-life problems or new processes.

Learning and Teaching Activities (LTAs)

LTAs	Brief Description	CILO No.	Hours/week (if applicable)
1 Lectures	The academic course content will be delivered to the students covering all of CILO 1 and an introduction to CILO 2 and 3.	1, 2, 3	19 hrs in total
2 Tutorials	Students will learn about body language and low stress handling in a tutorial setting.	1, 2, 3	10 hrs in total

3	Practical classes*	In laboratory, kennel, stable, training centre and/or clinical settings, students will learn about learning theory and training of dogs and/or horses and how to handle domestic animals (e.g. cats, dogs, horses and exotic animals) in a low stress manner.	2, 3	10 hrs in total
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Additional Information for LTAs

*Practical classes are COMPULSORY. Students can be absent from no more than one practical class session per semester. Additional absence(s) from these session(s) constitute a course failure.

Assessment Tasks / Activities (ATs)

	ATs	CILO No.	Weighting (%)	Remarks ("- " for nil entry)	Allow Use of GenAI?
1	Poster presentation	1, 3	15	-	Yes
2	Practical class assessments	2, 3	15	-	No
3	Mid-semester examination (1.5hrs)	1, 2, 3	30	-	No
4	Final Examination (2 hrs)	1, 2, 3	0	Weighting: 40%	No

Continuous Assessment (%)

60

Examination (%)

40

Examination Duration (Hours)

2

Additional Information for ATs

Notes regarding continuous assessments:

1. A penalty of 5% of the total marks for the assessment task will be deducted per working day for late submissions, and no marks will be awarded for submissions more than 10 working days late.
2. For the poster presentation, this must be given in class time at the time scheduled. If the student does not present on this day they will be offered one other time within two weeks of the original date but will be subject to a 25% penalty. In case of illness (with accompanying medical certificate) no penalty will be applied.
3. For the practical class assessments, these must be completed during the scheduled practical sessions. If these sessions are missed, or students are late, no make-up opportunity will be provided and the student will be awarded a zero for that specific component.

Assessment Rubrics (AR)

Assessment Task

Poster presentation

Criterion

1. Describe the normal behaviour of a domestic animal species not covered during class.
2. Evaluate the restraint, training and management methods of species of veterinary importance, and advise on appropriate methods to improve safety and welfare.

Excellent (A+, A, A-)

Demonstrates a high level of knowledge regarding animal behaviour, restraint, training and management methods of species of veterinary importance. Demonstrates high level of ability to describe these issues in written and oral form.

Good (B+, B, B-)

Demonstrates a well-developed knowledge of animal behaviour, restraint, training and management methods of species of veterinary importance. Demonstrates well-developed ability to describe these issues in written and oral form.

Fair (C+, C, C-)

(For C+ and C) Demonstrates a basic level knowledge of animal behaviour, restraint, training and management methods of species of veterinary importance. Demonstrates basic ability to describe these issues in written and oral form. See additional information for AR regarding mark range below, as in the BVM programme only C+ and C grades are awarded.

Marginal (D)

Not applicable for the BVM programme.

Failure (F)

Demonstrates a lack of knowledge of animal behaviour, restraint, training and management methods of species of veterinary importance. Demonstrates lack ability to describe these issues in written and oral form.

Assessment Task

Practical class assessments

Criterion

Assess the behaviour and temperament of an animal, and apply a safe, humane and low stress approach to handling and restraint. Advises on appropriate methods of restraint.

Excellent (A+, A, A-)

Demonstrates a high level of knowledge regarding animal behaviour and temperament. Confidently applies a safe, humane and low stress approach to handling and restraint.

Good (B+, B, B-)

Demonstrates a well-developed knowledge of animal behaviour and temperament. Applies a safe, humane and low stress approach to handling and restraint.

Fair (C+, C, C-)

(For C+ and C) Demonstrates a basic level of knowledge of animal behaviour and temperament. Applies a safe, humane and low stress approach to handling and restraint but requires guidance from supervisor. See additional information for AR regarding mark range below, as in the BVM programme only C+ and C grades are awarded.

Marginal (D)

Not applicable for the BVM programme.

Failure (F)

Demonstrates a lack of knowledge of animal behaviour and temperament. Unsafe and/or inappropriate approach to handling and restraint.

Assessment Task

Mid-semester examination

Criterion

Describe the normal behaviour of domestic animals and the evolution of behaviour in these species. Assess the behaviour and temperament of animals and describe body language. Describe methods of restraint/handling to improve safety and welfare.

Excellent (A+, A, A-)

Demonstrates a highly developed knowledge and understanding of normal animal behaviour, temperament, body language, handling/restraint and animal learning.

Good (B+, B, B-)

Demonstrates a well-developed knowledge and understanding of normal animal behaviour, temperament, body language, handling/restraint and animal learning.

Fair (C+, C, C-)

(For C+ and C) Demonstrates a basic knowledge and understanding of normal animal behaviour, temperament, body language, handling/restraint and animal learning. See additional information for AR regarding mark range below, as in the BVM programme only C+ and C grades are awarded.

Marginal (D)

Not applicable for the BVM programme.

Failure (F)

Demonstrates a lack of knowledge and understanding of normal animal behaviour, temperament, body language, handling/restraint and animal learning.

Assessment Task

Final Examination

Criterion

Describe the normal behaviour of domestic animals and the evolution of behaviour in these species. Assess the behaviour and temperament of animals and describe body language. Describe methods of restraint/handling to improve safety and welfare.

Excellent (A+, A, A-)

Demonstrates a highly developed knowledge and understanding of normal animal behaviour, temperament, body language, handling/restraint and animal learning.

Good (B+, B, B-)

Demonstrates a well-developed knowledge and understanding of normal animal behaviour, temperament, body language, handling/restraint and animal learning.

Fair (C+, C, C-)

(For C+ and C) Demonstrates a basic knowledge and understanding of normal animal behaviour, temperament, body language, handling/restraint and animal learning. See additional information for AR regarding mark range below, as in the BVM programme only C+ and C grades are awarded.

Marginal (D)

Not applicable for the BVM programme.

Failure (F)

Demonstrates a lack of knowledge and understanding of normal animal behaviour, temperament, body language, handling/restraint and animal learning.

Additional Information for ARMark Range

The following is the mark range for each letter grade that must be used for assessment of any examinations or coursework of BVM courses (VM- and GE-coded) offered by PH and VCS:

A+: ≥92% A: ≥87-91.99% A-: ≥82-86.99% B+: ≥75-81.99% B: ≥68-74.99% B-: ≥61-67.99% C+: ≥54-60.99% C: ≥50-53.99%, F:<50%

Part III Other Information**Keyword Syllabus**

Behaviour, normal behaviour, learning theory, training, handling, retraining domestic animals

Reading List**Compulsory Readings**

Title	
1	Houpt K (2018) Domestic Animal Behavior for Veterinarians and Animal Scientists SBN: 978-1-119-23276-6, Wiley-Blackwell
2	Jensen P (2002). The ethology of domestic animals: an introductory text. ISBN 0851996027, CABI
3	Selected articles and resources posted on Canvas

Additional Readings

Title	
1	Broom, DM and Fraser, AF (2015). Domestic animal behaviour and welfare. London, Bailliere Tindall
2	Lindsay, Voith VL (2008) Handbook of Applied Dog Behavior and Training, Adaptation and Learning: Adaptation and Learning Wiley