



UNIVERSITY OF
LIVERPOOL

Veterinary
Postgraduate
Unit

STUDENT HANDBOOK

2025/26 INTAKE



**Postgraduate Certificate in
Veterinary Business Management**

WELCOME FROM THE PROGRAMME DIRECTOR

Dear Veterinary Business Management Programme student,

As the Director of the Veterinary Business Management Programme at the University of Liverpool, I am very pleased to present our provision of our online programme for the Postgraduate Certificate in Veterinary Business Management. We have an excellent team of experienced academic staff, supported by an amazing team of administrative staff who pride themselves in their support of our students. We have an emphasis on bringing together participants into a community of learning and we have developed the modules to maximise your opportunities to develop with our online community of colleagues and mentors.

This programme is designed to be studied alongside active participation in veterinary business management and the assessments designed so that you can review your own workplace after working through the resources and suggest evidence-based improvements for the future. We hope you gain a lot from these modules and look forward to working with you soon!



Em. Professor Catherine McGowan
Programme Director, Veterinary Business Management

PURPOSE OF THE HANDBOOK

This handbook is applicable to anyone studying with us as part of their Certificate in Veterinary Business Management or our PgDip/MSc in Veterinary Professional Studies programmes in veterinary business management.

It has been written to provide all the information you need to help you understand how your study is organised, where you can obtain further information and assistance, what you can expect from the unit, and also what we expect from you.

You should read it thoroughly during the early weeks of your programme. If you need to refer back to it at any point you will find a copy within your modules on our online teaching and learning platform.

The University of Liverpool has a PGT Handbook for all of its PGT programmes which can be found here <https://www.liverpool.ac.uk/student-administration/my-student-record/student-handbooks/>. This handbook has a lot of generic information applicable to students studying PGT across all programmes at the University of Liverpool. However, the information in this handbook is specifically for you.

KEY CONTACTS

Programme Director

Em. Professor Catherine McGowan BVSc MACVSc DEIM Dip ECEIM PgCertVBM PhD FHEA FRCVS

Director of Veterinary Business Management Programme

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Academic Support

Lucy Barrett

Senior Administrator

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Programme Registration and Payment

VPU Office Team

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INTRODUCTION

Em. Prof Catherine McGowan BVSc CertVBM MANZCVSC DEIM Dip ECEIM CertVBM PhD FHEA FRCVS

Cathy has been involved in postgraduate Master's level education since 1999 when she developed the Royal Veterinary College Masters and Postgraduate Diploma programs in Veterinary Physiotherapy which commenced in 2000. At the University of Queensland, she developed an online distance education MSc program for physiotherapists, was involved in a coursework Master's degree for veterinary surgeons and was the tutor for the Postgraduate Foundation in Veterinary Science (now Centre for Veterinary Education) Equine Internal Medicine distance education course for practising veterinarians for 5 years. Cathy set up the Veterinary Postgraduate Unit, CertAVP, Veterinary Physiotherapy and Veterinary Business Management programmes at the University of Liverpool and led the team as Director of Veterinary Postgraduate Education until 2023. She is a Diplomate of the European College of Equine Internal Medicine and an RCVS recognised specialist in equine internal medicine.

THE VETERINARY BUSINESS MANAGEMENT PROGRAMME

The University of Liverpool has undertaken to deliver the Postgraduate Certificate in Veterinary Business Management, a fully taught, structured e-learning programme, leading to the degree award.

It is open to anyone currently engaged in veterinary business management, such as practice managers and veterinary staff. This programme is designed to be studied alongside active participation in veterinary business management and the assessments designed so that students can review business aspects of their own workplace, from human resource management to management accounting. The online modules provide resources and a timeline to support learning in a flexible 100% online format, so you can study from home. Students are continuously assessed throughout the modules. Topics and assessment deadlines are listed on each module and also link to full library access, so students can plan ahead around busy work/ home commitments. Modules are supported by guidance from our experts and facilitated discussion with your peers.

The programme is designed to be studied part time to fit around existing work commitments and is focused around integrating the concepts developed in the modules into a comprehensive business plan for the real world.

Programme Structure

The PgCert(VBM) programme comprises six modules taken in a prescribed order over 2 years, starting in October annually. The 6 modules equate to 60-credits or 600 hours of work, all of which is assessed at Master's degree level (Level 7).

One module is taken per semester, with three semesters per year. Semester one starts in September, semester two at the beginning of January and semester three at the end of April. The programme commences with an introductory module, followed by four modules that cover key aspects of business management (business strategy & entrepreneurship, marketing, human resources and finance, accounting & resource management) and a final work-based learning module which draws all of the prior learning, as well as change management practices together in a series of four final reports.

	Semester 1	Semester 2	Semester 3
Year 1	VETS735 Introduction to Veterinary Business Management 08 Sep – 30 Nov 2025	VETS734 Business Strategy & Entrepreneurship 05 Jan – 29 Mar 2026	VETS733 Marketing 27 Apr – 19 Jul 2026
Year 2	VETS732 Human Resources 07 Sep – 29 Nov 2026	VETS731 Finance, Accounting & Resource Management 04 Jan – 28 Mar 2027	VETS736 Work Based Learning 26 Apr – 18 Jul 2027

Each module is designed to encourage the student to critically evaluate the daily activities of a veterinary practice against the fundamentals of business management, with emphasis on how the business management literature relates to veterinary practice.

Method of Teaching

The structure of the modules is such that learning materials and assessments are provided on a weekly to fortnightly basis allowing students to work through each module at a steady pace.

Extensive peer to peer interaction is encouraged through the use of discussion boards where students can interact and collaborate, bouncing ideas between colleagues and academic staff within the virtual 'classroom'.

An overview of the content for each module is provided at the end of this document (Appendix 1).

Assessment

Assessment is authentic and on-going. Throughout each module there are six to eight discussions around a set question related to the module materials and two business reports to complete with set submission dates and feedback provided by module tutors. Business reports and assessed discussion boards allow reflection of the study material learnt against the students' own business experience.

Continuing your Studies (Masters in Veterinary Professional Studies)

For students who wish to continue to a master's degree, there is the option to take further study towards a coursework Master's of Veterinary Professional Studies, specifically a 60 credit research project, which can be taken in a VBM related area.

Currently, this is only available for students who are members of the Royal College of Veterinary Surgeons (MRCVS), or veterinary surgeons who hold an equivalent registerable qualification, but this is in the process of being changed so that by 2026 this should be open to all VBM students who will be able to choose whether they wish to graduate or continue their studies towards a Postgraduate Diploma or MSc in Veterinary Professional Studies.

****If this is something that interests you please contact your programme director before the end of your first year of study, so the options can be explained to you.**

Assessment for the four core modules is also approved by the RCVS and successful attainment of these modules can contribute up to 40 credits towards achievement of the RCVS Certificate in Advanced Veterinary Practice (CertAVP).

COMMUNICATION WITH STUDENTS

There are several ways in which we will communicate with students, and it is important that you familiarise yourself with these areas so that you can check for messages and notices regularly. Failure to do so may mean that you miss important information regarding your study.

Email

All students are provided with a University email account and once your registration is complete, all University communications will be sent to this account. It is very important that you check this regularly, and also during any breaks in your study. To forward your University of Liverpool email onto another account, please review the following [page](#).

If you do email academic or administrative staff, please do so **only** from your University email account stating the programme you are enrolled on and if possible, your student ID number. The staff manage several programmes, and this will help us to identify you more easily and respond to your enquiry.

Please try to find information in this handbook, the University of Liverpool's PGT Handbook, through your modules, especially the FAQs section, or through the Veterinary Postgraduate Unit web pages in the first instance. If you cannot find what you are looking for, let us know so that we can provide that information for you and the benefit of other students.

Canvas Based Messaging Service

The platform which hosts the modules (Canvas) also offers the option of a Canvas based messaging service. Email remains the preferred choice for communication, but students are welcome to use the Canvas messaging service when contacting one another or their module coordinator if their module coordinator directs them to do so. Please note, your module coordinator will not check messages from there and so please use email or the discussion area.

Student Intranet and Liverpool Life

As a student at the University of Liverpool you have full access to the [Student Intranet](#). Within this site you will find all the information, advice and guidance required to help you manage your academic life such as online library support, IT support, access to policies & procedures, support around managing your study and much more. We recommend you set the Student Intranet as your home page whilst you are studying.

Within the Student Intranet, you will also find Liverpool Life, which is the University of Liverpool's portal for current students. Within the portal you can access your programme results and transcripts and the facility to request official documentation.

Canvas

Canvas is the online teaching platform (virtual learning environment) used to deliver our modules. Canvas supports learning and teaching activities across the internet and the Veterinary Postgraduate Unit actively uses your modules in Canvas to deliver essential information to students.

This facility takes advantage of web technologies to enable quick and easy provision of module materials and other relevant information, wherever you are in the world. It also allows students to communicate effectively with their peers, academics involved in the module and the VPU staff.

Students are expected to monitor information concerning their study on their online module regularly. Teaching specific information will be communicated via your online module either formally, in the structured sections, or informally in the form of announcements and discussion posts. Examples of the types of information that will be displayed there include: assessment feedback, reminders for key dates and updates to module materials. Generic information about your study will also be communicated via your online module, and examples of the type of information that will be displayed there include: copies of this handbook, FAQs, regulations and guidance, useful web-links, and University documentation such as Extenuating Circumstances Guidelines.

Veterinary Postgraduate Unit Website

The Veterinary Postgraduate Unit's website is: <http://www.liverpool.ac.uk/vets/cpd>

External Post

Sometimes we need to contact you via the external postal system (e.g. issuing certificates) so it is important that the unit is kept informed of any changes to your address.

Telephone Contact

All University of Liverpool staff have a direct telephone number and many have voicemail. You can find the numbers within the 'Key Contacts' section within this handbook, but also on each module.

STUDENT RESPONSIBILITIES

All members of the University community – students, alumni and staff – share responsibility for the continued success of the institution and our students. The [Student Charter](#) sets out our partnership in learning, what the University will provide and what students should undertake. When reading this charter please bear in mind that in our modular programmes your Academic advisor is your module coordinator in the first instance.

Confidentiality

A general note on confidentiality: Throughout the programme in general, we will at times discuss matters that may be of a confidential nature. All assessments submitted directly for assessment will be dealt with in the strictest confidentiality, however it must be remembered that anything posted on a discussion board is viewable by all members of the module.

Because the emphasis of the programme is on the concepts of business management it is acceptable to use aliases or fictional results (such as altered profit/loss statements) in your submissions. This should remove any remaining confidentiality issues. If you still have concerns, then please contact the module co-ordinator to discuss further.

Time and Study Commitment

As a postgraduate student studying at Master's level you are expected to be motivated and self-directed, and are responsible for organising your own time and making sure that assessment deadlines and other requirements are met. As a distance-learning student this is particularly important.

The modules are studied over 6 or 12 weeks and time commitments may vary week to week, but you are expected to study a minimum of approximately 8 hours a week for 6 weeks for a 5 credit unit module (Introduction to VBM) or for 12 weeks for a 10-credit module. You should plan to increase this to 12 hours a week for your work based learning (15 credits) module. If you are having difficulty in meeting any module requirements it is your responsibility to let the Assessment Administrator or your Module Coordinator know.

Online Communication

As an online programme, much of the communication is in written form, such as in group discussion boards, and we ask that you follow these guidelines in order to ensure that communication is effective and productive:

- Communication should be constructive, positive and respectful
- Don't attack or judge prematurely
- Write clearly and re-read messages before sending to avoid misinterpretation or misunderstanding
- Use appropriate grammar and punctuation
 - Don't use all capital letters, it can be considered SHOUTING
 - Don't use exclamation marks to emphasise frustration!!!!!!
 - Don't use red writing, this can be interpreted as being angry or annoyed
- Don't write impulsively or write anything that you would not say face to face

Computer Requirements

As an online programme you will be accessing a range of tools via the internet. Some basic requirements are required in order to be able to complete the modules. You will need to have access to a computer with the following minimum technical specification and accessories:

For Windows and Mac

- **Operating System:** Windows 10, Mac OS 10.11 (El Capitan) or higher
- **Processor:** Intel i3 or equivalent; 2GHz or higher
- **Hard Drive:** 80 GB or greater
- **Memory:** 2 GB of RAM or higher, 4GB preferred, depending on the OS
- **Internet Connection:** Broadband internet connection. Note: If you are using a mobile internet provider, you may experience timeouts, IP address issues, session problems, or course mail issues caused by latency. You may also incur additional costs if you go over your mobile data allowance.
- **Browser:** Firefox, Google Chrome. To verify that your browser has all required plugins, use [Canvas's Browser Checker](#).
- **Software:** Mozilla Firefox or Google Chrome, Microsoft Office 2016, 2019 or Office 365, up-to-date Adobe Acrobat Reader* (Adobe products are available via a free download).
- **Graphics and Sound:** Capable of viewing video/audio over the internet (try YouTube with your machine to see if you can play and hear a video).
- **Webcam/Microphone:** Camera enabled device or separate webcam. Microphone enabled device or separate microphone
- **Mobile App Requirements:** Device OS iOS 11+ Android 5+

If you do not have the minimum specification outlined above or would like to ask a question about the technical requirements of joining our courses, please contact IT Services on 0151 794 4567 or email servicedesk@liverpool.ac.uk and let them know what equipment you have, as there may be free* updates that can be applied to your computer to help make it compatible with our learning systems.

Feedback from Students to Staff

Student feedback is very important for the review and development of modules and the programme as a whole. All modules have an anonymous module feedback survey which we invite you to complete. In some years, students are invited to take part in the Postgraduate Taught Experience Survey (PTES), run in conjunction with the Higher Education Academy. The overall aim of these surveys is to identify where improvements can be made in order to enhance the quality of individual modules and the programme. A high response rate is vital to obtain useful results and participation is greatly appreciated. Informal feedback is welcome at any time, via the discussion board, email or phone.

Student-Staff Liaison Committee (SSLC)

An online SSLC meeting will take place once per semester usually the second week of semester. Due to the small number of students, we invite all students studying the module to each meeting. There is an online meeting per module each semester. A formal agenda will be issued, and the student representatives will gather any issues or ideas to raise at each meeting. Minutes will be taken and circulated for discussion at the next Board of Studies.

Student representatives are an important way to gather more feedback in a peer to peer, less formal manner. Students will be given the opportunity to nominate themselves for election as a year

representative and work with staff and fellow students to improve the student learning experience – identifying and discussing issues which affect their modules/programme and helping to come up with solutions. One/two representative/s from each year will be voted in by the students.

All students also have the opportunity to comment on individual modules anonymously on every module through the module survey tool, which is announced, administered and collated and discussed at academic team meetings.

Student Complaints

The Student Charter sets out the general entitlements and responsibilities of students. If you believe you have a legitimate complaint that cannot be solved in the first instance by communication with our team, you should refer to the [Student Charter](#) to clarify what is reasonable for you to expect from the University in the relevant area and whether you have discharged your corresponding liabilities. If, having consulted the Student Charter, you wish to proceed with a complaint you may invoke the Student Complaints Policy and Procedure. For more information please click [here](#).

Academic Advisors

All students at the University of Liverpool have an Academic Advisor and in your programme your advisor will be the programme director, Catherine McGowan. Please contact your Academic Advisor for any questions or concerns about your programme.

ASSESSMENT INFORMATION

All assessment follows the university [code of practice of assessment](#) and the [Code of Practice Appendix C for PGT students](#)

Penalties for Word Counts

Word limits are strictly enforced for the discussion board and essay submissions. There are no word limits on your subsequent discussion board posts (i.e. your responses to your peers' work) so please feel free to elaborate in this format.

You are required to include a word count of your submission including citations but excluding the reference list at the end of your main text (i.e. immediately preceding the reference list). Failure to do so will result in loss of marks. Grades of "Good" and above will only be awarded to submissions within 10% of the word limit, with the grade of "Excellent" only able to be awarded to students within the word limit. Some allowance is allowed on the final report, but it should not exceed 10% above the nominal allowed limit. While this may seem draconian, the word limits are a university-imposed requirement and the ability to write succinctly is a critical skill being evaluated at this level.

Please refer to the specific grading rubrics/ assessment criteria for guidance and note that assessors may stop marking beyond the permitted word length. Unless stated otherwise in specific assessment guidelines, tables, diagrams, references and appendices are not included in the word count

Failing Assessments

The University Code of Practice on Assessment (Appendix C) states: *Candidates who are registered onto a programme of study leading to an award and fail one or more modules at the first attempt shall be permitted to present themselves for re-assessment in the failed assessment component(s) for each failed module **on one further occasion** during the maximum registration period.*

This means a student who fails the overall cumulative assessment for a module, will have their performance reviewed at the next exam board (module review board) and may be allowed to resubmit one or more items of assessment within 3 months of the module completion date.

The marks gained for any individual module through reassessment will be capped at 50% for the purposes of calculating the overall average mark and determining classification for an award, except where the re-sit is a consequence of approved Extenuating Circumstances – often referred to as a ‘first-sit’. The actual mark achieved through re-assessment will be the mark recorded on the transcript. The results of any resubmission attempts will be ratified at the next Module Review Board. If resubmission is unsuccessful, or the student fails to resubmit in the invited period, the student will fail the module and their programme of study will be terminated.

Academic Integrity

By submitting your work you are agreeing to the University's [Academic Integrity Policy](#) that you have not plagiarised nor copied material, nor have you embellished, fabricated nor falsified any of the data nor have you colluded in producing the work nor submitted commissioned or procured work.

Written submissions are required to be submitted via Turnitin and are checked for academic integrity. It is critical that, in order to avoid the potential for inadvertent plagiarism, that all works are appropriately referenced. Please ensure that you check the "originality" score in Turnitin once you submit your work. It is your responsibility to highlight any potential issues arising from this score, particularly if you believe that there is a specific reason for the high score. In general scores above 25% will be critically examined.

If you are unsure of what the University considers plagiarism or how to reference material correctly, please visit our Skills4Study resource within your online module (guidelines and support) or via the student homepages.

Assessment Feedback

Although your score and some feedback can be found in the “Grades” section of the module in Canvas, for business reports you need to go back into your submitted assessment on SpeedGrader to get all your feedback. Please check the FAQs section of the homepage or assessments tabs for more information or if you have not been able to get access to all three forms of feedback outlined below.

Feedback is generally in 3 forms, although not all assessors use all forms of feedback on every assessment:

1. The grading rubric – see below for more details
2. Comments on your actual submission – this often includes editorial corrections
3. General text comments on your work overall either within the rubric or as a comment

Timing of Feedback

If you submit an assignment on time, you can generally expect feedback within 2 weeks. However, if you submit later than the due date you may not receive feedback for up to a month afterwards. As above, feedback can be found in your online module.

Variation in Feedback

There are several examiners who mark the assessments. This may lead to some differences of opinion

on what constitutes the “correct” way to do/write anything! On the positive side it means that your work is assessed by examiners who are active in different areas of the field. If you can assimilate all the pieces of advice, it should help you with any future writing/research project and with the compilation of business or other reports.

Please be aware that the most critical marking and feedback is often the most valuable to you. Some comments will be made purely to give you the assessor’s personal point of view. This view may not always be the same as you or other assessors. It is important to be aware that you will not have your grade reduced as a result of personal opinions such as this but we consider it extremely valuable to you to have access to expert opinion.

Grading Rubrics

Specific grading rubrics will be used for all assessment, and these will be available within the relevant assessment instructions page on your online module.

Moderation

Any student who achieves a final borderline mark of 40-55% will be moderated by the Module Coordinator or designated module moderator.

This means marks may be adjusted to ensure they are consistent and fair. Any moderated assessments where there is variation of >10% will be flagged and discussed by both examiners. Where agreement is not easily reached these will be passed on to the external examiner to mediate the final grade.

Boards

A Module Review Board/Board of Examiners will be formed consisting of academics contributing to the assessment for the relevant module being examined, Programme Coordinator, Programme Director, Module Coordinator or representative and the External Examiner. This will be held three times a year. The primary remit is to approve completed module marks giving the external examiner the opportunity to comment, however, where students have failed, the board of examiners will include a Progress Board and progress of any failed students will be discussed and outcomes decided taking into consideration any extenuating circumstances.

Students should be aware that all assessment grades are provisional pending ratification at the relevant Board.

A final Examination Board will be held for the third board of examiners each year to confirm examination marks and recommend award or not (pass/fail) of the final award for each individual taking into consideration any extenuating circumstances.

STUDENT SUPPORT

If you are experiencing difficulties with any aspect of your study, you should contact your Module Coordinator in the first instance, who will be happy to discuss any issues. You can also contact members of the administrative team via their email address, which can be found at the start of this handbook.

Disability Support

The Disability Support Team is responsible for the co-ordination of support for students with disabilities

or specific learning difficulties and provides a specialist guidance and support service for all prospective and current students.

They provide support and advice to students with a wide range of impairments. This can include, but is not limited to:

- Visual impairment
- Hearing impairment
- Mobility impairment
- Medical conditions which may be long term or progressive (e.g. epilepsy, chronic fatigue syndrome)
- Mental health difficulties
- Autistic spectrum disorder (ASD) e.g. Asperger's Syndrome.
- Specific learning difficulties (e.g. dyslexia, dyspraxia, dyscalculia)

Please visit the Disability Support Team's website

(<https://www.liverpool.ac.uk/studentsupport/disability/>) for further information and guidance.

To speak with a member of the Team and arrange for a support plan to be put in place, please telephone the Disability Support Team on (0151) 794 4714, 794 5117, 795 0323 or contact them by email: disteam@liverpool.ac.uk

Please Note: Any disclosure made must also be reported to the Assessment Administrator on vpusupport@liverpool.ac.uk at the start of your module so that any individual support outlined in your plan (e.g. additional time allowances etc.) can be put into place for you as soon as possible.

PROCEDURES

See the University's [Code of Practice on Assessment](#)

Additional considerations policy

Support is available if unexpected circumstances affect your ability to complete an assessment or sit your exams. We understand that you may encounter unexpected difficulties during your studies that may affect your ability to submit or attend assessments. These include extensions to coursework deadlines and Personal Extenuating Circumstances (PECs).

Extensions to coursework deadlines

If you experience genuine difficulties meeting the original assessment deadline, you are able to submit assessments up to 7 consecutive calendar days after the original submission deadline without penalty. Disabled students with extensions agreed as a reasonable adjustment in their Student Support Information Sheet (SSIS) can submit up to 14 days after the due date. Some assessments are exempt, where late submission is not possible, and these will be clearly signposted on the module.

Personal Extenuating Circumstances (PECs).

Personal Extenuating Circumstances are typically unexpected, unavoidable, and directly impact your ability to complete or perform in your assessment.

You can submit a PEC request when you are experiencing more serious or sustained circumstances that meet at least one of the following criteria:

- Your academic performance is likely to be significantly affected, even if you manage to attend or submit the assessment
- You are unable to submit their coursework, even with the automatic 7 calendar day extension
- You are unable to attend a time-specific assessment, such as an exam, class test, or presentation.

You are expected to submit PEC claims within 14 calendar days of the impacted assessment (wherever possible).

For more information extensions to deadlines and PECs, including how to submit a PEC claim, please see the [University's Additional Consideration pages](#).

Interrupting your Studies

You may find it necessary at some point during your study to interrupt your studies. This may be for a variety of reasons, which can be personal, financial or academic.

The University has a number of support services available for you if you need guidance or advice. In all cases, we advise you to discuss any possibility of suspension with your Programme Lead.

To further understand this procedure and the potential impact it may have on your studies and circumstances, please see the [University's pages on Interrupting your studies](#).

Procedure for Leaving your Programme Early

We understand there are many reasons for wanting to leave your programme early, but before you do, we advise you to talk with your programme lead or your School about why you want to leave the University. They may be able to offer help and advice that will allow you to carry on with your studies. If you don't want to talk to your programme lead, Student Services will be able to offer you confidential help and advice. You can also speak in confidence to a member of the [Counselling Service](#).

If you do want to leave your programme early and withdraw from the University, you must let us know as soon as possible. It is important to understand that withdrawing from University will have an impact on your fees.

Fees charged to registered students will be calculated based on the date the University is informed of any change in registration. Students should therefore follow the University's formal procedures for withdrawal or suspension outlined on the [website](#).

Further information around how interrupting or withdrawing from your studies will affect your fees can be found [here](#).

Procedure for Handling Assessment Appeals

The University is committed to ensuring that it provides for its students a high-quality educational experience, supported by appropriate academic services. It recognises, however, that there might be occasions when students will feel that they have cause to appeal against an academic decision made by a Module Review Board or Board of Examiners in relation to their studies.

The Assessment Appeals Procedure outlines the details of appeal considerations and, in the event of an appeal being unsuccessful, students' rights to further appeal. For the most up to date procedures, timescales and links to the policy, please click [here](#).

Appendix 1

Introduction to Veterinary Business Studies (5 credits)

This module is a prerequisite for all further modules.

The aim of the module is to introduce current concepts of business strategy. Students are shown how to combine practice based experience and independent learning to develop in depth understanding of business strategy including the functions of the vision and mission statements and the value of SWOT analysis.

At the end of the module students will be able to:

1. critically appraise the use of internet based technology in continuing professional development;
2. critically appraise the importance of vision and mission statements in the veterinary industry;
3. critically review the current literature and discuss the various business strategies that may be used in small to medium sized enterprises;
4. recognise and address the complexities of business management through SWOT analysis;
5. review and critically reflect on their current practices in light of the knowledge gained.

The syllabus is divided into 2 study units. The first study unit introduces the online teaching format. Subjects covered during this study unit include an introduction to the online teaching process, sourcing and use of appropriate use of resources and use of the Harvard system as the correct means of referencing information. The second unit includes discussion on the role of vision and mission statements in small businesses and their importance in business strategy in the veterinary industry. In this unit candidates are expected to develop an understanding of the subtleties of the wording of vision statements and how this impacts upon daily operations of a business. This unit also involves students performing a SWOT analysis either on their business as a whole or on a focused area of the business.

Business Strategy & Entrepreneurship (10 credits)

The aim of this module is to apply practice-based experience and previously acquired knowledge to develop understanding of business strategy and the unique challenges facing entrepreneurial enterprises in the modern business environment.

At the end of the module students should be able to:

1. Critically evaluate the differences between business strategy, mission statements and business goals;
2. Critically appraise the value of a business plan that includes the factors covered in learning outcome 1 plus other critical factors such as SWOT analysis, and of the value of wide distribution of the business plan within an organisation;
3. Critically evaluate the challenges faced by, and advantages held by, entrepreneurial enterprises and relate them to real world settings;
4. Critically review the different harvest strategies available to the entrepreneur;
5. Review and critically reflect on their current practices in light of the knowledge gained;
6. Demonstrate critical awareness of the ethical, economical and social issues that apply to Veterinary Business Management.

The syllabus will cover the importance and structure of a well laid out business plan, discussion on means through which small and medium sized enterprises grow and the advantages and disadvantages that such organisations have. Further, it will include discussion on harvest strategies and management of difficult financial times and/or bankruptcy.

Marketing (10 credits)

The aim of this module is to apply practice-based experience and previously acquired knowledge to develop understanding and implementation of current marketing theory.

At the end of the module students should be able to:

1. Critically evaluate the theory of holistic marketing, its implementation and importance in current business practices;
2. Critically appraise the importance of product consistency and how it relates to customer expectations in high-relational settings such as the veterinary industry;
3. Critically review the current literature and discuss the differences between, and significance of, product, brand and customer equity;
4. Critically evaluate customer lifetime value and how it relates to the candidate's industry;
5. Demonstrate originality in the application of knowledge gained in a real-world business setting;
6. Review and critically reflect on their current practices in light of the knowledge gained.

The syllabus will cover the importance and role of marketing in the veterinary industry. It will include discussion on current marketing theory and differences that the veterinary industry presents compared to traditional B2B or B2C settings. Emphasis is placed on relationship management and differentiation of marketing from advertising.

Human Resources (10 credits)

The aim of this module is to apply practice-based experience and previously acquired knowledge to develop understanding of the implementation of current human resource management theory.

At the end of the module students should be able to:

1. Critically evaluate the importance of the Hawthorne effect and its role in employee motivation;
2. Critically appraise the Maslow's hierarchy of needs and its implications in employee motivation, remuneration and conflict resolution;
3. Critically review the current literature and discuss the various management structures that may be used in small to medium sized enterprises;
4. Critically appraise the complexities that human resource management entails;
5. Review and critically reflect on their current practices in light of the knowledge gained;
6. Demonstrate critical awareness of the ethical, economical and social issues that apply to Veterinary Business Management.

The syllabus will cover the importance effective human resource management in the veterinary industry. It will include discussion on the importance of different personality types, staff motivation, employee remuneration and reward, organisational structure and conflict resolution.

Finance and Accounting (10 credits)

The aim of this module is to apply practice-based experience and previously acquired knowledge to the understanding and implementation of current financial and accounting theory.

At the end of the module students should be able to:

1. Critically evaluate financial accounting, management accounting and financial management.
2. Critically analyse and prepare the three main financial statements (balance sheet, profit/loss statement and cash flow projections);

3. Critically appraise the centrality of inventory control in effective cash flow management and discuss the different strategies that may be used in inventory control;
4. Critically evaluate the advantages and disadvantages of different means of capital acquisition and an ability to deal with related issues both systematically and creatively;
5. Review and critically reflect on their current practices in light of the knowledge gained;
6. Demonstrate critical awareness of the ethical, economical and social issues that apply to Veterinary Business Management.

The syllabus will cover the importance and role of financial accounting, management accounting and financial management in the modern veterinary business and tools in each discipline. Further it will cover the critical aspects of resource management including inventory control and discussion on the various methods of capital acquisition.

Work Based Learning (15 credits)

The aim of the module is to systematically evaluate the four core business areas already studied in the programme, consolidating knowledge and skills. Students are required to demonstrate critical reflection and application of practice-based experience and previously acquired knowledge of business strategy. Students will develop their ability to present their reflections and knowledge in a business report aimed at their business executives.

At the end of the module students should be able to;

1. Critically analyse the importance of human resources, accounting, marketing and strategic planning in a real-world business setting;
2. Problem solve when faced with real world business situations;
3. Critically evaluate the current management literature and its application to small to medium sized enterprises;
4. Consolidate the aforementioned areas into a clear vision and business strategy;
5. Communicate the aforementioned areas in written form, specifically as a business report.

The syllabus will consist of four study units covering each of the four core areas of business: Business strategy, Human Resources, Marketing and Accounting.