

University Course Animal-assisted therapy and animal-assisted measures

The University course aims at qualifying graduates as academically approved specialists in animal-assisted therapy and animal-assisted support measures for professional use of animals for the care and therapy of humans of all age groups, especially humans with special needs (including persons with behavioural disturbances, handicapped or sick humans) for the benefit of health promotion, increase of quality of life and well-being.

Course graduates will be qualified for independent, animal-assisted therapeutic and/or pedagogical activities of health promotion in institutions or in free practice.

Course Topics

By means of the following course topics participants shall be qualified for **professional use of animals in the care of humans** of all age groups, particularly of humans with special needs, and for increase of quality of life and of well-being:

Topics Overview:

Psychology:

- Basic principles and tasks of psychology
- Developmental psychology
- Psychological principles of human-animal-interaction
- Health psychology
- Social psychology
- Child- and adolescent psychiatry
- Use of animals in socially disadvantaged groups
- Mental hygiene for assisting professions

Medicine:

- Basic principles of geriatrics and gerontology
- Overview of most frequent diseases in old age
- Use of animals in geriatrics and in nursing homes
- Use of animals in hospitals (presentation of a project concept)
- Possibilities of rehabilitation by use of animals
- Hygiene in dealing with animals
- First Aid

Veterinary Medicine:

- Animals & ethics
- Animal husbandry - information on production animals, domestic animals and pets and animals for leisure activities which are used within animal-assisted therapy and/or animals-assisted support measures
- Behavioural science
- Learning behaviour and training principles of animals for therapeutic use
- Hygiene
- First Aid

Pedagogics:

- Basic principles of paedagogics
- Learning theories & teaching principles
- Overview of pedagogical principles
- Special paedagogics
- Therapeutic paedagogics
- Paedagogical and therapeutic use of animals with children and adolescents

Other topics & thematic priorities:

Global overview of special institutions with emphasis on animal-assisted paedagogics and/or therapy
Overview of the most important institutions in Austria
Overview and short presentation of associations and organizations worldwide
Legal principles
Presentation and communication techniques
Ways to self-employment

Academic Qualification

Requirements for qualification:

Certificate of attendance (by signature lists) in all seminars; maximum authorized absence on one weekend per semester. The certificate for the missed weekend will only be issued after submission of a written paper (8-10 pages) on the contents of teaching of that particular weekend.
Written certificate about completed practical training in at least 6 different institutions together with a written report (in form of a short record) for each training unit followed by personal reflections and comments.
Final written paper of approximately 50-60 pages (font size 12 pt, limited number of photos and pictures) - consisting of both a theoretical and a practical part (including completed practical experience and/or applications or a concept for practical use in the field of animal-assisted therapy and animal-assisted measures).
After completion of the 2nd and the 4th semester a written partial exam on the theoretical contents of the individual topics will be held. At the end of the course each participant gives a 30-minutes presentation of their final paper.
In case of negative examination results a one-time resit can be taken within 12 months.

Participants receive a certificate and diploma as academically approved specialists in animal-assisted therapy and animal-assisted support measures.

Course organisation

Duration

4 semesters altogether, offered as part-time programme:

306 hours of bloc course - including short excursions and examination weekend
partitioned into 288 teaching hours including short excursions and 18 hours of exams

Schedule per weekend:

Saturday and Sunday: 9 teaching hours per day

Location

The lectures will be held in the lecture halls of the University of Veterinary Medicine Vienna.
Short excursions and practical training will be organized in different institutions which are partly supervised by TAT.

General remarks regarding course contents:

Special emphasis is put on up-to-date and vivid conceyance of the specific course contents by use of various media and technical equipment for attractive and diversified presentation techniques. Additional teaching material, to be provided by the course instructors, is an essential condition for teaching activities in the course.

Course fees

Participants have to pay a course fee of 1.250,- € per semester.

The entire course fee of 5.000,- € has to be paid within one week after admission to the course. Acceptance is based on the results of the admission interview.

Potential costs for board and lodging have to be covered by the participants themselves.

Potential expenses during the practical training period have equally to be covered by the participants themselves.

Reimbursement of the course fee in case of premature dropout is not possible.

Organizing Institution

The course is organized by the **University of Veterinary Medicine Vienna** and held in cooperation with the **association "Animals as Therapy" (TAT)**

Chairman: Prof. Leibetseder

first deputy chairperson: Mrs. Helga Widder

Participants

The course is accessible to the following participants:

Graduates from the field of pedagogical, social, medical and biological studies, such as:

Educationists, social workers, social pedagogues, therapists, physicians, psychologists, biologists, veterinarians - following an admission interview with the examination board;

Persons with **completed training** in an adequate professional fields (e.g. infant and nursery pedagogues, geriatric nurses, hospital nurses, stockmen - following an interview with an admission committee.

Persons with **considerable practical experience** in an adequate professional field (e.g. nursery school assistants, experienced staff members of the association "Animals for Therapy" (TAT) - following an interview with a commission

A maximum of 45 participants will be admitted per University course.

6 places per course are allocated to participants from other professional fields - following an interview with an admission committee.

Course admission is based on the results of the interviews.