

NEW ZEALAND CERTIFICATE IN ANIMAL MANAGEMENT (Canine Behaviour and Training)

Learn to care for and train your canine companion by studying canine behaviour and training.

Explore what influences canine behaviour and husbandry, develop your knowledge of the roles and requirements of canine-related industries in New Zealand, and apply your knowledge through practical training in our dog agility facility.



What is the programme content?

With growing public and legislative interest concerning the management of animals (dogs in particular), the industry is on the lookout for work-ready graduates. Study the New Zealand Certificate in Animal Management (Canine Behaviour and Training) and you'll develop the technical and transferable skills needed to work in canine-related industries.

Begin to understand and recognise what influences canine behaviour, develop your skills to be able to manage day-to-day canine health and husbandry in a training environment, and apply your knowledge to train a variety of dogs in a range of disciplines.

Learn about health and safety planning, the ethics, philosophies, and regulatory procedures that surround the roles and responsibilities of canine industries, as well as develop an understanding of the Animal Welfare Act as it applies to all animals in New Zealand (specifically to dogs).

You'll also gain a broad understanding of the anatomy and husbandry of a range of animals which enables you to provide them with general care.

What are the programme highlights?

- » Receive a hands-on approach focused on practical experience in many aspects of canine obedience and training
- » Extensive practical training in a range of disciplines including obedience, agility and nose work with a strong focus on humane and effective training methods based in science.
- » Self-selected work-experience placement(s) in the canine industry
- » Highly experienced lecturers who continue to work closely with industry and are experts in the fields of animal behaviour, health and welfare, and practical dog training

How and when do I apply?

The programme starts around late February each year. Due to its growing popularity, and to ensure a high quality, Unitec is only able to accept up to 30 students each year.

The best time to apply for the programme is prior to the 1st of November of the previous year (e.g. by the 1st of November 2021 in order to start the programme in February 2022). This involves completing an online application form.

However, applications will be accepted at a later date if there are still places available on the programme. Depending on whether you meet the entrance criteria (please see below for details) and the success of your individual application, you may be invited for an interview.

What is the selection criteria?

To be eligible for admission to this programme, applicants must meet the following criteria:

1. 36 credits at NCEA Level 2 including 12 credits in English
2. 12 credits at NCEA Level 1 in a relevant science subject (biology and chemistry are most preferred)
3. Have consistent access for the duration of the programme to a dog that has been evaluated and deemed suitable by Unitec's specialist dog trainers
4. For international students where English is your second language, you will need one or more of the following:
 - › Have achieved NCEA Level 3 and New Zealand University entrance
 - › Be able to provide evidence you satisfy our criteria for existing English proficiency
 - › Have achieved at least one English proficiency outcome in the last two years

What if I don't have NCEA?

The New Zealand Certificate in Animal Care (Level 3) or an equivalent qualification; OR provide sufficient evidence to be eligible for special or discretionary admission (see our website for these regulations). Study of science subjects is an advantage for this programme as there is significant scientific content.

The applicant must also meet the General Admission and English language requirements as set out in the programme regulations.

What type of dog is suitable for the programme?

The dog must be no younger than 18 months and ideally no older than 7 years. There are no breed or size restrictions. The dog must be registered, vaccinated, and in excellent health to enable them to cope with and excel in the more physical aspects of the programme.

They must also be social towards other people and dogs and have a strong desire to work for both food and toys during training sessions.

We also prefer dogs to be insured since, in a learning environment, we cannot guarantee that dogs will not be injured.

How do I know if my dog is eligible?

Before being accepted on to the programme, you and your dog will be invited to an interview with Unitec's dog training tutors. During the interview, your dog will be assessed on the amount of interest they show in both food and toys. Because these are the primary rewards we use in the training process, it is essential that your dog is strongly motivated to work for access to both food and toys.

If we feel that your dog does not have the required level of motivation, we may offer you tips to increase this, or suggest another dog. In this situation, we may be able to help you find another dog with which you are able to complete the programme.

If you do not own your own dog before applying for a place on the programme it is essential that Unitec's dog training tutors are aware of this so they can provide guidance towards finding you a suitable dog.

Will I work with other dogs?

While each individual is primarily responsible for their own dog, you will occasionally be required to work with other dogs and allow others to work with your dog. In the interest of producing desirable graduates it is vital that students experience a range of dogs with a range of learning styles.

It is also important to work with the owners of other dogs because dogs never come without owners. We are here to provide the industry with excellent graduates, not perfect dogs.



Does my dog have to be desexed?

We do encourage and prefer that dogs on the programme are de-sexed. Castrating male dogs can make them more focused in their training and reduce the potential for the development of certain forms of aggression and health problems in the future. Spaying female dogs can also make them more focused in their training.

Although dogs that are not desexed are permitted on the programme, bitches are not permitted into class whilst they are in heat as this can be disadvantageous to both the dog and dog owner's training progress.

What if my dog gets sick or injured?

Each student should aim to progress through and complete the programme with one dog. However, in the event that your dog becomes injured or sick, appropriate alternative arrangements with substitute dogs can be made at the discretion of teaching staff.

How is the programme structured?

The programme is structured for one-year full-time study (5 days a week over 2 x 16-week long semesters which is equivalent to 1200 hours of learning). However, the lectures and practical lessons on-site only form one part of your learning; on-site hours' account for around 15 hours per week, so you will be expected to spend up to 18 hours per week on self-directed study.

This may be revising, researching, writing assignments, tests, on-line discussions with staff and other students, practicing training techniques with your dog, or going through formative (non-assessed) work as directed by your tutors.

Two days per week, you will complete practical dog training in the field, which includes both structured practical sessions and self-directed training. For an additional 2 days per week, you will be required to attend lectures and laboratory sessions. One day per week will be for additional tasks such as gaining your outside work experience hours and to study for assessments and exams.

There are assessments throughout the year in the form of practical exams, written exams and/or written assignments. You will also be expected to attend a one-day orientation in the week prior to the first semester that is critical to your learning and success on this programme.

What will you expect from me?

We expect students to be self-motivated and committed, and have excellent time management skills. You cannot be late to lectures or practical sessions since this adversely affects the learning environment for the rest of the class and the dogs. You should be prepared and comfortable to work outside in variable weather conditions.

Do I need computer access?

Yes, prospective students must have consistent access to a computer with broadband, and with appropriate word processing and slide presentation software that is provided by Unitec and downloadable once you're enrolled. You need to be proficient at word processing, web browsing and e-mail communication; Unitec's Student Success Team offer upskilling in this area.

If you have any other specific questions, please contact the Programme Coordinator Jo Thorne:
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