



# New Zealand Certificate in Animal Technology (Level 5) (Veterinary Nursing Assistant)



Domestic fee: \$7,880

International fee: \$22,220

Compulsory student levy >  
StudyLink >

\*Fees are approximate, subject to change and exchange rates

Location Dunedin or online with block courses  
> International students must study in Dunedin.  
> July intake only has block courses in Dunedin.  
> Please note our Dunedin option is currently waitlist only.

A one-year, part-time, online option is also available for those with existing knowledge and skills due to practical experience in this area. [Find out more >](#)

Duration One year full-time or two years part-time

Delivery **Blended on campus full-time** with facilitated sessions; this is the **only** option for international students.

**Distance full-time or part-time** with two compulsory block courses per year (approx. four days each) at various locations: Dunedin, Christchurch, Wellington or Auckland. Block courses may be offered in alternative locations dependent on numbers. All options include 240 hours of work placement time which you must organise. Please note that our July intake only has block courses in Dunedin.

Credits 120

Level 5

Start On campus (full-time): February (this option is waitlist only)  
Distance (full-time): February  
Distance (part-time): February  
Distance (full-time): July

Apply Apply now for our February intake



Love animals and care about their welfare? Prepare for a career as a Veterinary Nurse.

Become a Veterinary Nursing Assistant educated to the highest professional standards with this practical and theoretical programme.

The animal health industry is vital to the success of New Zealand's economy and there is always strong demand for qualified Veterinary Nursing Assistants to assist Veterinarians and Veterinary Nurses.

This programme will give you the skills and knowledge required for a successful career in companion animal healthcare. It will enable you to work alongside veterinarians and veterinary nurses in a clinical environment as a veterinary nursing assistant and will fulfil education requirements for you to become a listed veterinary nursing assistant (LVNA).

In addition, it will prepare you for entry into the New Zealand Diploma in Veterinary Nursing (Level 6) where you will gain the skills to become a fully qualified Registered Veterinary Nurse (RVN).

Aligned with international standards, it has been developed in consultation with veterinarians, veterinary nurses, the New Zealand Veterinary Nursing Association and our own experienced staff. All of our staff are required to undertake compulsory industry immersion to ensure they can deliver up-to-date, detailed theoretical knowledge of companion animal healthcare and practical skills, including low stress handling techniques.

#### Career opportunities

A Veterinary Nursing Assistant works to promote the health, husbandry and welfare of companion animals such as household pets (cats, dogs, birds, rabbits).

A Veterinary Nursing Assistant will support and communicate with Veterinarians and Veterinary Nurses in the care and treatment of companion animals in the veterinary clinic. This may include roles in reception and front of house, hospitalised animal patient care, assisting with diagnostic sampling and radiography, providing proactive and preventative health care to pets, first aid/emergency advice. Veterinary Nursing Assistants will play an important role in preparing animals for surgery and assisting Veterinarians and Veterinary Nurses during and after surgery.

#### Links to useful websites

- > New Zealand Veterinary Nursing Association
- > British Veterinary Nursing Association
- > Veterinary Nurses Council of Australia
- > Canadian Association of Animal Technologists and Technicians

#### Entry requirements

##### Academic entry requirements

> 60 credits at NCEA Level 2, with a minimum of:

- > 12 credits in English at Level 2, and
- > 12 credits in Maths at Level 1, and
- > 12 credits in Science at Level 1
- > OR equivalent
- > OR evidence of meeting Step 5 Literacy and Numeracy for Adults, Assessment Tool.

> International students may only enter the full-year, blended, on-campus programme, and you will be individually assessed to ensure you meet the entry requirements. Click [here](#) for your country's equivalent academic entry criteria.

> If English is not your first language, you must provide:

- > New Zealand University Entrance OR
- > Overall Academic IELTS 6.0 (achieved in one test completed in the last two years)
  - > Writing band 6.0
  - > Speaking band 6.0
  - > Reading band 5.5
  - > Listening band 5.5, OR
- > Acceptable alternative evidence of the required IELTS (see here for NZQA proficiency table and here for list of recognised proficiency tests).

If you need to improve your English Language skills, we offer a wide range of English programmes.

Alternative entry criteria: Although our basic academic entry requirements are as outlined above, we prefer that you have NCEA Level 3 OR the [New Zealand Certificate in Animal Care \(Level 3\) \(Companion Animals\)](#) OR equivalent.

You are also required to provide the following:

1. Evidence of at least three or more days observing the role Veterinarians and Veterinary Nurses undertake in a companion animal veterinary clinic.\*\*  
Please note: If you are struggling with this requirement, please email [vetnursing@op.ac.nz](mailto:vetnursing@op.ac.nz) so we can have a chat with you.
2. Evidence/reference demonstrating an ability to work and communicate with others. This could be from an employer, teacher or manager of a volunteer organisation.
3. You will need to supply a Criminal Convictions History ([via the Ministry of Justice](#)), which is 6

months old or less, before the start date of your programme if you are a NEW student to the School of Veterinary Nursing (even if your report is clean we are required to sight this, your enrolment will be contingent on this report).

If you have studied with us in the last calendar year, have previously supplied us with a criminal convictions report and are returning to the School of Veterinary Nursing for further study, you will only need to make a declaration (click here) stating your history hasn't changed since the previous report.

To undertake the compulsory practical components of this programme you are also required to provide:

1. Evidence of a companion animal veterinary clinic to support your work placement requirements will be required prior to commencing the practical components of the programme. It is recommended this is arranged as soon as practical.\*\*
  - a. For students based in the **Otago region**, please contact [vetnursing@op.ac.nz](mailto:vetnursing@op.ac.nz) for advice **prior** to contacting any work placements in this region.
  - b. If you are seeking placement, outside Otago, please use the documents provided on the web link, after you have been accepted, to arrange this placement \*\*Please note: If you are struggling with this requirement, please email [vetnursing@op.ac.nz](mailto:vetnursing@op.ac.nz) so we can have a chat with you.
2. Completion of the Health and Safety Course.\*\*

\*\* Once your application has been received, if successful you will be sent a Conditional Offer into the programme. In this Offer there will be a link provided to the Health and Safety Course and templates to enable you to provide evidence of your three-day observation and work placement.

All applicants must:

- > have access to a computer, camera, video and the internet
- > submit a health declaration (this template will be provided with the link on your Conditional Offer).

Covid-19 vaccine

We recommend that you secure your work placement prior to enrolling in this programme to ensure you'll be able to meet the requirements to pass.

The veterinary and animal care industries are experiencing significant staffing pressure currently. This may result in placement providers requiring any students on placement to provide evidence of being fully-vaccinated (to mitigate the risk to animal welfare should Covid-19 mean businesses need to close).

Therefore, if you're not fully vaccinated or choose not to disclose your vaccination status if asked, you may not be able to access your work placement.

This will mean that you don't meet the requirements to achieve this programme as you won't have completed the necessary work placement hours.

We'll do everything we can to support you but it is a risk to you if you enrol and are unable to secure work placement in the future to complete these requirements.

If you need support finding a suitable placement, please contact the School of Veterinary Nursing by emailing [vetnursing@op.ac.nz](mailto:vetnursing@op.ac.nz) and one of our staff will be happy to help you.

Skills required to work in this area

- > A genuine interest in companion animals: cats, dogs, rabbits, rodents and birds
- > Keen interest in health and welfare of companion animals
- > The ability to communicate and work with a team
- > The ability to manage time effectively
- > The ability to work in a high pressure environment and handle stressful emergency situations
- > To be sensible and highly motivated
- > Good computer skills.

Want your existing skills recognised?

If you have extensive knowledge and skills due to practical experience in this area (5-7 years), you could gain this qualification through our Assessment of Prior Learning Pathway (APL). This option enables you to study part-time online, to evaluate your veterinary nursing career and to present a portfolio of evidence to show how you meet the requirements of the qualification.

Find out more >

Completing your application

You can enter information and upload documents directly into the application form. You may wish to prepare some of the required documentation beforehand.

To begin your application, click the Apply button at the top of this page.

You will need to provide:

- > Academic entry requirements
- > Referee report - [click here to download the report to give to your chosen referee](#)
- > Criminal Convictions History Report - [click here, follow the instructions online and upload a copy in your application.](#)
- > Certified copies of proof of identity and proof of residency (where appropriate).

Once your application has been received, if successful you will be sent a Conditional Offer into the programme. In this Offer there will be a link provided to the Health and Safety Course and templates to enable you to provide evidence of your three-day observation and work placement.

You will study

All eight, 15-credit courses **must** be completed to gain the qualification.

Courses	Credits
Introduction to Veterinary Nursing Assistant	15
Companion Animal Husbandry and Welfare	15
Operate Within The Animal Health and Veterinary Services Interface	15
*Routine Diagnostics and Imaging	15
*Essentials of In-patient Care	15
*Routine Surgery and Anaesthesia	15
Veterinary Nursing Assistant Practicum Part 1	15
*Veterinary Nursing Assistant Practicum Part 2	15

\* Courses completed during Year 2, part-time distance.

How you will study

**On campus, full-time blended delivery option:**

For this programme, you'll need to:

- > commit to approximately 35-40 hours per week including work placements
- > attend facilitated sessions on-campus every Monday and Tuesday morning as and when required for tutorial sessions and one-on-one meetings with your Learning Advisor.
- > undertake directed and self-directed study at home
- > organise all animal related facility and companion animal veterinary clinic work placements
- > complete a minimum of 240 hours of which a minimum of 40 hours must be in animal related facilities (such as kennels, catteries, SPCA) and a minimum of 200 hours in companion animal veterinary clinics
- > complete and pass your first course, Introduction to Veterinary Nursing Assistant, before you can start work placements.

**Distance options: full-time (one year) and two years (part-time)**

We're a leader in the provision of online education. You'll learn via online facilitated teaching sessions and discussion forums, as well as having access to online course resources and activities (written, audio and video).

Help is always on hand through our extensive support systems which include:

- > One-on-one tutor support
- > IT support.

**Distance, full-time one year option:**

For this programme, you'll need to:

- > commit to approximately 35-40 hours per week including work placements
- > undertake online directed and self-directed study at home and attend weekly online classroom sessions
- > attend induction and orientation online in the first week of the programme
- > attend two, compulsory four-day block courses, at one of the venues offered (this is usually Dunedin, Christchurch, Wellington or Auckland - each venue is dependent on numbers - please enquire with the School for more information). Links for block course: Full-time Distance
- > organise all animal-related facility and companion animal veterinary clinic work placements

- > to complete a minimum of 240 hours of work placement of which a minimum of 40 hours must be in animal related facilities (such as kennels, catteries, SPCA) and a minimum of 200 hours in companion animal veterinary clinics (2)
- > complete and pass your first course, Introduction to Veterinary Nursing Assistant, before you can start work placements.

#### **Distance, part-time over two years option:**

For this programme, over both years, you'll need to:

- > commit to approximately 15-20 hours per week including work placements
- > undertake online directed and self-directed study at home and attend fortnightly online classroom sessions
- > attend induction and orientation online in the first week of the programme to meet other students, learn how to navigate
- > attend two, compulsory two-day block courses in (approximately) May and September at one of the venues offered (this is usually Dunedin, Christchurch, Wellington or Auckland - each venue is dependent on numbers - please enquire with the School for more information). Links for block courses: Part-time Distance Year 1, Part-time Distance Year 2.
- > organise all animal-related facility and companion animal veterinary clinic work placements
- > complete a minimum of 120 hours of which a minimum of 40 hours must be in animal related facilities (such as kennels, catteries, SPCA) and a minimum of 80 hours in companion animal veterinary clinics
- > complete and pass your first course, Introduction to Veterinary Nursing Assistant, before you can start work placements.

#### Your workload

All study is highly structured, guided and self-directed and you will need to have good time management skills. If you are a full-time student, you should typically aim for around 30-35 hours of study per week. As a part-time student, you should typically aim for around 15-20 hours of study per week. Both options require engagement with on-line resources such as, activities, assessments and compulsory work placements (240 hours minimum), undertaken by directed and self-directed study at home.

#### Your work placements

Both blended on campus (full-time) and distance learning options (full-time and part-time) require you to undertake industry-based work placements. All work placements **must** be organised and managed by you. Due to the limited number of veterinary clinics in Dunedin, all Dunedin based students are likely to need to organise some work placement outside of Dunedin, therefore you must be prepared to travel to complete this requirement if necessary. You are required to undertake at least 240 hours of work placement - at least 40 hours in animal-related facilities (such as boarding kennels, catteries or your local SPCA) and a minimum of 200 hours in companion animal veterinary clinics while you study.

When approaching veterinary clinics for your three day observation and when sourcing supervising veterinary clinic work placements, you will be asked for evidence of completion of the Health and Safety Course (access to this course is provided once you have been offered a place in the programme) and also a copy of your current Criminal Convictions History report. This report can be obtained free from: <http://www.justice.govt.nz/assets/Documents/Forms/request-by-individual.pdf>

#### Health and safety

You will be given full training to minimise all programme-specific risks. Examples of risks associated with this programme are: lifting, animal bites and scratches, zoonotic diseases, computers, radiation from x-rays, anaesthetic gases, chemicals and drugs, UV radiation, sharp instruments, electricity, fire, gas cylinders and mercury thermometers.

We recommend that all students maintain a current up-to-date tetanus injection to handle any animals as part of this programme.

#### Further study options

Successful completion of the New Zealand Certificate in Animal Technology (Level 5) (Veterinary Nursing Assistant) will provide you with the entry requirements for the New Zealand Diploma in Veterinary Nursing (Level 6).

#### Additional costs

- > Compulsory textbook: \$300 (approx.)
- > Compulsory shirt: \$50 (approx.)
- > Compulsory name badge: \$15 (pin-back) or \$18.50 (magnetic)

- > Scrub top: \$45
- > Stethoscope: \$21
- > Closed-in shoes: \$100 (approx.) health and safety requirement
- > Photocopy and printing costs for personal work
- > Full time, blended, on-campus students: Travel, accommodation and food costs associated with attendance at work placements, face to face facilitated sessions (one and a half days per week)
- > Distance students: Travel, accommodation and food costs associated with attendance at work placements, with block courses (for both distance full-time and part-time options)
- > You will also need access to a mobile device to take videos for assessments such as a cell phone.

#### Student loans and allowances

Student loans and allowances are for domestic students only. For information about student loans and allowances please visit the Studylink website. It is important to apply for your student loan/allowance at the same time as you apply for this programme, due to the length of time Studylink take to process.

Loan/allowance applications can be cancelled at any time if you decide to withdraw from your programme application or if it is unsuccessful.

#### Disclaimer

While every effort is made to ensure that this sheet is accurate, Otago Polytechnic reserves the right to amend, alter or withdraw any of the contained information. The fees shown in this document are indicative ONLY. Both domestic and international fees are subject to change and are dependent on the development and implementation of Government policies. Please note that additional fees may from time to time be required for external examination, NZQA fees and/or additional material fees.



International **+64 3 477 3014**  
 New Zealand **0800 762 786**  
 Email **info@op.ac.nz**

**Dunedin Campus**  
 Forth Street, Dunedin  
 Private Bag 1910  
 New Zealand 9054

**Central Otago Campus**  
 Corner Erris & Ray Streets  
 PO Box 16, Cromwell  
 New Zealand 9342

**Auckland Campus**  
 Level 2, 350 Queen Street  
 PO Box 5268, Auckland  
 New Zealand 1141