

Module specification

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Module Code	ANM534
Module Title	Animal Behaviour and Welfare
Level	5
Credit value	20
Faculty	SALS
HECoS Code	Faculty of Social and Life Sciences
Cost Code	100522
Pre-requisite module	N/A

Programmes in which module to be offered

Programme title	Core/Optional/Standalone
FdSc Canine Behaviour Training and Performance	Core

Breakdown of module hours

Learning and teaching hours	22 hrs
Placement tutor support hours	0 hrs
Supervised learning hours e.g. practical classes, workshops	8 hrs
Project supervision hours	0 hrs
Active learning and teaching hours total	30 hrs
Placement hours	0 hrs
Guided independent study hours	170 hrs
Module duration (Total hours)	200 hrs

Module aims

Students will develop an understanding of animal behaviour and welfare by exploring the ethology of vertebrate species and the diversity of behavioural strategies observed across taxa. They will develop the ability to recognise, analyse, and report behavioural states in a range of species, with particular focus on behaviours relevant to professional practice and welfare assessment. The module aims to foster a critical understanding of how biological, evolutionary, and environmental factors influence behavioural development, including the emergence of behavioural disorders. Students will be equipped to evaluate behaviour and welfare in an evidence-based, ethically informed manner across a variety of animal contexts.

Module Learning Outcomes

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

1	Evaluate the ethology of vertebrate animals across a range of species and taxa. (K1)
2	Recognise, analyse, and report behavioural states in a range of species. (K2)
3	Evaluate how behavioural ontogeny, biological, evolutionary, and environmental factors interact to influence the development of behavioural disorders across species. (K3 and 4)

Assessment

Indicative Assessment Tasks:

This section outlines the type of assessment task the student will be expected to complete as part of the module. More details will be made available in the relevant academic year module handbook.

Assessment 1:

Students will produce a comparative report critically evaluating the ethology of the dog with one other vertebrate species from different taxa (e.g., a dog and a bird, reptile or fish). The report must explore each species' perceptual abilities, maintenance and survival behaviours, communication strategies, and motivational drivers.

Students should integrate relevant scientific literature to compare how evolutionary history, ecological niche, and species-specific adaptations shape behavioural patterns.

Assessment 2:

Students will complete a structured behavioural observation of the dog using an ethogram and an appropriate sampling method (e.g., focal sampling, scan sampling). They will record behavioural states and events over a specified observation period, then analyse the data to identify patterns relating to activity budget, emotional state indicators, and potential welfare concerns.

They will produce a report detailing results gathered and an interpretation of how biological, developmental, and environmental factors may influence the observed behaviours and whether any indicators of behavioural disorders are present.

Assessment number	Learning Outcomes to be met	Type of assessment	Duration/Word Count	Weighting (%)	Alternative assessment, if applicable
1	1	Written Assignment	2,000 words	40%	N/A

2	2, 3	Portfolio	2,000 words	60%	N/A
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Derogations

N/A

Learning and Teaching Strategies

This module is delivered through a blended approach incorporating theory-led lectures, interactive seminars and applied practical sessions within an Active Learning Framework (ALF). The approach adopts a high challenge, high support model to support the development of conceptual understanding and analytical skills in animal behaviour and welfare.

Lectures introduce key ethological theories, behavioural development and welfare frameworks, while seminars provide opportunities for discussion, case study analysis and critical evaluation of scientific literature. Practical sessions enable students to apply behavioural sampling techniques, interpret behavioural states and analyse real-world welfare scenarios.

Independent study, supported by digital resources and structured tasks, consolidates learning and supports the development of confidence in evaluating behaviour across species. This approach enables students to integrate theoretical knowledge with professional observational and reporting skills.

Welsh Elements

The module will incorporate awareness of the Welsh language and cultural context within professional canine training practice. Students will be encouraged to consider inclusive communication strategies appropriate to bilingual service delivery and may utilise Welsh language resources where appropriate. Opportunities will be provided to reflect on client engagement within the Welsh professional landscape.

Students can present their work, access forms, resources, email correspondence, work placements and personal tutorials in Welsh.

Indicative Syllabus Outline

- Historical development of ethology; overview of vertebrate taxa and comparative behaviour.
- Sensory modalities, species-specific perception, and implications for behaviour and welfare.
- Feeding, foraging, reproduction, predator avoidance, and motivation-based models.
- Visual, auditory, chemical, and tactile communication; functions and adaptive significance.
- Recognising and analysing fear, aggression, frustration, relaxation, play, and illness indicators.
- Ethograms, sampling methods, and practical data collection skills

- Sensitive periods, socialisation processes, attachment theory, and developmental pathways.
- Genetics, natural selection, evolutionary drivers of behaviour, species-specific adaptations.
- Housing, enrichment, stressors, human–animal interactions, and risk factors for behavioural problems.
- Using behavioural indicators to assess welfare; interpreting behavioural data in context.
- Applying learning to real-world scenarios in husbandry, veterinary, and applied behaviour practice.

Indicative Bibliography

Please note the essential reads and other indicative reading are subject to annual review and update.

Essential Reads:

Rendle, M. and Hinde-Megarthy, J. (Eds) (2022), BSAVA Manual of Practical Veterinary Welfare. Gloucs BSAVA.

Other indicative reading:

Pinillos, R. (ed.) (2018), One Welfare: A Framework to Improve Animal Welfare and Human Well-Being. Wallingford: UK CABI Publishing.

Students will be directed to current peer-reviewed research from journals including *Applied Animal Behaviour Science*, *Journal of Veterinary Behavior*, *Animal Welfare* (UFAW), and *Animals* to support evidence-informed practice.

Administrative Information

For office use only	
Initial approval date	April 2026
With effect from date	September 2026
Date and details of revision	
Version number	1