MSc Applied Animal Behaviour and Training

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Subject	Level	Study Mode	Duration	Start Date
Animal Sciences	Master's Degree (Level 7)	Full-Time	1 year full-time/2 years part-time	September 2027

The Course

Do you want to stand out as an exceptional animal trainer or behaviour advisor? Do you want to develop your knowledge of animal behaviour and training to an outstanding level? Do you want a comprehensive and critical understanding of the ethical, legal and welfare issues related to animal management? Then our unique Master's programme will equip you with the knowledge and skills to stand out in an increasingly populated field. This programme has been formally recognised by the ABTC Programme Recognition Committee as delivering the academic elements necessary for an individual to achieve ABTC recognition as a Clinical Animal Behaviourist. Successful completion of this programme, with passes in all assessed work, allows graduates to meet the Knowledge and Understanding requirements for Clinical Animal Behaviourist accreditation with the Animal Behaviour and Training Council. Note that full accreditation also requires membership of an appropriate Practitioner Organisation.

Course Aims

- Give you analytical and comprehensive understanding of animal behaviour research, learning theories and the complex ethics surrounding these. Allow you to select and apply appropriate and humane techniques for the training and behaviour modification of animals, which is underpinned by current theory and accurate mechanical skills. Enable you to be independent thinking and able to communicate confidently and effectively within a professional and research context. Develop your analytical and systematic thought processes, as appropriate for working and researching within the animal and related industries.

What You Will Study

Year 1

- FULL TIME (credits):
- Research Methods (20)
- Animal Behaviour Theories (20)
- Health, Welfare and Ethics (20)
- Learning Theories and Training Methods (20)
- Animal Behaviour Consulting (20)
- Human-Animal Interactions and Psychology (20)
- Independent Research Project (60)
- PART TIME YEAR 1 (credits):
- Research Methods (20)
- Animal Behaviour Theories (20)
- Health, Welfare and Ethics (20)
- Learning Theories and Training Methods (20)

Year 2

- PART TIME YEAR 2 (credits):
- Animal Behaviour Consulting (20)
- Human-Animal Interactions and Psychology (20)
- Independent Research Project (60)

Entry Requirements

You will need:

A minimum of a 2.2 honours degree, ideally in biological science subjects or equivalent, but work experience can be taken into account if an unrelated qualification is held.

An appropriate academic reference

Life and/or experience of non-traditional students will be taken into account when considering applications. The successful completion of an entry task may be required when considering applications without the required formal entry qualifications.

If your first language is not English, or a Tier 4 student visa to study is required and GCSE English at grade 4/C or equivalent is not held, you will need to evidence your English language proficiency level, such as International English Language Testing System (IELTS) 6.0 overall (with a minimum 5.5 in each skill).

Teaching and Learning Approach

This programme is delivered with a variety of learning and teaching approaches to include all students' learning preferences. For all modules, theory lectures are delivered that aim to deliver the core content and provide the underpinning knowledge. Using the webinar software, staff are able to monitor engagement to ensure participations. To complement all theory lectures, you will have asynchronous seminars that are used to reinforce concepts delivered theoretically. Online webinars focus on facilitating a student-centred approach to enhance the independent learning that takes place outside of the webinar lecture sessions.

Time Required on Campus

2026-27 ENTRY Full-Time: You will study four modules in the first semester and two in the second semester, alongside completion of the Independent Research Project. This represents approximately six hours of live webinars per week plus a similar amount of time dedicated to directed tasks and tutorials. Evening webinars normally take place between 6pm and 9pm but the number of evenings per week and days on which they occur is yet to be confirmed for the 2026-27 academic year. Additional to this you will book individual tutorials with your Programme Leader. You will have four individual tutorials in an academic year. Attendance may be required at several block sessions throughout the year. Some sessions are online only while others may require your attendance in person at University Centre Bishop Burton. These dates for the 2026-27 academic year are yet to be finalised. You are expected to complete a significant amount of private study in addition to class time and directed study (approximately 20 - 40 hours per week). Part-Time: You will study two modules per semester except during the final semester when the focus is on completion of the Independent Research Project. This represents approximately three hours of live webinars per week plus a similar amount of time dedicated to directed tasks and tutorials. Evening webinars normally take place between 6pm and 9pm but the number of evenings per week and days on which they occur is yet to be confirmed for the 2026-27 academic year. In the first year, attendance may be required at several block sessions throughout the year. Some sessions are online only while others may require in-person attendance University Centre Bishop Burton. These dates for the 2026-27 academic year are yet to be finalised. You are expected to complete a significant amount of private study in addition to class time (approximately 10 - 20 hours per week).

Work Experience

Relevant extra-curricular activity and/or work experience is encouraged to enhance your learning.

How You're Assessed

The programme incorporates a variety of assessment methods across each academic year. The mix of assessments will seek to challenge and evaluate your knowledge, understanding and skills. Assessments for this programme include written assignments, webinar presentations, practical demonstrations, evaluations and role-plays. Tutors provide support for assessments in class. There will also be opportunity for formative assessment and feedback during the delivery of each module to monitor learning, and to support and prepare you for the summative assessments which make up the module. Feedback on your summative assessments will be given which will allow you to guide efforts and activities in subsequent modules. Staff aim to return assessed work within a 20 working day timeframe (not including holidays) so that you can most benefit from the feedback.

Clothing, Equipment and Additional Costs

- Regular access to a computer with a reliable broadband internet connection in order to participate in webinars, download learning materials, watch recorded webinars and submit assignments.
- A headset with microphone will be required for participation in webinars and on-line tutorials.
- Appropriate software is required: Microsoft Office and OpenOffice (freeware) are the only office suites supported.
- Sturdy footwear suitable for any practical sessions on campus.
- The college has a strict policy of not allowing work boots inside college buildings – you will need to have alternative footwear (shoes or trainers) to attend in-person lectures on campus.
- Training equipment will be required (i.e. clicker and target stick) for the training related modules and you will need to have regular (several times per week) access to an animal for training for the practical training assessment.

- A wide range of resources are available for use both on and offsite for dissertation projects but it may not be possible to purchase/service all requests, therefore students need to be aware that they may need to self-fund some elements.
- Students will need to fund their own travel, accommodation and food.
- Dogs are not required to attend the college for the programme and therefore are not permitted on the college campus. However, if you do need to bring your dog to any in-person block sessions, the College has a commercial boarding kennels. To book, call 01964 553138 or email kennels@bishopburton.ac.uk. Payment for the boarding kennels is required if you decide to bring your dog to any in-person block sessions.
- For any student that requires the use of an assistance dog, prior arrangements must be made with the Programme Leader to ensure suitable facilities and provision is made. Appropriate insurance must be held and evidenced before your dog is permitted onsite.
- On successful completion of the programme, you will have the opportunity to graduate at a ceremony wearing formal dress. The hire of the formal dress is an additional cost.

Progression

Those who wish to continue their studies can do so by taking a PhD.

Careers

Upon graduating from this programme you could seek management positions in animal training, zoo keeping and education, environmental enrichment co-ordinator, education and lecturing, behaviour advisor/consultant, companion animal trainer, training animals for commercial work, animal rescue and rehabilitation, and assistance dog trainer.

Financial Information

Find the full details of the fees associated with this programme and the financial support available on our https://www.bishopburton.ac.uk/degree-level-courses/information/fees-and-finance.

How to Apply

To apply, scan the QR code at the top of this page!

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