

Equine Behaviour and Welfare

BSc (Hons)

If you're passionate about the human-horse relationship from an equine welfare perspective, and want to understand how horses interpret our world to enhance their wellbeing, then this is the ideal course for you. You don't need to ride horses, you simply need a keen interest in horse behaviour, learning and welfare.

During your degree, you'll develop your understanding of contemporary ethical approaches to horse training and management based on the most up-to-date scientific research, applying theory to practice in real-world settings including our commercial equine yard that's home to 230 horses and riders of all levels.

[Apply now via UCAS](#) [Book an open day](#)

Key Information

Course Duration: 3 or 4 years full-time; part-time available

UC UCAS Code: D43L

Part or Full Time: Full Time / Part Time

Level of Study: Undergraduate Degrees

Placement Year: Optional

Typical Offer: 112 UCAS tariff points

Course information

[Download a PDF](#)

Overview Entry requirements Employability How you'll study

We'll support you to adopt an innovative and scientific mind-set, building both specialist and transferable skills to help you stand out when you graduate. Alongside developing equine-specific expertise, you'll refine entrepreneurial and leadership skills. Work placements will enable you to build a successful career while improving the wider industry.

Graduate opportunities are diverse and could include working for equine charities and welfare organisations or with individuals to improve horse-rider relationships. Graduates of this course will play a vital role in education and implementation of best practice.

- **UCAS** | A typical offer for this course is 112 UCAS tariff points or equivalent.

- **GCSE** | A minimum of five GCSEs at grade 9 to 4, (or A* to C grades if relevant) or equivalent, to include English Language and Mathematics.
- **A-level** | Typical offer is BBC or equivalent. This must include a minimum of two A-levels.
- **Vocational Award** | Typical offer is a DMM in an Extended Diploma in a relevant subject.
- **Access** | Typical offer is 112 UCAS tariff points in an Access to Higher Education Diploma.
- **IB** | Typical offer is 112 UCAS tariff points in an IB Diploma, to include a minimum of two Highers at H3 or above, including one in Biology. This must also include Maths and English Language at a minimum of Standard Level S3 if equivalent GCSEs have not been obtained.
- **Scottish Highers** | Typical offer is 112 UCAS tariff points in Scottish Highers. This must include a minimum of one Advanced Higher and one Higher.
- **Irish Leaving Certificate** | Typical offer is 112 UCAS tariff points in the Irish Leaving Certificate. This must include a minimum of two Highers. This must also include Maths and English Language at a minimum of Ordinary Level.
- **OCR Cambridge Technical** | Typical offer is a DMM in a Cambridge Technical Extended Diploma in a relevant subject.
- **T Level** | Typical offer is Merit in you T Level overall grade in a relevant subject.
- The minimum academic entry requirement for this programme is 80 UCAS tariff or equivalent providing this is combined with relevant experience.

We welcome students with equivalent qualifications. Please contact us to discuss.

We may interview mature applicants and those with non-traditional qualifications to ensure this is the right course for you.

Previous learning towards a university-level qualification or relevant work experience may count as credit for this course.

Please contact us for further information.

[Email us](#)

Your career

Industry opportunities on this course are diverse to ensure you develop the skills, experience and connections needed for your graduate career. Many of our students secure graduate roles with their work placement employers.

Field trips and guest lecturers

You'll develop a greater understanding of equine behaviour as you take part in study trips to local and national equine organisations. You'll also hear from industry experts and professionals in lectures and explore potential career paths. Previous guest lecturers have included representatives from Three Counties Equine Hospital and charities such as Horse World.

Study internationally

Our Study Abroad programme means you can make the most of opportunities to study, a semester or full year of your degree, at one of our partner institutions while achieving credits towards your degree.

Graduate destinations

As a graduate, you'll be well versed in all aspects of equine management, behaviour and welfare, with the necessary skills to enter a graduate-level position within the equine industry. You'll also have the transferable skills you need for other graduate careers. Our careers team can support you to find, prepare and secure your perfect role. Typical graduate destinations might include:

- Educational Officer
- Training Officer
- Campaigns Officer
- Behaviourist
- Fundraising Manager
- Welfare Officer
- Postgraduate study

Success Stories

Your support network

You'll benefit from a strong support network from day one to be the best you can be. This will range from your personal tutor and specialist academic support team (our Achievement and Success Centre) to dedicated wellbeing and employability (Innovation, Careers and Enterprise) centres.

Academic support

You'll have your own personal tutor while you're here who will support you to succeed in your studies. You'll also have access to our academic and wellbeing support teams who run regular workshops and one-to-one sessions on campus and online.

Alongside this, we have a comprehensive bank of online study skills resources to help you make the most of your qualification.

Your learning experiences

You'll experience a range of teaching methods to strengthen your digestion of topics, including lectures, workshops and practical sessions, as well as supported work placement learning as part of many courses.

Your career

Each year of your course will be made up of two semesters, within which you'll study compulsory and optional modules on different industry-focused topics, enabling you to develop your own unique portfolio of knowledge, skills and experience, ready for your career. The course is taught in English.

Modules

Overview Level four (year one) Level five (year two) Integrated placement year (optional) Level Six (final year)

What you'll study

On this course, you'll cover a range of fundamental behaviour and welfare topics through a combination of compulsory and optional modules, which you'll be able to choose from to suit your interests and career goals.

Compulsory topics will include management of equine wellbeing, equine learning and cognition, and measurements of equine behaviour.

Optional modules change each year in line with student, industry and research demands - you'll find recent topics studied below. You can attend introductory sessions for optional modules before deciding which ones to study.

Module credits

On successful completion of your modules you'll gain academic credit that accumulates towards your award. The marks you gain in your second and third years may contribute towards your final degree classification.

You'll focus on key topics relating to equine learning and welfare to gain knowledge and fundamental study skills that underpin your course and equip you to study at higher levels. You'll also begin to explore human behaviours and interactions to gain skills for influencing future change in equitation science, training and beyond.

Compulsory Modules

Equitation Science

The module aims to give an introduction to evidence-based learning principles for horses and the impact of environmental effects on learning.

Professional Development and Influence within the Equestrian Sector

An introduction to learning theory and human behaviour in relation to developing an understanding of reflection of self and how humans interact and influence others.

Principles of Equine Welfare

An introduction to equine ethology including behavioural ecology, senses, cognition and basic needs in relation to optimal horse welfare.

Managing Equine Wellbeing

Generally, horses spend around an hour per day being trained or exercised. This module focuses on the principals of horse welfare and management for the other 23 hours.

Introduction to Equine Nutrition

Study of the basic principles of equine feeding and nutrition.

In this year, more in-depth topics will be explored, taking the fundamental knowledge learned in year one to explore the key factors and principles which

underpin behaviour and welfare measurements in more detail. You'll also be supported to complete a work placement, enabling you to gain experience and make connections, ready for your career. Alongside compulsory modules, you'll select from a range of optional modules to further develop your specialist expertise.

Compulsory Modules

Measuring Equine Behaviour and Welfare

Use of behavioural, physiological and physical measures of welfare and welfare assessment in different contexts.

Professional Placement Experience in the Equestrian Sector

You'll be supported to complete a minimum of 150 hours of work experience during the year, which can be in a variety of equine focused establishments in the UK or abroad.

Equine Performance

Understand how performance horses are exercised and trained to meet specific demands of various disciplines.

Equine Learning and Cognition

This module further develops the understanding of learning theory, attachment theory, emotions and learning in relation to evidence-based training of horses.

Optional Modules

Equestrian Event Management and Fundraising

Explore the operational aspects of event management and the customer experience.

Equine Nutrition

The study of the horse's digestive system, their required nutrient intake for different activities, and how to manage the horse's diet.

Independent Report

A chance to independently review an approved topic area in line with the student's programme of study.

Either International Academic Study Portfolio OR International Academic Study Project

International Academic Study Portfolio

A reflection upon a period of international study.

International Academic Study Project

A reflection upon a period of international study.

Study Trip

You will engage in a programme relevant study trip which will provide a context for you to synthesise content from across your programme of study and make applications and inferences to this real world setting, while expanding your horizons.

An integrated placement year before your final year allows you to put your knowledge and skills into practice and gain valuable industry experience. Many students get their graduate careers with the organisation with which they completed their work placement.

Your final year allows you to focus on areas of particular interest to you, in line with your career aspirations. One module is your dissertation, a substantial research project that enables you to plan, implement and report on a specialist topic of your choice.

In addition, you'll be exposed to contemporary challenges and developments in the field of equine behaviour, gaining an insight into the direction of emerging research. Optional modules will support you to develop entrepreneurial and leadership skills, including negotiation and conflict resolution, preparing you to drive changes in the industry to improve equine training, behaviour management and welfare.

Compulsory Modules

Undergraduate Dissertation

Partake in independent research and analysis in a related area of your choice.

Research in Equine Behaviour

This module will enable you to undertake a critical review in a chosen area and design a pilot study utilising behavioural, physiological and/or physical measures in order to advance the current evidence base in relation to current management practices.

Equine Ethics and Welfare

Students will build their knowledge of ethical philosophy and key equine welfare contributors/research to enable discussion of contemporary industry issues.

People, Leadership and Change

Exploring the structure, diversity and culture of organisations in relation to leadership and change management.

Optional Modules

Equine Nutrition for Performance

Evolution of feeding strategies to support athletic performance in the horse, whilst maintaining good health.

Sales, Negotiation and Customer Service

Gain strategies and techniques to develop communications skills in order to influence, sell and negotiate within the equine industry.

Sustainability and Global Responsibility within the Equestrian Sector

Explore and analyse current business practice within the global equestrian industry in relation to long term sustainability.

Undergraduate Independent Study

A chance to critically review an approved topic of your choice linked to the programme aims.

Volunteering within the Equine Charity Sector

Practically apply theory and knowledge of the equine charity sector to a real-life volunteering environment, proposing methods of raising awareness of their work as an organisation and reflecting on personal development during time spent in industry.

Teaching modes

The modules contain a mixture of scheduled learning – lectures, workshops and practical sessions – alongside independent learning - students are expected to dedicate at least two to three hours of independent study per contact hour. Your course will also include work placement learning as part of some modules.

The course is taught in English.

This programme is currently undergoing consultation but it is estimated that the course will comprise of the following teaching modes.

Year	Contact learning	Independent learning	Placement learning
Level four (year one)	24%	76%	0%
Level five (year two)	19%	69%	12%
Placement year (optional)	1%	19%	80%
Level six (final year)	17%	83%	0%

Assessment and Feedback

Assessments take place through a mixture of written exams, practical exams and written assignments. Many of the modules will be marked based on a mixture of assessment types, whilst others will be based solely on one type of assessment. Feedback will be given informally during scheduled learning and formally following each assessment.

This programme is currently undergoing consultation but it is estimated that the course will comprise of the following assessment methods.

Year	Written exam	Coursework	Practical exam
Level four (year one)	19%	33%	48%
Level five (year two)	8%	58%	34%
Placement year (optional)	0%	100%	0%
Level six (final year)	0%	64%	36%

Timetables

This programme is taught over two semesters, normally consisting of 12 weeks of scheduled teaching and then assessment weeks.

- Scheduled teaching takes place between 8:30 to 20:30 Monday to Friday

- Wednesday afternoons are normally reserved for sports and cultural activities
- Work placements may entail different days and hours
- Part-time students may need to attend learning activities five days each week, depending on modules selected
- Timetables are available during enrolment week

[View term dates](#)

Fees and funding

Please [visit our student finance page](#) for information on tuition fees and student loans, as well as non-repayable grants, bursaries and scholarships, eligible to different groups, to support with study costs.

Below, you'll find extra costs associated with studying this course.

Clothing and footwear

You'll need to purchase some specialist kit and clothing before you enrol, or during enrolment week. In particular, appropriate footwear for practical sessions on the yard. We'll let you know exactly what you need to purchase before enrolment.

Hartpury University branded clothing is also available through our online shop, for those who wish to purchase it, however, this is not essential.

Optional field trips (up to circa £1800)

You'll have the chance to engage in various trips and visits as part of the course. While many of these are included in the course fees, there is the opportunity to engage in additional significant study tours, experiencing international horse management practices in person. It is estimated these costs will be approximately £1800.

Accommodation and living costs

Please [visit our student accommodation page](#) for details.

Livery

We have stabling for 230 horses on campus. If you're interested in having your horse at Hartpury on DIY livery while you study, please [visit our livery page for details and costs](#).

Equine Academy

If you have the talent and drive to develop your skills as an equestrian athlete alongside your studies, you may be eligible to join our Equine Academy. For further details including costs, please [visit our Equine Academy page](#).

[Fees & Finance](#)

Further course details

For further details about this course, including the programme specification and module descriptions, please visit our document library.

[Resource library](#)

Academies

If you're playing sport competitively, or you have the talent and drive to do so, you may want to join one of our Sports Academies. Over 200 international athletes have developed their talents with us over the past 10 years. You could be our next success story. We're a semi-professional sports environment offering world-class facilities and professional coaching and support services.

Accommodation

Settle into an accommodation option to suit your taste and budget – at Hartpury University, undergraduate students can choose to live on-campus surrounded by Gloucestershire's beautiful countryside or off-campus in the heart of Gloucester City centre. Enjoy the best of both worlds.

Finance

We can help you understand how it all works, and what you need to do next. Find out everything you need to know about tuition fees, student loans and bursaries and scholarships. In 2021/22, we provided assistance to over 1/3 of our students through bursaries, scholarships and grants, totalling a little under £1million.

TEF Gold

Our undergraduate provision has been awarded Teaching Excellence Framework (TEF) Gold in all aspects - Overall, Student Experience, and Student Outcomes.

Teaching quality

Ranked in the top 10 universities for teaching quality (The Times and The Sunday Times Good University Guide, 2024).

Graduate employability

97% of our graduates are in employment, further study or other purposeful activity (Graduate Outcomes, 2023).

Academic support

We've been named as the top university in England for academic support (National Student Survey, 2023).

Become a game changer

World-class equine facilities

Benefit from multi-million-pound equine facilities, used by world-class riders and horses from across the globe.

From research opportunities in our rider performance and hydrotherapy centres, to client-facing positions in our commercial therapy centre, you'll develop professional skills for the future.

[Equine facilities](#)

Success stories

Daniel's story

[Success Stories](#)

[Daniel's story](#)

“Being at Hartpury gives me a lot of flexibility to combine my riding and get the support I need with my degree. The Achievement and Success Centre, in particular, has given me a lot of help. It’s meant I’ve done well academically. Getting a degree has been really rewarding.”

Daniel Olley

BSc (Hons) Equine Business Management

"Completing my work placement at Hartpury’s summer equine events was a great experience. I learnt how to run events, secure sponsorship deals, organise volunteers, and ensure arenas and stables are ready for competitors. I even got to compete in an event myself. I built contacts and connections with a range of people, including the Hartpury Equine management team, which lead to my role as Yard Technician today."

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Clarissa Burnell-Price

High-performance equine environment

We have an international reputation for equine education. Our students are challenged to reach new heights in their fields.

If you’re passionate, hard-working and motivated to make a difference, we’ll give you the skills and connections to channel this energy into an exciting equine career. Whatever your career aspirations, you’ll find plenty of opportunities to gain experience on and off campus.

[Watch via YouTube](#)

Important information

Every effort has been made to ensure the accuracy of our published course information, however our programmes are reviewed and developed regularly. Changes or cancellation of courses may be necessary to ensure alignment with emerging employment areas, to comply with accrediting body requirements, revisions to subject benchmark statements or as a result of student feedback. We reserve the right to make necessary changes and will notify all offer-holders of changes as and when they occur.