

BSc (Hons)

Animal Behaviour and Welfare (with Foundation Year)

Love animals? Turn your passion into a rewarding career with our Animal Behaviour and Welfare degree.

Explore the fascinating science behind animal behaviour, tackle important ethical questions, and gain hands-on experience with domestic, exotic, and wild species. Build advanced skills to assess welfare, train animals, and lead the way in shaping a better future for animals around the world.

Enrolment year: 2026 ▼

Key Information



Course Duration: 4 or 5 years full-time; part-time available

UC **UCAS Code:** DF29



Part or Full Time: Full Time / Part Time



Level of Study: Foundation Year Degrees



Placement Year: Optional



Typical Offer: 32-48 UCAS tariff points or equivalent

Course information

Overview

You'll be exposed to the latest research in the field of animal behaviour and welfare, and develop industry-standard practical skills to assess welfare, measure behaviour, train animals and manage domestic, exotic and wild species.

Gain first-hand experience of fieldwork and research through trips and interactions with industry professionals. Whether you want to become a welfare officer, trainer or researcher, you'll be prepared for a range of careers in the animal sector.

If you're considering going into international conservation, an optional field trip to Mankwe Wildlife Reserve, South Africa, allows you to experience wildlife and conservation in action, for a valuable insight into this rewarding career.

Benefit from a 360-hectare campus that's home to a diverse range of animals. Our 70-species Animal Collection provides opportunities to assess the behaviour and welfare of domestic and non-domestic animals in different contexts. You'll also have access to our commercial farm and equine yard.

Entry requirements

UCAS tariff points | 32-48 UCAS tariff points.

A Levels | EE-DD or equivalent from at least one full A Level.

Vocational Awards | PPP in an Extended Diploma.

Access | 32-48 UCAS tariff points in an Access to Higher Education Diploma.

International Baccalaureate | 32-48 UCAS tariff points in an IB Diploma, to include one Higher at H3 or above.

Scottish Highers | 32-48 UCAS tariff points from at least one Higher. You must have completed two years study at Higher Level.

Irish Leaving Certificate | 32-48 UCAS tariff points from at least one Higher.

T Level | An overall grade of Pass.

Additional Information

In addition to the above, we require a minimum of five GCSEs at grade 9-4 (A*-C), to include English and Maths. We will consider equivalencies including but not limited to functional skills level 2, Irish Ordinary level, National 5s, IB standard level.

We will consider combinations of level three qualifications.

We welcome applications from individuals with equivalent, non-UK qualifications and mature students (over 21). We may interview as part of the application process.

Employability

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 get their graduate roles with their work placement employers.

Work placements and experience

The optional integrated placement year, between the second and final year, takes you into industry and prepares you to enter your dream career. Your work placement can be at any animal-based organisation, either in the UK or overseas.

Our commercial canine and equine therapy centres offer opportunities for students to gain industry experience ready for their careers – either on work placement or within voluntary roles. Alongside this, we'll encourage you to find a voluntary role with a local organisation such as an animal rescue shelter, wildlife rehabilitation centre or a zoo. Students have worked with organisations including the Blue Cross and West Midlands Safari Park.

Field trips and guest lecturers

Field trips and industry professionals in lectures form an important part of your learning, enabling you to experience different businesses, careers and best practices.

Recent field trips have included visits to places such as the Forest of Dean, Paignton Zoo, and Mankwe Game Reserve in South Africa. Extra fees are required – please see the fees tab.

Our students have heard from inspirational guest lecturers who are fire investigation dog handlers, conservationists, dog training professionals and zookeepers.

Graduate destinations

As an Animal Behaviour and Welfare graduate, you may go on to work in zoos, aquariums, wildlife parks, rescue, conservation or welfare centres. You'll also have the transferable skills you need for other graduate careers. Our careers team can support you to find and prepare to secure your perfect role. Recent graduate destinations have included:

- Welfare Inspector
- Dog Trainer
- Animal Welfare Assistant, Blue Cross
- Animal Carer
- Editorial Assistant, BSAVA
- Zoo Keeper, Bristol Zoo
- Fundraising and Adoptions Officer
- Animal Welfare Assistant
- Livestock Engagement Officer
- Researcher
- FE Lecturer
- Guest Experience Manager, Bristol Aquarium
- Instructor, Guide Dogs for the Blind
- Postgraduate study – MRes Animal Behaviour and Welfare, MRes Anthrozoology

How you'll study

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

What you'll study

You'll gain an in depth understanding of key topics in the field of animal behaviour and welfare, with core subjects ranging from behaviour, biology, and genetics, to biodiversity, welfare and ethics.

This course is comprised of both compulsory and optional modules, which you'll be able to choose from to suit your interests and career goals.

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 final year contribute towards your final degree classification.

Level three foundation year (year one)

Develop the knowledge and skills to succeed in the remaining three years of the degree. You'll focus on the key subjects including animal studies, academic skills and biological science, and work with animal students from across the department.

Compulsory Modules

Academic Literacy for University Studies

Understand and explore topics including the scientific method and enquiry, team working, research skills, and effective time management.

Professional Development in Practice

An opportunity to explore graduate destinations associated with your programme of study, building a portfolio of experiences aiding your professional development.

Exploring Current Concepts

Develop understanding and knowledge of literature reviews including constructing a rationale and summarising and presenting relevant information to suit a purpose, subject and audience.

Animal Studies

Study the fundamentals of animal care, husbandry and management for maximising animal health and welfare.

Biological Principles for Land-Based Scientists

Through the study of fundamental biological aspects, gain an understanding of how organisms come about and how they function and operate for survival and performance.

Level four (year two)

Your first year will focus on key topics such as animal biology, health, behaviour and welfare. You'll gain fundamental skills and knowledge that will equip you to study at higher levels in the course. Develop the key academic and vocational skills to be successful in a career in the animal industry.

Compulsory Modules

Animal Behaviour

Explore the factors affecting animal behaviour, including evolution, development, and human influence.

Management of Animal Health

Discover how diseases affect animals, health monitoring, and animal first aid.

Introduction to Animal Welfare

Gain an understanding of animal welfare, including stress, abnormal behaviours, influence of management systems, and legislation.

Systems Biology

Explore the anatomy and physiology of animals.

Genetics, Evolution and Biodiversity

Understand genetic and evolutionary principles and explore how they generate the diversity of life we see in the natural world.

Professional and Academic Skills in Animal Biology

Develop key academic and professional skills and the personal attributes needed to be successful in a career in the animal industry.

Level five (year three)

You'll cover a range of concepts, including animal welfare assessments and ethics. Depending on the optional modules you choose, you'll explore themes such as ecology, companion animal behaviour, training and management. You'll also start to think about the research process in preparation for your dissertation research project in your final year.

Compulsory Modules

Assessing Animal Welfare

Discover the use of behavioural, physiological and physical measures of welfare and welfare assessment in different contexts.

Ethics and Welfare

Explore the influence of ethical theories upon attitudes towards animals and the consideration of animal ethics and welfare in a range of contexts.

Research Methods for Agricultural and Animal Scientists

This module introduces students to the process of academic research, methods of research and analysis, helping to prepare them for reading research literature and conducting research projects in the future.

Companion Animal Behaviour and Training

This module will examine the behaviour and psychology of the domestic dog and cat and our ability to train these animals to meet our own needs. This module will investigate the role of training in the daily training for obedience, enrichment and husbandry practices. This will include evaluation of the different approaches to training of such animals, the ethical considerations and the justification of methods used.

Management of Domestic Animals

Develop an ability to evaluate animal welfare legislation and justify industry-relevant improvements to the keeping of captive animals. Knowledge will also be developed regarding how to appropriately handle and sex a range of non-human animal species.

Optional Modules

Field Course

Learn a variety of field techniques to collect data about a wide range of taxa including plants, invertebrates, birds, and mammals. This module includes an optional residential trip. Choose

between South Africa, Wales or non-residential day trips around Gloucestershire*.

Professional Experience in the Animal Sector 1

Reflect on and evaluate a period of industry experience within the animal sector.

Human Behaviour Change for Animals

Appreciate and apply the principles of how we can positively influence human behaviour in relation to animals and the environment.

**Residential field courses are run at an additional cost and spaces are limited. Minimum numbers apply for residential trips to be viable.*

Integrated placement year (optional)/Level six (final year)

Integrated optional placement year (optional)

An optional integrated placement year between your third and final years gives you the opportunity to put your knowledge and skills into practice and gain valuable industry experience. You could choose to enter a wide range of animal-based organisations, such as charities, zoos, rescue centres, boarding kennels and laboratories, amongst others.

Level Six (final year)

Your final year allows you to focus on areas that are of particular interest to you and will support you in your future career. You'll undertake a substantial research dissertation project, which will provide you with the chance to experience being responsible for planning, implementing and reporting on a specialist topic. In addition, you'll be exposed to contemporary challenges in the subject areas such as animal trade and welfare. You'll focus on advanced theory and gain an insight into where current research is focusing.

Compulsory Modules

Animal and Agriculture Dissertation

This module involves independent research and analysis in an animal or agriculture-related field with one-to-one support from an academic.

Welfare of Trade Animals

Explore the influence of the marketplace on animal welfare, including commercial use of wildlife, animals as entertainment and transportation of animals.

Cognitive Ethology

Develop the ability to critically evaluate the evidence supporting cognitive abilities in non-human animals.

Wildlife and Zoo Management

This module provides the opportunity to work with a UK zoo to explore the application of the biology learnt throughout the course to the practical zoo environment, through day trips. Students will also explore topics such as wildlife reintroduction and breeding for conservation.

Anthrozoology

Anthrozoology is the study of human-animal interactions, exploring the impact animals have on our lives, and the impact they have on ours.

Biodiversity and Conservation

The module will enable students to analyse and evaluate real world biodiversity conservation challenges and develop practical management recommendations based on science and industry best practice. The assessments are based on applied case studies, and incorporate some practical field work, an introduction to QGIS and management planning.

Professional Experience in the Animal Sector 2

Reflect on and evaluate a period of industry experience within the animal sector.

Teaching modes

The modules contain a mixture of scheduled learning – lectures, workshops, seminars and practical sessions – alongside independent learning. The Foundation Year also includes an internship using Hartpury's on-site facilities and industry links.

You're expected to dedicate at least two to three hours of independent study per contact hour. Some modules offer trips to locations such as zoos or assistance animal breeding centres, to show you how their knowledge can be applied within the animal industry. Some modules may invite guest lecturers to provide topical and industry-relevant talks.

Year	Contact learning	Placement learning	Independent learning
Level three foundation year (year one)	24%	0%	76%
Level four (year two)	26%	0%	74%
Level five (year three)	23%	0%	77%
Placement year (optional)	1%	80%	19%
Level six (final year)	17%	0%	83%

Assessment and Feedback

You'll be assessed through a mixture of written exams, practical exams and written assignments or coursework. 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 with each assessment either via a feedback sheet or summary page, or via an academic tutorial.

Year	Written exam	Practical exam	Coursework
Level three foundation year (year one)	24%	38%	38%
Level four (year two)	25%	50%	25%
Level five (year three)	14%	50%	36%
Placement year (optional)	0%	0%	100%
Level six (final year)	13%	32%	55%

Timetables

Each year of this course is taught over two semesters, normally consisting of 12 weeks of scheduled teaching and then assessment weeks, with an overview below:

- Scheduled teaching takes place between 8.30am to 8.30pm Monday to Friday
- Wednesday afternoons are normally reserved for sports and cultural activities
- 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.

Clothing and footwear (circa £100)

You'll need to purchase appropriate clothing and footwear before you enrol, or during enrolment week. We'll let you know exactly what you need to purchase in your enrolment guide – everything is available from our supplier's online shop for approximately £100.

Optional field trips (up to circa £2,000)

Some field trips may be included in the course fees, however, the below are not, as follows:

- Year two optional module, Field Course, offers one of three field trip options. The first two are residential trips to Mankwe Wildlife Reserve in South Africa and Slapton Ley in Devon, respectively. The third option consist of day visits to sites more locally around Gloucestershire. On each of these trips the students will study the ecology and ethology of the local area. The South Africa trip is popular, and places are limited and costs in the region of £2000, the trip to Devon costs around £600 while the trips around Gloucestershire will be free to those students who choose this option.

Accommodation and living costs

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

Fees & Finance

Further course details

Our [Resource Library](#) is where you'll find all the essential details about Hartpury University's courses. It includes *Programme* and *Module Specifications*, along with *Course Information Sheets* for every course. You can easily download a complete revision history for each of these, clearly showing the dates changes were made.

Course Information Sheets: These are PDF versions of the course webpages. They provide an overview of the course, what to expect during your studies, and the topics covered.

Programme Specifications: These are detailed, validated documents containing academic specifics for each programme. They include descriptions of the programme, its aims, learning outcomes, year and module structure, as well as teaching, learning, and assessment strategies.

Module Specifications: Each Programme consists of several Modules. Our Module Specifications outline the topics covered and the expected outcomes for students studying each Module.

Resource library

97% of students say
teaching staff have
supported their
learning well.

Data for Animal Behaviour and Welfare (with
foundation year) (Full time) at Hartpury University

For **more** official course
information visit
Discover Uni

[See course data](#)



"Hartpury is a great place to be if you have a passion for animals. There's so many opportunities on offer to suit different interests. I'm a dog person but being able to experience lots of different things, from the Equine Therapy Centre to the farm, was great for my development."

Lauren Branfield, Trainee Guide Dog Mobility Instructor, Guide Dogs for The Blind

Get in touch

Ask us a question, or enter your details to be kept up-to-date with news and events from Hartpury University.

Full Name *

First name

Last name

Home country *



What year are you planning to start your studies? *



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Meet our academic team

Get to know our dedicated and passionate teaching staff who'll help you achieve your very best. We're proud to have been awarded Gold in all three areas of the Teaching Excellence Framework (TEF): Overall, Student Experience, and Student Outcomes. This places Hartpury University in the top 15% of published institutions in England. Plus, we're ranked sixth in the UK for Teaching Quality, in The Times and Sunday Times Good University Guide 2025.

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.