

Info sheet

Interdisciplinary Master Human-Animal Interactions

The academic year **2012/13** will see the launch of a new, interdisciplinary master course at the Vetmeduni Vienna. It will be taught mainly by the members of the new **Messerli Research Institute**, together with members of other institutes (ITT) of the Vetmeduni Vienna, the Medical University of Vienna and the University of Vienna. Students will receive comprehensive, research-oriented training in many areas of **human-animal interactions (HAI)**.

The master course will be held in English. The **requirements for admission** include the successful completion of a related (bachelor) study in (preferably) veterinary or human medicine, biology or agricultural sciences. In addition, applicants must complete the standard admission procedure and be assigned a place at the University. Details of the admission procedure may be found at www.vetmeduni.ac.at

The master course focuses on the **provision and application of knowledge** relating to the following four basic disciplines:

- Animal behaviour and cognition
- Comparative medicine
- Animal husbandry and welfare, as well as the legal foundations of human-animal interactions
- Philosophy, philosophy of science and ethics

By providing students with theoretical and methodological expertise in the relevant fields of the humanities and natural sciences and by equipping them with the ability to consider information they acquire, the course will improve interactions and relationships between humans and non-human animals.

The interdisciplinary approach to issues of high societal and ethical relevance is a **novel challenge** for all students. To help them meet the demands of the course, students will enjoy the benefits of an attractive research infrastructure, an excellent learning environment and an up-to-date curriculum.

- Introductory courses in philosophy
- philosophy of science and ethics
- Legal basis of human-animal interactions
- Advanced courses in animal behavior and cognition; comparative medicine
- animal husbandry and animal welfare

- ethics; and the legal basis of human-animal interactions
- Further, detailed courses to help students acquire specialist knowledge
- Transfer and acquisition of general skills required for academic careers (such as presentation and publication techniques, scientific English, PR skills, acquisition of third-party funding, project management, etc.)

Methods of instruction

- Lectures, seminars and workshops
- Accompanying revision courses
- Method-oriented practical courses
- Interdisciplinary seminars and journal clubs
- Practical courses on planning, conducting and publishing experimental studies (in small, closely supervised groups)
- Participation in current projects in all basic disciplines (“into science”) as preparation for the master thesis

Results of the course

- Detailed knowledge and understanding of fundamental issues in the field of HAI
- Ability to cope with different scientific practices, languages and traditions
- Ability to participate in interdisciplinary research projects
- Specialized knowledge of one HAI phenomenon or field — with an interdisciplinary perspective
- Ability in ethical evaluation and systemic reflection of HAI topics that are relevant to society
- Ability to develop and undertake research projects independently, especially comparative, behavioural and clinical studies and projects relating to animal husbandry and animal welfare
- Ability to apply the skills acquired in appropriate professions or in academic/scientific careers
- Ability to incorporate scientific considerations into ethical aspects of human-animal interactions

Graduates will find opportunities in the following **professions**:

- Academic (scientific) careers in the life sciences, especially PhD positions

- Managerial positions in institutions related to animal husbandry (zoos, game parks, pet shops, sanctuaries, animal shelters, animal hostels, institutions that house laboratory animals, animal breeding facilities)
- Coaching for animal keepers, both private persons and persons attached to institutes
- Managerial positions in companies offering products or services related to animals
- Positions in authorities, agencies, commissions, counselling centres, animal-related organizations
- Positions in various associations and societies
- Trainers of animal trainers

The course **qualifies** students for both scientific and non-scientific careers in the field of human-animal interactions. It aims at educating the next generation of experts, providing students with the necessary scientific skills and ethical background to assume responsibility for structuring human-animal interactions.

Structure, duration, number of working hours and ECTS points

The master comprises **4 semesters** (2 years) and includes courses with a total of **120 ECTS** points. This equates to about 3000–3600 working hours. In the fourth semester the completion of a master thesis (representing 30 ECTS points) is required.

The master is composed of the following modules:

- **Four main (compulsory) modules** (80 ECTS)
 - Animal behaviour and cognition
 - Comparative medicine
 - Animal husbandry and welfare, together with the legal foundations of human-animal interactions
 - Philosophy, philosophy of science and ethics
- **Two compulsory modules** (10 ECTS)
 - General scientific abilities and soft skills
 - Courses to accompany the master thesis
- **Master thesis** (30 ECTS)

Academic title

Master of Science (MSc)