

English translation of the official publication

Interdisciplinary Master in Human-Animal Interactions

at the University of Veterinary Medicine, Vienna

Curriculum 2012

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1. General Provisions

1.1 Legal Basis

The legal basis for the Master's Programme is the Austrian Universities Act of 2002 (*Universitätsgesetz UG 2002*).

1.2 Goals of the Master's Programme

The goal of the Master's Programme *Interdisciplinary Master in Human-Animal Interactions* (IMHAI) at the University of Veterinary Medicine, Vienna is to educate graduates to take on responsibility for shaping human-animal relationship in science and society, both scientifically and ethically. The key components of the Master's Programme comprise teaching and practical knowledge application from the following major disciplines:

- Behavioural and Cognition Biology
- Comparative Medicine
- Animal Husbandry and Animal Welfare including Legal Framework of Human-Animal interactions
- Philosophy, Philosophy of Science and Ethics

The curriculum reacts to the challenges faced in human-animal interaction, given the changes in the role of animals in society, and conveys expert knowledge and methodical skills in the relevant disciplines in natural science and humanities, as well as encouraging reflection and critical thinking.

1.3 Qualification Profile

1.3.1. General Qualifications

Attending the Interdisciplinary Master's in Human-Animal Interactions Programme, students will receive a comprehensive basic and applied science education on top international levels. The lectures will be held (mostly) in English and qualify for academic and professional careers in socially relevant fields in human-animal interaction.

IMHAI graduates will be able to:

- take on responsibility in shaping human-animal interaction in science and society scientifically and in an ethical knowledgeable manner, as well as contribute to the debate and solving socially relevant questions
- design, carry out and direct behavioural studies in a scientifically sound, legal and ethically reflected way
- support and evaluate veterinary and medical studies, taking relevant legal and ethical aspects into account
- use expert knowledge independently, work on complex issues and make responsible decisions
- conduct research projects independently and apply knowledge that has been acquired
- evaluate the latest scientific findings independently and critically, as well as to reflect on them ethically
- work in a problem and team-oriented manner and solve complex interdisciplinary questions
- deal with challenges arising from constant changes in human-animal relationship
- present and argue their conclusions clearly in front of experts and laymen

1.3.2. Scientific Key Qualifications and Compulsory Modules

The scientific specialisation through research-oriented teaching in human-animal interactions consists of biological, medical, veterinary, philosophical and legal aspects that will be taught in compulsory modules as part of the Master's Programme. Emphasis will be placed on independent, scientific thinking and work, as well as team activities. These skills will be applied in a final Master's Thesis. Students will learn to formulate appropriate hypotheses with the help of their supervisors, work with existing published materials on the given issue, choose amongst methods to solve questions and carry out the relevant experiments, laboratory tests and measurements independently. This programme is designed to build a bridge between basic research and applied science, as well as dealing with and solving socially relevant questions.

Compulsory Module I: Animal Behaviour and Cognition

Students completing this compulsory module will have:

- a basic insight into the evolution, individual development, function and physiological (neuronal and hormonal) mechanisms of behavioural patterns in animals and humans
- the ability to understand cognitive and emotional processes as biological phenomena and the significance of the evolutionary, comparative approach in the research of these phenomena
- thorough knowledge of certain species and individual specific, life-relevant issues related to selected animal species – in particular those of canines – and their individual and social competences to solve these problems with the help of learning, memory and thinking processes
- the ability to understand the relationship between genetics and environment, as well as nature and nurture and the effects of domestication on behaviour and cognition
- knowledge about the role of early socialisation, life-long learning and personality, as well as the practical significance of interacting with animals
- knowledge about the ways animals express themselves with regards to regulatory needs, motivation and conflicts
- the ability to apply knowledge on cognition and animal behaviour to evaluate and shape human-animal interaction
- the relevant methodical insight (basic statistics, experimental design) and skills (observation, training and testing animals) to conceptualise and conduct behavioural and cognitive experiments independently and interpret, present and publish the findings
- the ability to recognise relationships of this field
 - with other biological fields (e.g. genetics, evolutionary biology, neurobiology, animal physiology)
 - with other cognitive science fields (e.g. philosophy of mind, psychology, sociology, artificial intelligence research, linguistics)
 - and with other fields in the context of human-animal interaction (animal husbandry and animal welfare, comparative medicine, philosophy and ethics)

Compulsory Module II: Comparative Medicine

Students completing this compulsory module will have:

- basic skills in the correct use and interpretation of scientific methods and laboratory technologies
- special knowledge that enables them to support and evaluate laboratory research findings to use them on human and animal patients
- comprehensive knowledge about differences and similarities in humans and animals with regards to their anatomy, physiology and genetics, as well as the associated diagnostic principles
- a basic understanding of the pathophysiological mechanisms of the most important diseases in animals and humans, as well as basic knowledge of analogue animal models and 3R methods
- basic knowledge of methods used to treat diseases and improve human and animal health using therapeutic and preventive measures
- the ability to assess methods in non-clinical, biomedical research and reproduce them in research projects according to the 3Rs (reduction, replacement, refinement)
- knowledge of various therapeutic strategies and an overview of the most important stages and obstacles from claiming intellectual property, proof-of-concept studies, GMP production and clinical studies to marketing
- sound knowledge for appropriately evaluating the suitability of animal and human studies from a medical point of view

Compulsory Module III: Animal Husbandry and Welfare including Legal Framework of Human-Animal Interactions

Students completing this compulsory model will have:

- the ability to evaluate the quality of animal husbandry and animal welfare, as well as human-animal relationships, based on scientific concepts and methods and with respect to its relevance to animal welfare, in addition to developing the ability to work possible improvements out
- basic knowledge of species-specific behaviour in selected domestic animals, based on the functional systems of behaviour
- the ability to recognise the most significant behavioural disorders
- the ability to deduce the standards required for keeping and interacting with animals from their normal behaviour
- basic knowledge of the most important production and husbandry systems commonly used in practice
- the ability to identify the ethological and psychological foundations for differences in human-animal relationship and describe their significance for human and animal welfare
- the ability to present recent studies on animal welfare and human-animal relationship and assess them critically, as well as carry out projects in this field using the appropriate methods
- basic knowledge of the legal framework relating to animal welfare and animal experiments
- the ability to evaluate practical questions in animal husbandry and the use of animals from a legal point of view
- the competence to reflect on the quality of the legal norms relevant for animal protection given the tense situation between animal-ethical standards, social requirements and the implications of scientific findings

Compulsory Module IV: Philosophy, Philosophy of Science and Ethics

Students completing this compulsory model will have:

- basic knowledge in theoretical and practical philosophy, overview of philosophical methodologies and general philosophical questions
- insight into the most important contemporary positions in philosophy of science
- the ability to reflect methodically on one's own science-based practice
- basic knowledge of the most important ethical theories, including applied ethics
- insight into contemporary debates on ethics in human-animal interaction
- the ability to reflect on common animal husbandry practises and ethical aspects in relation to veterinary medicine
- the ability to analyse ethical problems methodically and develop ethically sound solutions

1.3.3. Professional Fields

The Master's Programme is designed to train students to work in an interdisciplinary and problem-oriented manner and enable graduates to integrate into scientific project groups. Students will be able to apply their newly acquired knowledge and skills in related professions and will be prepared to establish their careers in new areas of human-animal interaction.

Graduates of the Master's Programme will be particularly suited for work in the following fields:

- academic career (PhD) in Life Sciences (universities and other tertiary educational and research institutions)
- research institutions in the pharmaceutical and biomedical sector
- non-university research institutions
- biomedical research
- management positions in institutions that keep animals (e.g. zoos, animal parks, animal shelters, animal homes, zoological products industry, institutions for animal experiments and animal breeding)
- public and private investigation bodies related to human-animal interaction
- private and public health institutions
- consulting and coaching private and institutional animal owners
- management positions in companies offering animal-related services or products
- authorities, commissions and consulting agencies
- training people who train animals
- related associations and NGOs

1.3.4. Practical Experience

Experience gained in practical courses and "hands on" trainings will help students getting an early glimpse of potential professional fields. At the same time, practical training encourages interdisciplinary competence and problem-oriented thinking.

1.4 Structure, Study Hours and Length of Programme

The Master's Programme consists of four semesters with a total number of 120 ECTS points, which will be acquired on the completion of four compulsory modules, two elective compulsory modules and a Master's Thesis. The compulsory modules include in total 78 ECTS points, which translates into approximately 61 credited hours per semester. Students will have to write a Master's Thesis (worth 30 ECTS points) in the fourth semester. In addition, two elective compulsory modules of a total of 12 ECTS points have to be completed to enhance the knowledge garnered in the compulsory modules.

1.5 Requirements for the Admission to the Master's Programme

A university or college degree (bachelor) in a subject-related study programme of at least 180 ECTS points (preferably veterinary or human medicine, biology or agricultural sciences with a zoological focus) is the admission requirement for the Master's Programme *Interdisciplinary Master in Human-Animal Interactions* according to § 64 (5) UG 2002 (Austrian Universities Act).

Other qualifications are an official application, participation in an admission process and the allocation of a study place. Information on the admission process can be found at www.vetmeduni.ac.at.

2. Courses and Teaching

2.1 Language Requirements

Courses are mainly held in English. This is to prepare students for work in an international context. In addition, English opens up the programme to international students as required in the Bologna process, benefitting the internationalisation of the research field and the desired international networking of students.

2.2 Credited Hours

The extent of lectures and other courses is defined in weekly credited hours per semester (SWS = Semesterwochenstunden) and ECTS points. Thus, one credited hour equals 15 academic hours of 45 minutes each, given a semester duration of 15 weeks.

2.3 Types of Courses

Lectures (*Vorlesungen, VO*) provide the basic concepts and extensive explanations of subject-specific contents that have been prepared and compiled in didactically appropriate form and are taught with the help of the appropriate media.

Practical courses (*Übungen, UE*) are designed to acquire practical and special skills for a future professional and academic career. The course work will be assessed continuously.

Conversatoriums (*Konversatorien, KO*) should help acquire skills with the help of subject-focused and competently led discussions, as well as to train problem-solving abilities. The work in the conversatoriums will be assessed on a continuous basis, with special emphasis on active participation.

Seminars (*Seminare, SE*) are designed for scientific discussion. Seminars require students to participate actively during the lessons. The students will work in small groups to apply the knowledge acquired to problems and study questions. Participants will be required to deliver oral and/or written contributions.

Interdisciplinary Practical Project Courses (*Interdisziplinäre Projektpraktika, PP*) are designed to give students a practical scientific education in one or several fields with the help of concrete scientific questions. To pass this course, students are required to present research results in class during the semester and in a written project report at the semester end.

Excursions (*Exkursionen, EX*) are designed to give students insight into practical situations and are usually part of lectures, practical courses or seminars.

2.4 Examinations

Module examinations are examinations on all of the material of a compulsory module that is not assessed on a continuous basis during the semester.

Course examinations (*Lehrveranstaltungsprüfungen*) are written or oral exams after the course.

Courses during which the student's work and knowledge are assessed on a continuous basis (conversatoriums, seminars, practical courses, excursions) usually have no final examinations.

Master's Thesis Examination: see Chapter 6

2.5 ECTS Points

The European Credit Transfer System (ECTS) is designed to facilitate the inter-university and inner-European accreditation of examinations. The allocation of ECTS points is made for each course individually, based on the student's workload related to the course in working hours (both in class and at home). ECTS points are also allocated to module examinations and the Master's Thesis.

The ECTS allocates 120 points to a two-year Master's Programme.

ECTS points are allocated separately for lectures that are examined at the end of the semester and courses during which the student's work is assessed on a continuous basis. If a course is examined on the basis of continuous work assessment and further is part of courses in an examination subject, the points allocated to this course are included in the total points given to the subject.

ECTS points are allocated to compulsory subjects, elective subjects, practical work and Master's Thesis as follows:

Compulsory modules	Elective modules	Master's Thesis	Total
78	12	30	120

3. Master's Programme

3.1 Credited Hours

A total of about 90 credited hours of courses per semester are scheduled within the four-semester Master's Programme.

The Master's Programme consists of:

- four **compulsory modules** – 78 ECTS in total
 - Animal Behaviour and Cognition (20 ECTS)
 - Comparative Medicine (20 ECTS)
 - Animal Husbandry and Welfare including Legal Framework of Human-Animal Interactions (24 ECTS)
 - Philosophy, Philosophy of Science and Animal Ethics (14 ECTS)
- two elective compulsory modules – 12 ECTS in total
 - general scientific abilities and soft skills (6 ECTS)
 - specialisation in the subject of the Master's Thesis (6 ECTS)
- Master's Thesis – 30 ECTS

3.2 Compulsory Modules in Master's Programme

Animal Behaviour and Cognition				
Sem	Title	Type	SWS	ECTS
1	Introduction to Cognitive Biology	VO+KO	2	2
1	Introduction to Animal Behaviour	VO+KO	2	2
2	Motivation, Emotion and Personality in Animals	VO+KO	2	2
2	Canine Evolution, Behaviour and Cognition	VO+SE	2	2
2	Exam of Module Animal Behaviour and Cognition			2
3	Into Science: Practical Course in Behavioural and Cognitive Sciences	VO+PP	6	10
			14	20

Animal Husbandry and Welfare including Legal Framework of Human-Animal Interactions				
Sem	Title	Type	SWS	ECTS
1	Applied Ethology and Animal Welfare I: Basic Principles and Concepts	VO	1	1,5
1	Behaviour, Husbandry and Welfare of Farm Animals	VO	2	3
1	Human-animal-relationship I: Biological and Psychological Fundamentals	VO, SE	1	1
1	Partial exam of Module Animal Husbandry and Welfare I			1
2	Behaviour, husbandry and welfare of companion animals including basic aspects of behavioural therapy	VO	2	3
2	Applied Ethology and Animal Welfare II: Animal Welfare assessment	VO+SE+UE	1,5	1,5
2	Excursion Animal Husbandry and Welfare- welfare constraints in farm animal husbandry	EX	1,5	1,5
2	Human-animal-relationship II: importance for animal and human welfare	VO, SE	1	1
2	Handling of farm and companion animals	VO+UE	1	1
2	Introduction to Animal Law I (focus: Animal Welfare Law, in German)	VO+KO	2	2
2	Partial exam of Module Animal Husbandry and Welfare II			1
3	Excursion Animal Assisted Intervention	EX	1	1
3	Journal Club Animal Welfare	SE	1	1,5
3	Projectwork: Applied Ethology and Animal welfare	SE+PP	1,5	2
3	Introduction to Animal Law II (focus: Laboratory Animal Law, in German)	VO+KO	1	1
3	Exam of Legal Framework of Human-Animal Interactions (in German)			1
			17,5	24

Comparative Medicine				
Sem	Title	Type	SWS	ECTS
1	Comparative Anatomy, Physiology and Genetics	VO+SE	4	6

2	Comparative Pathophysiology & Pathology	VO+SE	5,1	7,5
2	- Animal Models of Human Disease	SE	1	1,5
3	Comparative Aspects of Prevention & Therapy			
3	- Comparative Nutrition and Dietetics	SE	0,5	0,5
3	- Drug Development and Clinical Application	SE/UE	1	1,5
3	Exam of Module Comparative Medicine			3
			11,6	20

Ethics of Human-Animal Interactions				
Sem	Title	Type	SWS	ECTS
1	Introduction to Theoretical Philosophy and Philosophy of Science	VO	2	2
1	Introduction to Practical Philosophy	VO+UE	2	2
1	Introduction to Applied Ethics and its Methodologies	VO/UE	2	2
1	Reading-Course on Animal Ethics	SE	2	2
1	Exam of Module "Ethics of Human-Animal Interactions"			1,5
2	Current Debates in Applied Animal Ethics	SE	2	2,5
3	Practical Course on Ethics and Human-Animal Studies	PP	2	2
4	Supervision of the Master's Thesis (Interdisciplinary Tutorial)	KO	0	0
			12	14
1-4	Elective Compulsory Modules (free selection)		9	12
4	Master's Thesis			30

3.3 Elective Compulsory Modules

3.3.1. General Academic Skills (6 ECTS points in total)

This module is designed to gain and develop the general skills required for an academic career in the field of human-animal interactions. The corresponding courses (at least 1 ECTS point or equivalent per course) should be taken over the four semesters of the programme from the following areas:

- Science Communications
- Presentation and Publication Techniques, Public Speaking
- Scientific English
- Project Management, Acquiring Third-Part Funding
- Statistics, Bioinformatics, Experiment Design
- Applying for and Designing Animal Experiments (e.g. FELASA)
- Courses in Economics or Business Administration

3.3.2. Specialization in the subject of the Master's Thesis (6 ECTS points in total)

Additional courses on subjects from compulsory modules and other relevant subjects in the field of human-animal interactions such as didactics, psychology, sociology, animal-assisted therapy etc., to deepen the student's knowledge.

It is recommended to select the courses (at least 1 ECTS point or equivalent per course) in agreement with the supervisor of the Master's Thesis. These can be taken at the Vetmeduni Vienna or other universities. It is advisable to take these courses in the last two semesters of the programme.

3.4 Recommended Time Table

1 st semester			
Title	Type	SWS	ECTS
Introduction to Cognitive Biology	VO+KO	2	2
Introduction to Animal Behaviour	VO+KO	2	2
Applied Ethology and Animal Welfare I: Basic Principles and Concepts	VO	1	1,5
Behaviour, Husbandry and Welfare of Farm Animals	VO	2	3
Human-animal-relationship I: Biological and Psychological Fundamentals	VO, SE	1	1
Comparative Anatomy, Physiology and Genetics	VO+SE+UE	4	6
Introduction to Theoretical Philosophy and Philosophy of Science	VO	2	2
Introduction to Practical Philosophy	VO+UE	2	2
Introduction to Applied Ethics and its Methodologies	VO+UE	2	2
Reading-Course on Animal Ethics	SE	2	2
Exam of Module Ethics of Human-Animal Interactions			1,5
Partial exam of Module Animal Husbandry and Welfare I			1
Compulsory Modules (free selection)		3	3,5
Total 1st semester		23,0	29,5

2 nd semester			
Title	Type	SWS	ECTS
Motivation, Emotion and Personality in Animals	VO	2	2
Canine Evolution, Behaviour and Cognition	VO+SE	2	2
Exam of Module Animal Behaviour and Cognition			2

Behaviour, husbandry and welfare of companion animals including basic aspects of behavioural therapy	VO	2	3
Applied Ethology and Animal Welfare II: Animal Welfare assessment	SE, UE	1,5	1,5
Excursion Animal Husbandry and Welfare- welfare constraints in farm animal husbandry	EX	1,5	1,5
Human-animal relationship II: importance for animal and human welfare	VO, SE	1	1
Handling of farm and companion animals	UE	1	1
Partial exam of Module Animal Husbandry and Welfare II			1
Introduction to Animal Law I (focus: Animal Welfare Law, in German)	VO+KO	2	2
Comparative Pathophysiology & Pathology		5,1	7,5
- Animal Models of Human Disease	SE	1	1,5
Current Debates in Applied Animal Ethics	SE	2	2,5
Compulsory Modules (free selection)		2	2
Total 2nd semester		23,1	30,5
3rd semester			
Title	Type	SWS	ECTS
Into Science: practical course in behavioral and cognitive sciences	VO+PP	6	10
Excursion Animal Assisted Intervention	EX	1	1
Journal Club Animal Welfare	SE	1	1,5
Projectwork: Applied Ethology and Animal welfare	SE+PP	1,5	2
Introduction to Animal Law II (focus: Laboratory Animal Law, in German)	VO+KO	1	1
Exam in Legal Framework of Human-Animal Interactions			1
Comparative Aspects of Prevention & Therapy			
- Comparative Nutrition and Dietetics	SE	0,5	0,5
- Drug Development and Clinical Application	SE/UE	1	1,5
Exam of Module Comparative Medicine			3
Practical Course on Ethics and Human-Animal Studies	PP	2	2
Compulsory Modules (free selection)		4	5
Total 3rd semester		18,0	28,5
4th semester			
Title	Type	SWS	ECTS
Supervision of the Master's Thesis (Interdisciplinary Tutorial)	KO	0	0
Master's Thesis			30
Compulsory Modules (free selection)		1	1,5
Total 4th semester		1	31,5
Total		65,1	120

4. Examination Regulations of the Master's Programme

4.1 Examinations and Master's Examination

The following examinations must be taken during the programme. Examinations that consist of a written and oral section require students to pass the written part successfully before being able to take the oral examination.

4.1.1 Written and oral examination of the module Philosophy, Philosophy of Science and Ethics at the end of the first semester.

4.1.2 Written and oral examination of the module Comparative Cognition at the end of the second semester.

4.1.3 Written examination of the module Animal Husbandry and Welfare at the end of the second semester.

4.1.4 Written examination of the module Legal Framework of Human-Animal Interactions at the end of the third semester.

4.1.5 Written examination (multiple choice) of the module Comparative Medicine at the end of the third semester.

4.1.6 Master's oral examination on the subject of the Master's Thesis, after the positive assessment of the thesis.

4.2 Requirements for Courses, Master's Thesis and Master's Examination

The requirement for examination registration is the successful completion of the required module courses that are based on the continuous assessment of the student's work.

Third and fourth semester courses can only be attended, if the examinations mentioned in 4.1.1 to 4.1.3 have been passed successfully.

All the examinations mentioned in 4.1.4 and 4.1.5 must be passed before starting the Master's Thesis.

The successful assessment of the Master's Thesis is an obligatory requirement for the registration for the Master's Examination (4.1.6).

5. Master's Thesis

Students are obliged to write a Master's Thesis. The topic of the thesis must be taken from one of the compulsory modules. Students are entitled to suggest a topic or to select one out of the topics presented by their supervisors. The Master's Thesis can be completed at the University of Veterinary Medicine, Vienna, at other national and international universities, as well as at external subject-related institutions or companies. The topic has to be selected so that that students are able to complete the thesis within one semester (or a maximum of six months).

The internal guidelines for writing a Master's Thesis and taking the final Master's Examination must be followed and confirmed in writing as part of a supervisory agreement with the supervisor.

The Master's Thesis must be written in English and can be presented after passing the examinations mentioned above and providing the grade records required (4.1.1 – 5.1.5). The thesis should comprise about 50 A4 pages and be suitable as a basis for a scientific publication. It is recommended that students use their practical experience from the programme for the thesis, expand it and evaluate it critically.

As soon as the Master's Thesis has been submitted to the Registrar's Office (*Studienreferat*), it will be evaluated by the supervisor and an independent evaluator within two months. For Master's Theses written at an external institution, the external supervisor will also be asked to make an evaluation.

The Master's Thesis will be assessed by the supervisor and the independent expert according to § 73 (1) UG 02 (Austrian Universities Act) and with the following grades: *Sehr gut* (1; excellent), *gut* (2; good), *befriedigend* (3; satisfactory), *genügend* (4; pass) or *nicht genügend* (5; fail). A further expert evaluation is required, should the assessment result in a "fail" grade. The assessment will be conducted within two months of the renewed submission of the thesis.

6. Graduation

The final Master's examination will be conducted in front of a panel of examiners. It can be scheduled two weeks after approbation of the Master's Thesis (i.e. both evaluators assessed it positively and do not require another submission) at the earliest. The candidate has to coordinate a date with the members of the panel.

The examination panel will consist of the Vice Rector for Teaching (or a proxy named by her/him), the independent expert and the supervisor.

The student will present his/her thesis to the panel and will be subject to an oral examination on the subject of his/her thesis.

The grades for the examination are awarded according to § 73 (1) UG 2002 (Austrian Universities Act): *Sehr gut* (1; excellent), *gut* (2; good), *befriedigend* (3; satisfactory), *genügend* (4; pass) or *nicht genügend* (5; fail).

The Master's Programme will be considered to have been completed successfully if both the Master's thesis and the oral examination have been assessed with the minimum pass grade (4).

The overall grade of the Master's Examination is calculated by combining the grade from the oral examination (30%) and the grade from the master's thesis (70%).

Once the Master's Examination has been passed successfully (4.1.6), the Master's Programme is completed. Students will receive an official graduation certificate from the University of Veterinary Medicine, Vienna. This certificate entitles graduates to hold the title of Master of Science (MSc.).

The completion of the Master's Programme *Interdisciplinary Master in Human-Animal-Interactions* entitles graduates to start a doctorate or PhD programme in accordance with the Bologna guidelines and enables them to work in a management position in one of the professional fields listed in item 1.2.3.

7. Entry into Force

This curriculum will come into effect on October 1, following the announcement.