Module Definition Form (MDF)

Module code: MOD010983	**Version:** 1 **Date Amended:** 07/Mar/2025

1. Module Title
Equine Behavioural Science

2a. Module Leader
Rosa Verwijs

2b. School
Writtle School of Agriculture, Animal and Environmental Sciences

2c. Faculty
Faculty of Science and Engineering

3a. Level
5

3b. Module Type
Standard (fine graded)

4a. Credits
15

4b. Study Hours
150

5. Restrictions

Type	Module Code	Module Name	Condition
Pre-requisites:	None		
Co-requisites:	None		
Exclusions:	None		
Courses to which this module is restricted:	BSc Equine Science		

LEARNING, TEACHING AND ASSESSMENT INFORMATION

6a. Module Description

Understanding how horses think, learn, and respond to their environment is key to providing care that truly supports their wellbeing. In this module, you'll explore the behavioural needs of the horse and their care, management, handling and riding. It will include appraising how we manage horses to meet their needs and create environments where they can thrive for optimum welfare.

You'll explore the biological processes that influence how horses perceive their surroundings and how horses interpret this information to produce the behavioural output we see. You'll also investigate how the horse learns, looking at key learning theories of habituation and desensitisation, classical and operant conditioning. Building on this knowledge, you'll apply these principals to analyse horses' behavioural responses to various industry handling and training techniques, assessing their ethical implications based on current scientific research.

6b. Outline Content

- Behavioural needs, impact of domestic management on welfare
- Physiological regulation of behaviour – sensory system, information processing, behavioural responses
- Learning theories – habituation, desensitisation, classical and operant conditioning
- Application of learning theory in training methods used in industry – traditional and contemporary methods

6c. Key Texts/Literature

The reading list to support this module is available at: https://readinglists.aru.ac.uk/

6d. Specialist Learning Resources

Equestrian Facilities

7. Learning Outcomes (threshold standards)

No.	Type	On successful completion of this module the student will be expected to be able to:
1	Knowledge and Understanding	Demonstrate awareness and ethical consideration of the behavioural needs of the horse in domestic settings
2	Knowledge and Understanding	Discuss the role of biological factors involved in behavioural responses in the horse
3	Intellectual, practical, affective and transferrable skills	Analyse the application of learning theories in equine training

8a. Module Occurrence to which this MDF Refers				
Year	**Occurrence**	**Period**	**Location**	**Mode of Delivery**
2026/7	ZZF	Template For Face To Face Learning Delivery		Face to Face

8b. Learning Activities for the above Module Occurrence			
Learning Activities	**Hours**	**Learning Outcomes**	**Details of Duration, frequency and other comments**
Lectures	24	1-3	Lectures
Other teacher managed learning	12	1-3	Practicals, seminars/workshops, tutorials/critiques, student presentations - Weekly sessions involving taught theory, student led workshops and practical application of theory.
Student managed learning	114	1-3	Directed reading. Canvas activities. Preparation for workshops, seminars and summative assessments. Supporting material to direct further reading and prepare for assessments.
TOTAL:	150		

9. Assessment for the above Module Occurrence					
Assessment No.	**Assessment Method**	**Learning Outcomes**	**Weighting (%)**	**Fine Grade or Pass/Fail**	**Qualifying Mark (%)**
010	Coursework	1-2	50 (%)	Fine Grade	30 (%)
1500 word discussion of behavioural and physiological responses					
Assessment No.	**Assessment Method**	**Learning Outcomes**	**Weighting (%)**	**Fine Grade or Pass/Fail**	**Qualifying Mark (%)**
011	Coursework	3	50 (%)	Fine Grade	30 (%)
1500 word evaluation of the use of learning theory in training					

In order to pass this module, students are required to achieve an overall mark of 40% (for modules at levels 3, 4, 5 and 6) or 50% (for modules at level 7*).

In addition, students are required to:
(a) achieve the qualifying mark for each element of fine graded assessment as specified above
(b) pass any pass/fail elements

[* the pass mark of 50% applies for all module occurrences from the academic year 2024/25 – see Section 3a of this MDF to check the level of the module and Section 8a of this MDF to check the academic year]