Module Definition Form (MDF)

Module code: MOD010990	Version: 1 Date Amended: 07/Mar/2025

1. Module Title
Factors Affecting Animal Performance and Wellbeing

2a. Module Leader
Caroline Farr

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

2c. Faculty
Faculty of Science and Engineering

3a. Level
4

3b. Module Type
Theory and practice (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 Therapy, rehabilitation and performance, BSc Animal Therapy, rehabilitation and performance, BSc Canine Therapy rehabilitation and performance. MVetphys Veterinary Physiotherapy, Canine and Equine.		

LEARNING, TEACHING AND ASSESSMENT INFORMATION

6a. Module Description

This module will investigate the key factors that impact the performance and well-being of equine. You'll develop a thorough understanding of how various environmental and management practices impact equine health and welfare, particularly in the contexts of training, competition and everyday care. An emphasis will be placed on how these factors directly affect equine athletic performance, recovery and overall well-being.

Throughout the module, you'll engage in active discussions and analysis of evidence-based research, with a strong focus on considerations relevant to therapists assessing equine patients for therapeutic intervention. Practical application will be central, as we encourage you to integrate your knowledge in a way that informs best practice within the equine industry.

This module will include an in-depth examination of critical factors such as equine equipment, training aids, arena surfaces, farriery practices, saddle fitting, and the influence of rider biomechanics. Additionally, it will cover various equine training practices, performance disciplines, and training methods used to optimise athletic outcomes. You'll explore the unique demands of different equestrian disciplines and the impact of specific training regimens on equine musculoskeletal and physiological health.

Through a combination of lectures, hands-on practical sessions, and interactive discussions, you'll gain the skills to adopt a holistic approach to managing and enhancing equine performance and welfare.

6b. Outline Content

This module examines the key factors affecting the performance and well-being of equines, with a comprehensive focus on the following areas:

SURFACE:

Analysing the effects of various training and competition surfaces, including arena surface, turf, and outdoor terrain, on equine locomotion, joint health, and injury prevention.

Developing best practices for surface management to optimize equine performance and minimize the risk of lameness.

EQUIPMENT:

Exploring types of equipment used in equine training and competition, such as bits, bridles, training and exercise aids.

Evaluating the appropriateness and fit of equipment, with a detailed emphasis on saddle fit and its impact on equine spinal movement, rider balance, and overall performance. To focus on the indications of poor saddle fit and how this may impact performance.

FARRIERY:

Understanding the importance of proper farriery and hoof balance and their relationship to equine soundness and performance.

Identifying the signs of poor farriery practices, including irregular hoof angles and movement alterations, and assessing their impact on biomechanics and gait.

HUMAN INFLUENCE:

Investigating the role of riders, trainers, and handlers in shaping equine behaviour, both in training and competitive settings.

Examining the impact of human-animal interactions on equine performance, including the psychological and physical effects of rider posture, cues, and riding techniques.

Working with other sporting paraprofessionals to ensure animal welfare

MANAGEMENT PRACTICES:

Discuss key equine management practices such as bedding choice, stable design, paddock management, and feeding schedules.

Assessing how environmental, sustainability factors and husbandry practices impact animal welfare and performance.

Considering the impact of modern domestication on equine behaviour and well-being.

TRANSPORT:

Evaluating the effects of transportation practices, including frequency, duration, and vehicle design, on equine health and stress levels.

Reviewing strategies to minimize transport-related stress and its impact on subsequent performance.

BREED:

Analysing the diverse conformation traits, temperaments, and behavioural characteristics of various equine breeds, with emphasis on their suitability for specific sporting disciplines.

Exploring how breed-specific traits influence athletic performance, endurance, and discipline-specific strengths and challenges.

COMMON SPORTING PRACTICES:

Providing an overview of prevalent equestrian sports in the UK, such as dressage, show jumping, eventing, and endurance riding.

Reviewing common training methods used in these disciplines and discussing the potential negative effects of improper or excessive training on equine stress, welfare, and long-term performance.

6c. Key Texts/Literature

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

6d. Specialist Learning Resources

None

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	Understand the impact of intrinsic and extrinsic factors, including sustainability, on equine performance and well-being.
2	Knowledge and Understanding	Analyse how rider posture, balance, and movement influence equine performance and welfare.
3	Knowledge and Understanding	Assessing how environmental, sustainability factors and husbandry practices impact animal welfare and performance.
4	Intellectual, practical, affective and transferrable skills	Investigate evidence-based strategies to strengthen equine performance and promote long-term well-being.

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	1-4	2 hours weekly: Content delivery, quizzes
Other teacher managed learning	12	1-4	1 hour weekly. Teacher-led seminar- research discussion/ practical
Student managed learning	114	1-4	Reading surrounding topics to support seminar discussion and assignments.
TOTAL:	150		

9. Assessment for the above Module Occurrence

The assessment for some modules includes a presentation (see below for details on how this particular module is assessed). We recognise that presenting, especially to a large group, can cause significant anxiety or distress for some students. If this may affect you, please contact your Module Leader or the Disability and Neurodiversity Service as early as possible. We will work with you to consider appropriate reasonable adjustments. Depending on your individual needs, these might include, for example, presenting to a smaller group or presenting only to a member of academic staff.

Assessment No.	Assessment Method	Learning Outcomes	Weighting (%)	Fine Grade or Pass/Fail	Qualifying Mark (%)
010	Coursework	1-4	100 (%)	Fine Grade	30 (%)
2 components					

Assessment components for Element 010

Component No.	Assessment Title	Submission Method	Weighting (%)	Components needed for Mark Calculation?
010/1	Video/presentation		90 (%)	All
010/2	Seminar discussion		10 (%)	

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]