



THOMPSON RIVERS UNIVERSITY

Animal Welfare Certificate Program

General level – AWCP 1700

Advanced level – AWCP 1710

Animal Care – XWCP 0500

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The Kamloops campus of Thompson Rivers University is located on the Tk'emlups te Secwepemc territory within the unceded traditional lands of Secwepemcúl'ecw (Secwepemc Nation), where learning has taken place since time immemorial.

Welcome to the Animal Welfare Certificate Program!

We are glad to join you as you explore the fundamentals of animal welfare & animal sheltering. All course materials are now online; they are managed through Thompson Rivers University Veterinary Technology Department using Moodle. Students will work through and complete assignments and quizzes on the Moodle platform, working at their own pace. Once you register, your course facilitator will be sent a notification from the registrar. The TRU IT department will then add you into the system and the course, where you will receive a welcome email with instructions. If you have not heard from your instructor or if you have questions about the registration process, please reach out.

The only 'due date' is the 8-month final deadline – all assignments must be handed in by that date. Students do not have to work through the materials in any specific order but can choose to work on what best suits them at the time. The goal of the program is to familiarize students with concepts and information resources to give them a level foundation on all major concepts. As there is so much content, it would be impractical to expect students to memorize all the details of each topic, so all assignments and quizzes are open book but are designed to encourage students to really dig deep into what they have learned and how all the information ties together.

Students are required to submit every assignment and quiz to graduate.

We look forward to working with you, do not hesitate to reach out with any questions or concerns you may have.

Michelle Virdee, AHT

mvirdee@tru.ca

Your course facilitator

Michelle graduated from Thompson Rivers University's (formerly UCC) Animal Health Technology program (now Veterinary Technology Medicine). During the 90's she worked for the Kamloops Branch of the BC SPCA and served as a Special Provincial Constable with that organization. Once she left the BC SPCA as a staff member Michelle remained involved with the organization as a volunteer, taking on a variety of tasks, such as:

- Served on the community council for many years.
- Giving humane education presentations.
- Fostering.
- Advocating for a variety of topics, like improving animal welfare legislation, supporting public education initiatives with the provincial office, giving feedback on position statements and policies, for low cost spay/neuter programs and more.
- Working on raising the funding, engaging public interest, and supporting the efforts of the creation of the new Kamloops BC SPCA animal community center.
- Doing media appearances.
- Working with volunteers, including leading orientation sessions.
- Organizing, co-ordinating and volunteering for many fundraisers, including leading major ones such as the Fur Ball gala.
- Advocating for the mission of the BC SPCA with local politicians.
- Attending community events as a BC SPCA representative.
- Supporting a variety of other activities within the shelter.

In 2015, Michelle received the award for Volunteer of the Year for the Provincial BC SPCA to recognize her contributions. She has also assisted with the animal care needs in several disasters, including the BC interior wildfires of 2003, Hurricane Katrina, and during the more recent 2017 & 2021 fire seasons.

Michelle is particularly interested in the wellbeing of people in the animal welfare movement and hopes to encourage new and current animal welfarists to build in space for self care & compassion, and to adopt behaviours that support health and improve the interpersonal dynamics common to high pressure environments, like animal shelters. She enjoys working with students and helping explain concepts that students may be struggling to understand, so please reach out for a hand with anything that you require.

Introduction

The Animal Welfare Certificate Program was initiated as a joint effort between the British Columbia Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals and Thompson Rivers University. The program recently was reworked to expand the focus of the program to a Canada-wide model, including all the various Provincial Acts and additional animal welfare legislation. The purpose of the program is to enable animal care workers and members of the public who wish to learn more about animal care and welfare a means of upgrading their knowledge.

As mentioned, TRU will deliver this program using Moodle. Students will review materials, watch videos and link to other resources and documents through Moodle, so they will need to be able to access a computer or similar device and an internet connection that will support video play back. Students will submit their assignments via electronic means; however, we work to accommodate any special requirements or situations whenever possible.

This program will address the problem of delivering current animal welfare education to interested people who because of distance, work, financial or time constraints would find it difficult to upgrade their knowledge in this interesting field. There are continuous efforts to keep this program as accessible as possible for prospective students, including utilization of open-source documents. The program now also includes access to the Fear Free™ course, so students can get additional certification for no extra cost.

Once students have completed all assignments and quizzes, they will be issued an electronic certificate of completion, and will have their grades registered. Students can also earn the equivalent of 3 science credits for completing either AWCP 1700 or 1710 – however these cannot be combined for a total of 6 credits.

AWCP 1700 General Level

This program is intended for employees of animal care facilities who are relatively new to the organization. Some material directly pertaining to the BC SPCA is included but much of the information can be utilized by anyone interested in animal welfare.

Modules included in The General Level (theory) are:

Animal Care (0100): In this module the student will delve into the areas of animal anatomy, physiology, handling of animals often seen in an animal care facility including birds and wild animals, breed identification, animal disease, small animal nutrition, dog, and cat first aid, micro chipping, immunology, euthanasia, cleaning and disinfection, the husbandry of rabbits and other small animals and animal behaviour and enrichment. Videos produced at TRU and included in the course package will demonstrate many of the animal handling techniques discussed.

Shelter Operations & Law Enforcement (0110): This module familiarizes students with the core aspects of how shelters function and operate, including adoptions, relinquishments, assessments, public relations, the five freedoms, capacity to care, shelter standards and more. This module now includes discussion of all the various pieces of provincial animal welfare legislation from coast to coast and the Federal legislation that influences this work, including the core concepts and materials that are utilized by animal protection officers in enforcing the law. Those wishing to seek employment as a constable will need to take additional training through their province to become certified – the goal of this program is to lay in the foundations for all employees so that they can understand how these laws work and are enforced.

Human Conflict Resolution (0120): Every animal care facility must deal with people. Conflicts can arise between co-workers and between staff and clients. This module, via the use of several videos and a reference manual gives some ideas for defusing conflicts and creating a more harmonious workplace. The module also deals with issues such as “burn out”, motivation, customer service, personal development, and self respect.

Office Skills (0130): Most animal care facilities are run independently managing their own finances through fundraising, licensing, fines etc. It is therefore important that their employees have some basic business skills. This module is broken down into several areas which will begin to address these skill needs.

Safety in the Workplace (0140): This module has been adapted from material written by Diane McKelvey DVM, for veterinary clinics. In this module many safety issues are discussed. What animal diseases are zoonotic and how do you prevent contracting them when working with your animal charges? What other hazards are present in an animal care facility? This module covers chemicals, environmental issues, WHMIS standards, and much more. Students will also receive a TRU WHMIS certificate.

Humane Education (0150): This module covers a wide range of humane issues such as the history of the humane movement, violence prevention against animals (and its link to child abuse), responsible pet care, teaching others and giving an humane education presentation.

AWCP 1710 Advanced Level

This course is directed at the more experienced employees of an animal care facility or at people with an extensive background in animal care. The emphasis is more on management techniques (i.e., fundraising, managing volunteers, handling media, managing employees). Animal diseases are investigated in more depth with an emphasis on encounters with animals in settings outside the animal care facility (abuse investigations, wildlife rescue, etc.). Employees with a minimum of 2 years of experience working in this field may possibly qualify to enter the Advanced Level without taking the General Level course.

Modules included in the Advanced Level course are:

Animal Care (0200): This module builds on the AWCP animal care module (0100). Large animal and wildlife handling and first aid topics are covered, and videos are supplied. Animal diseases are explored in more depth using a body systems approach. Large animal and avian nutrition are covered as is Immunology. The module ends with a section concerning the enrichment of the lives on shelter animals and how they can be trained to be more adoptable.

Advanced Law Enforcement (0210): In this module we will build on issues discussed in the General Level course (0110). Whereas the topics in the General Level course centered mainly around general activities and concepts, the topics in the Advanced Level course will focus more on issues encountered by animal protection officers. (i.e., abuse investigations, ethics & dilemmas, incident investigation etc.)

Management & Interpersonal skills (0220): This module will concentrate on the practical considerations of customer service, employee management and mental health. The module is meant to give animal care facility managers and directors materials to motivate staff and help them to feel pride and satisfaction in the work that they perform. Material will be in the form of a textbook, Frontline Office Management for the Veterinary Team with supplementary court notes and videos.

Advanced Humane Education (0240): This module is a continuation of the Humane Education General Level module (AWCP 0150). Topics will include establishing a humane education program within your shelter, exploring animal issues, teaching controversial subjects, animals in therapeutic contexts and building a humane network. We utilize the textbook *Animal Assisted Therapy and Activities* by Phil Arkow.

Volunteers (0250): Finding good volunteers and keeping them is another top priority for most animal care facilities (or at least, it should be). This module addresses the issues of volunteer acquisition, motivation, and satisfaction.

Fundraising (0260): In most animal care facilities relying partially on public interest and support, fundraising is an ongoing activity. This module explores some do's and don'ts and will provide the facility management team with some new ideas. We will also be using the open source ASPCA book *101 More Great Shelter Ideas* to help with your fundraising projects.

Safety in the Workplace (0270): This is a continuation of the AWCP General Level Safety in the Workplace module (0140). In this module more zoonotic diseases are covered, and the disposal of Biomedical wastes is discussed. The section on Chemical and Drug Hazards is repeated in this module for the benefit of the students who did not take AWCP 0150.

Vehicle Maintenance (0280): Most animal care facilities who also participate in animal control and animal abuse investigations own a vehicle to perform these activities. This short module discusses some do's and don'ts of vehicle maintenance involving animals. There are no required assignments or quizzes for this section.

AWCP 0500 (XWCP 0500) – Animal Care

This course was designed for people who wish to work in ancillary fields where knowledge of animal handling, diseases and behaviour would be of asset. Examples of related fields where this course may be helpful are:

- kennel technicians for vet clinics or boarding facilities
- groomers
- dog walkers
- dog trainers.

It combines the Animal Care sections of 1700 & 1710.

Animal Care (0100): In this module the student will delve into the areas of animal anatomy, physiology, handling of animals often seen in an animal care facility including birds and wild animals, breed identification, animal disease, small animal nutrition, dog and cat first aid, micro chipping, immunology, euthanasia, cleaning and disinfection, the husbandry of rabbits and other small animals and animal behaviour and enrichment. Videos produced at TRU and included in the course package will demonstrate many of the animal handling techniques discussed.

Animal Care (0200): This module builds on the AWCP animal care module (0100). Large animal and wildlife handling and first aid topics are covered, and videos are supplied. Animal diseases are explored in more depth using a body systems approach. Large animal and avian nutrition are covered as is Immunology. The module ends with a section concerning the enrichment of the lives on shelter animals and how they can be trained to be more adoptable.

Recognition of Achievement

At the successful completion of each course (AWCP 1700, AWCP 1710 & XWCP 0500) the student will receive an electronic certificate of completion.

Requirements for the Successful Completion of the Sections are:

- a. Completion of all assignments and quizzes
- b. An overall average of 60%

Grade Determination

TRU uses the following grading system:

<u>Letter Grade</u>	<u>Grade Point Value</u>	<u>Definition</u>	<u>Percentage Range</u>
A+	4.33	Excellent	90 – 100%
A	4.00	Excellent	85 – 89%
A-	3.67	Excellent	80 – 84%
B+	3.33	Good	77 – 79%
B	3.00	Good	73 – 76%
B-	2.67	Good	70 – 72%
C+	2.33	Satisfactory	65 – 69%
C	2.00	Satisfactory	60 – 64%

A grade of 60% or better is required for a successful completion.

C-	1.67	Pass	55 – 59%
D	1.00	Minimal Pass	50 – 54%
F	0.00	Unsatisfactory	Below 50%
DNC		Did Not Complete	
W		Withdrawal	

Failing to complete the course within 8 months will automatically result in a grade of DNC. *Should additional time be required, you may purchase three-month extension, for a maximum of 11 months total – no further extensions are permitted.*

A maximum of one only rewrite or extension is available for purchase by contacting the registrar at continuingstudies@tru.ca to arrange for an extension.

Accreditation

Both AWCP 1700 and AWCP 1710 have been granted accreditation at Thompson Rivers University. This means that any student attending TRU can take either of these courses and earn three college credits. The courses are recognized by the Biology, Arts and Social Work programs at TRU. As of March 2001, we have entered into an agreement with the University College of the Fraser Valley and the University of British Columbia to have these courses recognized for credit in certain programs. Additional Universities may accept them; however, this will require the student to initiate and explore this possibility with their own institution. Please contact us for further details.

There are no credits available for XWCP 0500 – Animal Care.

Timelines

Because of course facilitator availability, course overlaps etc. the student needs to have completed the 1700 or 1710 courses within eight months to receive a certificate of completion.

For students taking the animal care course (XWCP 0500), they must have the modules completed in six months.

The student will be able to extend the timeline for General Level (theory) and Advanced Level (theory) by three months, but an Extension Rewrite fee will be charged. Only one extension will be allowed.

Assignments

All assignments are to be completed on Moodle, however certain accommodations may be possible for certain assignments, and the instructors are happy to work with people who need additional support; if you have concerns about completing these online, please contact us prior to registering for the course. Most students can expect to spend 10-15 hours a week on the course. Students who are ESL or have learning differences may need to consider leaving themselves additional time to review materials and to get support from their instructor.

Course Requirements

The student must have access to a computer, email and a local internet provider which allows for high enough speeds to watch videos and complete materials online. Students will find that successful completion of Grade 12 with some science background will enable a better appreciation of this course, however there are no required prerequisites to take any of the levels (1700, 1710, 0500).