

Programme information: New Zealand Certificate in Animal Management (Zookeeping)

What is the New Zealand Certificate in Animal Management (NZCAM)?

The New Zealand Certificate in Animal Management is a Level 4 programme that is delivered by Unitec Te Pūkenga's School of Environmental and Animal Sciences. It is ideal for people wanting to work with animals, or those looking to re-train for a new career in an animal-related occupation. The programme is designed to equip students with the skills they will require during both employment and/or further study. The courses provide knowledge and understanding of a wide range of subject areas including animal husbandry and health, animal anatomy and physiology, and the working environment of the industry.

What is the New Zealand Certificate in Animal Management – Zookeeping?

The New Zealand Certificate in Animal Management is split into three different strands. The Zookeeping strand, NZCAM (ZK), is a one-year full-time programme, starting in mid-February, and ending in late November. This programme is designed to provide graduates with the necessary skills and knowledge to gain employment as an entry level keeper in zoo/wild animal facilities in New Zealand.

Please note: This programme is delivered mostly extramurally (blended learning - Face-to-face and distance learning). Students must also attend 3 on-site block courses throughout the year and complete a total of 300 hours work-experience from an approved New Zealand zoo facility.

What is the industry looking for?

With growing public and legislative interest concerning the management of animals, animal-related industries are on the lookout for work-ready graduates. Our Zookeeping strand is recognised as a leading entry-level qualification in the zoo industry and will give you the opportunity to develop the practical and transferable skills needed to work in any New Zealand zoo/wild animal in human care facility.

What is the programme content?

The programme currently consists of seven compulsory courses (you may know them as papers) as shown in Table 1 below. You must pass all seven courses to gain the New Zealand Certificate.

Table 1: All courses are compulsory

Level	Course Number	Course Name	Credits	Semester
4	ANML4002	Anatomy & Physiology	15	1
4	ANML4902	Biodiversity & Conservation	15	2
4	ANML4903	Zoo Animal Husbandry	15	1
4	ANML4904	Animal Welfare & Behaviour	15	2
4	ANML4905	The Zoo Profession	15	1 & 2
4	ANML4906	Professional Skills & Competencies	15	1 & 2
4	ANML4907	Zookeeping Industry Work Experience	30	1 & 2

The courses cover a range of subject matter, including:

• In-situ and ex-situ conservation • Practical zoo keeping skills • Professional & Communication competency skills • Animal behaviour and welfare, including the five domains of animal welfare • Breeding and nutrition • Animal law and ethics • Enrichment and Animal Training • Records and recording systems • The zoo industry and associated organisations • General animal health and hygiene • Tertiary study skills • Housing, enclosures, and their maintenance • Health and safety in zoos • Anatomy and physiology.

How and when do I apply?

The NZCAM (ZK) is a popular programme, which starts around mid-February each year. It is best to apply earlier in the year and all applicants must apply before the 1 October 2024 for Auckland Zoo and 1 November 2024 for other zoos. However, if there are still places available on the programme after this date, applications will still be accepted.

The Unitec application process involves completing an online application form (enrol.unitec.ac.nz). If possible, please state work experience facility (zoo) to which you are applying on your Unitec application.

What are the selection criteria?

School leavers entering this programme must meet the following criteria:

To be admitted to this programme applicants must hold one of the following:

40 credits at NCEA Level 1, including 10 Literacy credits and 10 Numeracy credits; or a recognised equivalent; OR a relevant qualification at NZQF Level 2 or above; OR a recognised equivalent.

or;

1. Have completed the New Zealand Certificate in Animal Care (Level 3) or equivalent.

And,

2. Provide evidence you have been accepted by one or more approved zoo facilities in New Zealand to complete 300 hours work experience with them (more information in a later section).

Adult student entry requirements:

- Evidence of ability to study at a tertiary level
- Evidence of the equivalent NCEA credits as applicable for school leavers (above)

International students:

This programme is for domestic students only and is not open to international students.

What if I do not meet the selection criteria?

If you do not meet the selection criteria above, please consider the New Zealand Certificate in Animal Care (Level 3). If you successfully graduate from this programme, you will have the academic qualifications necessary to move up to the New Zealand Certificate in Animal Management (Zookeeping).

Additionally, gaining a work experience placement at a zoo is very competitive. Zoos look favourably on applicants that have shown a commitment to working with animals, volunteer work in some aspect of conservation and/or a previous qualification may be seen as evidence of your commitment.

How old do I need to be?

To meet Unitec's requirements, entry is open to anyone aged 16 years or older as of 1 February of the year of study, who have met the academic requirements and have gained a work experience placement at an approved zoo.

(Please note, that some zoos have differing minimum age requirements for their work experience placements, e.g. Auckland Zoo's minimum age is 18 years old).

So how does Blended learning actually work?

There can sometimes be a perception that studying from a distance is easier, or there will be less content. This is not the case, as this programme is equivalent to one year of full-time study.

The blended learning format and expectations:

- You will attend an online orientation for the programme the week of 17th February 2025. The online orientation will be for 2 days in that week and will give you the opportunity to meet your teaching team and introduce you to all courses within the programme and all aspects of studying with us.
- The programme starts on Monday 24th February and finishes on Friday 21st November 2025. It is expected that you are available for the final assessments at your zoo placement that are conducted in November.
- 3 in-person block courses at Unitec Mt Albert campus, which you are expected to attend (see dates below for 2025)

- Pre-block course weeks: in the week prior to each block course delivery may include on-line lectures, materials for reading and activities to be completed. This is to set you up for the material in each block course.
- Weekly on-line tutorials: A minimum of a 1 hour Zoom lecture/tutorial will be delivered on-line and is an opportunity to develop ideas and ask questions about materials and assignments. This is on a Wednesday 7 – 8pm (PLEASE NOTE: Day for on-line tutorials/lectures for ANML4002 Anatomy & Physiology may differ from the rest of the programme). All Zoom classes are recorded and can be accessed by students after the session.
- Self-directed learning: This is most of your programme and includes your time to read relevant information and complete assignments.
- Learning outside of block courses will be delivered using our web-based learning platform (Moodle) and Zoom. You will be given instruction as to how to navigate these platforms, but students are encouraged to investigate these systems, where possible, before the start of the programme. Moodle is the main point of contact for staff to inform you about the programme, however, they may also be contacted by email and vice versa.
- Unless otherwise stated, assignments will be submitted via the Turnitin platform, which allows feedback to students.
- Students enrolled in this programme of study are expected to be self-motivated and committed and have excellent time management skills.

How do the block courses work?

All three block courses are 5 days (Monday to Friday) and are a mixture of theoretical and practical learning. These will be held at Unitec (Mt. Albert campus, Auckland). You must attend all 3, unless cross crediting particular courses.

2025 block course dates are:

1. 4 days; 14th April to 17th April Incl.
2. 5 days; 23rd to 27th June incl.
3. 5 days; 22nd September to 26th September incl.

Block courses are intensive; however, every effort is made to provide breaks and structure the timetable for a mixture of theoretical and practical learning. Block courses are important for building relationships with staff and other students to create a community of learning and shared experiences to help support you through the distance components of your study. Block courses start at 8.30am each day, so if you are travelling from outside Auckland to attend the block course, we advise that you arrive a day early to account for any travel delays. Each block course ends at 5.00pm each day and at the latest on the last day. Food and drinks can usually be purchased from various outlets on campus. Please be advised that some block courses take place outside regular semester therefore some food options may be limited.

Unfortunately, we are unable to provide accommodation for those travelling from outside of Auckland, however there is plenty of accommodation available within the West Auckland area.

How does work experience work?

There are a few requirements you must meet to successfully complete your work experience placement:

- You must obtain a total of 280 hours structured work experience and 20 hours self-directed learning with regards to your work experience (total 300 hours) at an approved facility to meet the requirements of course ANML4907 - Zookeeping Industry Work Experience within the year of study (see next section for a definition of an 'approved facility'). (The only exception to this is special circumstance, e.g., full-time zoo keeping staff who have their employer's support).
- You will not be accepted onto the programme until your work experience placement has been authorised in writing by the facility/facilities concerned;
- Each facility will have its own schedule for completion of work placement, so you will have to be flexible to fit in with their requirements.
- There is an expectation that you are capable to carry out required tasks, including those with dangerous animals across an 8-hour working day. It is within the zoo placement mandate to discontinue practical placement, if they are concerned about student capability.

Table 2: Hours required for ANML4907 zoo work experience

<i>Animal Group</i>	<i>Minimum work experience hours required</i>	<i>Self-directed Study hours required</i>	<i>Additional Hours (yours/zoo's taxa choice).</i>	<i>Total hours</i>
<i>Invertebrates, fish, amphibians & Reptiles</i>	<i>40</i>	<i>5</i>	<i>See below</i>	<i>45</i>

<i>Mammals</i>	<i>80 (minimum of 64 on mammals & 16 hours on dangerous animals below)</i>	<i>5</i>	<i>See below</i>	<i>Minimum 69</i>
<i>Dangerous Animals</i>	<i>16</i>	<i>5</i>	<i>See below</i>	<i>21</i>
<i>Birds</i>	<i>40</i>	<i>5</i>	<i>See below</i>	<i>45</i>
<i>Taxa of your choice</i>	<i>-</i>	<i>-</i>	<i>120</i>	<i>120</i>
Total hours for course	160	20	120	300

Please note: There is an expectation that you are physically capable of carrying out moderately physical tasks across an 8-hour working day.

Approved facilities: The facility has an obligation to instruct you in the practical skills of zoo keeping during your work experience, up to a maximum of 280 hours. The facility/facilities where you gain your work experience will depend largely on where you are based during your study period.

Facilities that have an existing agreement with Unitec Te Pūkenga are listed in the next section (Table 3). If you wish to gain work experience at any other facility, you must contact the Programme Coordinator first to discuss options and suitability.

What are the approved zoo facilities?

Table 3

Zoo/Facility	Contact Name	Phone	Email
Auckland Zoo	<i>See next section</i>		
Wellington Zoo	Harmony Neale	+64 4 381 6755	Harmony.Neale@wellingtonzoo.com
Oriana Wildlife Park, Christchurch	Catherine Roughton	+64 3 359 7109 ext. 810	hkn@oranawildlifepark.co.nz
Willowbank Wildlife Reserve, Christchurch	Shaun Horan	+64 3 359 6226	shaun@willowbank.co.nz
Hamilton Zoo, Hamilton	Mark Turner	+64 7 838 6961	Mark.Turner@hcc.govt.nz
*Brooklands Zoo, New Plymouth	Brooklands Zoo c/- New Plymouth District Council	+64 6 759 6060	enquiries@npdc.govt.nz
*Natureland, Nelson	Alix Rimmer		alix@natureland.nz
*Butterfly Creek, Auckland	Jess Ayres	+64 9 275 8880	jess@butterflycreek.co.nz

**These facilities cannot provide for the full scope of animal experience required as per Table 2 and therefore applicants must contact other approved facilities to gain experience in areas that cannot be accommodated by these facilities.*

How do I apply for a work placement position?

There are around 35 placements available across New Zealand each year and gaining a placement is highly competitive, therefore, it is strongly advised to contact zoos as soon as possible to express your interest.

If applying to Auckland Zoo do not apply to them directly - see the instructions below. For all other facilities, apply directly to the facility you are aiming to gain work experience (see Table 3).

Each zoo will have different cut off dates for work experience applications (some as early as July) and, as stated before, may require applicants to be older than Unitec's minimum age of 16.

We advise you to start the process of applying for a work placement and lodge your online application for the programme at the same time.

If you are successful in obtaining a work experience position, AND fulfil Unitec's minimum entry requirements for the programme, you will automatically be accepted into the programme.

Regardless of where you apply for work experience, please clearly state which zoo facility/facilities you are applying to for work experience when you submit your Unitec online application.

I'm planning on gaining a placement at Auckland Zoo. What do I need to know?

Auckland Zoo accepts a maximum of 11 students per year for the structured work experience relating to the New Zealand Certificate in Animal Management (Zookeeping) and applicants **must be a minimum of 18 years old**.

Work experience at Auckland Zoo is usually held on either a Monday or Tuesday 8.00am to 4.30pm minimum, every week from late February through to November. To be fair to all, successful applicants are not able to choose their work experience day, as competition is very high for these positions.

Important: Do not send information directly to Auckland Zoo.

The cut-off date for submitting your applications to Unitec for a place in Auckland Zoo is 1st October and interviews are timetabled for late October/early November. To enable us to choose the correct students for placement at Auckland Zoo, you are required to attach **the following additional information to your Unitec application** (just as you would also attach your school results and proof of residence):

- 1) an up to date and relevant CV, and
- 2) a letter of no more than 300 words with the following information:
 - What you hope to gain from this certificate and why.
 - What your involvement has been with animals or environmental/conservation activities, e.g. pets, volunteer work, previous study, association with organisations, in the past.
 - How you view the role of zoos in today's society, with particular reference to New Zealand.

Please note: All Auckland Zoo work experience students must attend an induction course at Auckland Zoo at the beginning of the programme. This is a requirement of Auckland Zoo only and is for the benefit and safety of all students, staff, public and animals.

Do I need computer access?

Yes, prospective students must have consistent access to a computer with broadband, and with appropriate word processing and slide presentation software, which is provided by Unitec and downloadable once you have enrolled. You need to be proficient at word processing, web browsing and email communication; Unitec's Learning and Achievement Team offer upskilling in this area.

How much does the programme cost?

This programme costs **approximately** \$7,500 (NZD), not including recommended reading (see next section), travel and accommodation costs during block courses, and work experience expenses. If studying full time, students are eligible for student loans and allowances.

How will I be supported during my study?

In addition to your individual lecturers, your Programme Coordinator will help you with any issues you experience. In addition, there are many support mechanisms within the School and Unitec that you can access. You will be informed of these during the programme orientation in February, and your Programme Coordinator can also provide you with advice on how to access these support systems.

Where can I get more information on the care of zoo animals?

Highly recommended reading:

- Zoo keeping: An Introduction to the Science and Technology (Irwin, Stoner & Cobaugh) University of Chicago Press
- Zoo Biology and Management (Rees, P.A.) Wiley-Blackwell
- Zoo Animals: Behaviour, Management and Welfare (Hosey, Melfi & Pankhurst) Oxford Uni Press
- Zoo studies: Living collections, their animals and visitors (Rees, P.A.) Cambridge, United Kingdom ; New York : Cambridge University Press
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Other recommended reading:

- The Welfare Ark (Margodt K.) University Press
- The Zoo Story (de Courcy C.) Penguin Books
- Second Nature (Shepherdson D.J.) Smithsonian Institute
- Ethics on the Ark (Norton B.J. et al) Smithsonian Institute
- Wild Mammals in Captivity (Kleiman D.G. et al) University of Chicago Press
- Last Animals at the Zoo (Tudge C.) Island Press
- Zoo Culture (Mullen B. and Marvin G.) University of Illinois Press
- Environmental Enrichment for Captive Animals (Young, R. Blackwell Science Ltd
- After the Ark (Mazur N.) Melbourne University Press
- Modern Ark, The Story of Zoos Past, Present and Future (Croake V.) Avon Books Inc.
- Different Nature, A (Hancock's D.) University of California Press
- Measuring Behaviour - An Introductory Guide. 2nd Ed (Martin P. and Bateson P.) Cambridge University Press
- Zoo - A history of zoological gardens in the west (Baratay E. and Hardouin-Fugier E.) Reaktion Books Ltd
- Zoo Man (Maple T. and Archibald E.) Longstreet Press
- New Worlds, New Animals: From Menagerie to Zoological Park in the 19th Century (Hoage and Deiss)
- Building a Future for Wildlife – The World Zoo and Aquarium Conservation Strategy (Olney, P.J.S.) WAZA Executive Office
- The Five Domains [The Five Domains \(zooaquarium.org.au\)](http://zooaquarium.org.au)
- Websites: ZAA; WAZA; ASZK, IUCN; CITES; DoC (NZ); MPI, and all zoo websites (with particular reference to New Zealand and Australian Zoos).

How do I get further information about the programme?

Programme Advisors at Student Central: Email: study@unitec.ac.nz; Telephone: 0800 10 95 10

If you have any other specific questions, please contact the Programme Coordinator, Joanne Thomas
Email: jthomas@unitec.ac.nz