Learning down under

Laura Styles works for Study Options, a service that advises vets and students on options for further study in Australia and New Zealand

COURSES taught by Australian and New Zealand universities are becoming increasingly popular with students from around the world, offering travel opportunities and a wide range of courses and research opportunities for qualified veterinarians. Cross-accreditation agreements between the relevant veterinary registration bodies and associations make it straightforward for UK vets to undertake further study in Australia and New Zealand.

Murdoch University in Perth, Western Australia, for example, is spearheading the evolving discipline of conservation medicine, which involves the integration of veterinary science, conservation biology and public health to advance biodiversity conservation; address issues associated with the inter-relationships between human, animal and ecosystem health; and study the effects of global environmental change on these health interrelationships. There is an increasing recognition that veterinarians have an essential role within interdisciplinary teams working on international environmental conservation projects and its master of veterinary studies in conservation medicine course is designed to equip them with the ability to work within this field.

James Cook University (JCU) is located in the wet and dry tropics of northern Queensland, offering access to unusual species and expertise, as well as the opportunity to engage with research areas of veterinary medicine that are not prominent within the UK. The distinctiveness of the programmes at JCU lies in its tropical focus and the opportunity individuals have to undertake research in aquatic and terrestrial animals.

JCU offers a masters in tropical veterinary science, which is a one-and-a-half-year coursework campus-based programme designed for those who wish to further their training in tropical veterinary health issues and reproduction.

Research opportunities

Australian and New Zealand universities provide an engaging, pioneering and dynamic research environment. The University of Queensland’s Equine Laminitis Research Unit is a leading research centre. Veterinarians working at this unit demonstrated that laminitis development was enzyme based, due to a carbohydrate overload, which caused a paradigm shift in understanding laminitis and provided a plausible mechanism for the disease and led to the first practical, scientifically validated therapy to combat it.

The University of Melbourne offers opportunities for postgraduate researchers to work alongside academics such as Paul Hemsworth, a leader in the field of animal welfare and human-animal interactions in domestic species, and Marshall Lightowlers. Professor Lightowlers has made a significant contribution to developing recombinant vaccines to prevent hydatid disease in domestic animals and humans. The University of Adelaide’s School of Animal and Veterinary Sciences has a dedicated campus outside of the city, providing an opportunity to research animal production and genetics, wildlife ecology, animal welfare and laboratory animal science.

Options to study in Australia and New Zealand

The following universities work with Study Options (www.studyoptions.com) to provide opportunities for overseas students

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>University</th>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Programmes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Massey University</td>
<td>Palmerston North, NZ</td>
<td>R, O, PGC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>University of Sydney</td>
<td>Sydney, New South Wales</td>
<td>R, O, PGC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>University of Queensland</td>
<td>Gatton, Queensland</td>
<td>R, PGC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>James Cook University</td>
<td>Townsville, Queensland</td>
<td>R, PGC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>University of Adelaide</td>
<td>Roseworthy, South Australia</td>
<td>R</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Murdoch University</td>
<td>Perth, Western Australia</td>
<td>R, PGC</td>
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<tr>
<td>University of Melbourne</td>
<td>Melbourne, Victoria</td>
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Educational programmes: R, Research; O, Online; PGC, Postgraduate coursework

Useful facts

- The academic year starts in February. Some programmes offer an intake in July.
- Research students can apply to start at any time.
- Veterinary qualifications from the UK are accepted as sufficient to apply for entry to postgraduate coursework programmes.

Costs

The costs of studying in Australia and New Zealand can be more expensive than studying in the UK as anyone who is not a citizen or permanent resident of Australia or New Zealand is classed as an international student, and is therefore liable to pay full fees. There are some funding options available: students wanting to study postgraduate courses can apply for scholarships from the universities as well as from external organisations such as the Australian government and the Britain-Australia Society (www.britain-australia.org.uk). Research students should note that in New Zealand, PhD students pay domestic,
rather than international, fees meaning that the average cost of a PhD in veterinary science in New Zealand is equivalent to around £5350 per year.

It is also possible to continue working alongside studying, as Australian and New Zealand student visas give students the right to work, although depending on the type of course, these work rights may be restricted to a certain number of hours.

**Online study**

For those who wish to combine study with work in the UK, there are options to access academics and courses in Australia and New Zealand through a range of online programmes. These allow students to choose modules that correspond most closely with their interests and, in many cases, build them up to a full qualification.

The University of Sydney offers an online masters of veterinary public health management, which integrates scientific skill and leadership and is designed to address the increasing need for veterinarians with developed skills to benefit the health of the community.

Massey University in New Zealand offers the opportunity to build up online courses towards a masters in veterinary medicine. Courses differ each year, but one example of a 2015 course is canine and feline emergency medicine. This aims to help vets to confidently assess, stabilise and prioritise patients’ cardiovascular, respiratory and neurological systems. It is taught by Sarah Haldane, previously a president of the anaesthesia, emergency and critical care chapter of the Australian and New Zealand College of Veterinary Scientists.

**Where to get more information**

Further information can be found at www.studyoptions.com, the official application support service for UK-based students wanting to apply to university in Australia and New Zealand. The service is free and independent, offering advice and counselling to help students choose the right course, at the right university. We also guide them through the application process, from making an application to accepting an offer of a place. We can provide assistance with practicalities, including, funding, student accommodation and student visas. As the official representative of Australian and New Zealand universities in the UK, we aim to ensure that the application process is as straightforward and stress-free as possible.

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