

Online Chat Event Transcript 2nd July 2008

Royal Veterinary College

This is a transcript of the online chat event that happened for the distance learning courses in Livestock Health & Production and Veterinary Epidemiology & Public Health on 2nd July 2008. Personal information about participants has been removed for data protection purposes.

<p>The websites for the courses are:</p> <p>For MSc, Postgraduate Diploma and Postgraduate Certificate in Livestock Health and Production http://www.londonexternal.ac.uk/prospective_students/postgraduate/royalvet/stock/index.shtml</p> <p>For MSc, Postgraduate Diploma and Postgraduate Certificate in Veterinary Health & Production http://www.londonexternal.ac.uk/prospective_students/postgraduate/royalvet/ve_and_ph/index.shtml</p>	Comment
<p>The academic leadership for these courses comes from The Royal Veterinary College. It is the UK's longest established veterinary school and one of the most highly regarded institutions of its kind in Europe. The College has over 1,500 students enrolled on undergraduate, postgraduate and continuing professional development programmes and four state-of-the-art teaching and referral hospitals, providing services to the public and the veterinary profession. More information about the RVC can be found on their website at this address: http://www.rvc.ac.uk/</p>	Comment
<p>If I want to study for the MSc in Veterinary Public Health and Epidemiology - what differences would there be with the full time taught course?</p>	Question
<p>With our MSc in Veterinary Epidemiology and Public Health by distance learning, you can study the course material from the comfort of your own home, whereas with the full time cause, you are tutor led and study is structured. For your information, the tutors are the same for both the taught-led and distance learning courses.</p>	Answer
<p>Zoë Chapman studied in the UK, she said, "It's important to me that we can communicate with the tutors. They are always willing to provide help. Their support gives you a lot of courage." Whilst Jacoba Joubert took a Postgraduate Diploma in Livestock Health and Production from South Africa. She talks about the quality of the course, "It is one of the best compiled courses I have ever seen! I enjoyed every moment of studying, even if it meant only studying at night. With the knowledge I have gained, I opened my own business, working in the field of reproduction, and I will never look back!"</p>	Comment
<p>I assume it is not a problem to move location (move to other country) during the course because its distance learning?</p>	Question
<p>You can study these courses anywhere in the world. Studying through the University of London External System is an ideal solution for anyone who is moving between countries but who also wants to continue their higher education.</p>	Answer
<p>Did you know that the University of London was the first university to offer opportunities to study for its degrees worldwide to those who were not able to study on campus in London. University of London degrees have been available through its External System since 1858, so we have a track record in delivering courses to you wherever you live and whatever your circumstances.</p>	Comment
<p>After finishing this course, can I apply for job in UK like a full time taught course student?</p>	Question

<p>If this is a question about visas I suggest that you consult http://www.ukba.homeoffice.gov.uk/workingintheuk/.</p> <p>Many of the University of London External System alumni hold important roles across the globe. Not only do we have an excellent record of successful students but the University of London degree is awarded by Royal Charter and is recognised worldwide. More information on the University of London External System Alumni can be found on our website at this address: http://www.londonexternal.ac.uk/alumni/</p>	Answer
Will I be able to attend the graduation ceremony at London University?	Question
<p>The External System holds a presentation ceremony once a year at a venue in central London. Graduates and their guests come from all over the world to attend the ceremony, distance is no barrier! More information on the Graduation Ceremony can be found on our website at this address: http://www.londonexternal.ac.uk/alumni/graduation_photos/index.shtml</p>	Answer
<p>Mary Logan studied in the UK and graduated with Distinction on the MSc in Veterinary Epidemiology and Public Health in December 2006. Here she talks about catching the study bug, "Working for an MSc in my spare time has required considerable commitment and was a real challenge. I have really enjoyed the opportunity to study for a postgraduate degree though, and the knowledge that I have gained has proved to be invaluable in my job. I am even contemplating further postgraduate study!"</p>	Comment
How long is this course for?	Question
<p>The MSc has a 5-year registration period and you would need to study and successfully pass exams in seven modules. There is also a Postgraduate Diploma and Postgraduate Certificate in the MSc in Veterinary Epidemiology and Public Health. For your information, the modules of the MSc are also available as stand-alone 240-hour short courses.</p>	Answer
How easy is it for one to take all the courses in the MSc in one session?	Question
It wouldn't be possible in one session. The quickest you can do the full MSc is two years.	Answer
Okay thanks but can I take all the core courses (of the MSc) in the first year?	Question
<p>Yes. That's right.</p> <p>The structure for the Livestock Health Course is shown here: http://www.londonexternal.ac.uk/prospective_students/postgraduate/royalvet/stock/structure.shtml and the Vet Epi course is here: http://www.londonexternal.ac.uk/prospective_students/postgraduate/royalvet/ve_and_ph/index.shtml</p>	Answer
What are the qualifications needed for admission to the Msc Public Health degree?	Question
<p>The entrance requirements for the MSc in Veterinary Epidemiology and Public Health are as follows:</p> <p>a) a second class honours degree or the equivalent in a scientific subject, veterinary science, animal science, agriculture, biological sciences or medicine; or (b) a second class honours degree in a scientific discipline which has, in the opinion of the University, included suitable training. All applicants must provide evidence of their English language ability. Applicants whose first language is not English must provide documentary evidence acceptable to the University that the applicant has, no more than three years prior to the application, either: - been educated in English (minimum 18 months) or - worked in English (minimum 18 months) or - passed a test of English Proficiency acceptable to the University of London – for example IELTS with an overall score of 6.5 with a</p>	Answer

minimum of 6.0 in each sub-test or TOEFL score of 580 (or 237 in the computerised test) plus 4.5 in the Test of Written English (TWE)/Essay Rating.	
Is it possible to transfer credits from previous postgraduate studies and/or an extensive professional experience in the fields of veterinary public health and epidemiology.	Question
Applications for credit transfers from students and graduates of the University of London will be considered on a discretionary basis. We do not offer any exemptions for these courses.	Answer
If I get admission to the next academic session and am not able to secure a scholarship can I defer it?	Question
An offer to study with the University of London is valid for two-years, in which case you would be able to defer awaiting your scholarship.	Answer
Short courses, either 240-hour, 50-hour or 35-hour, are ideal if you're keen to update your professional knowledge, enhance your career, or sample the programme.	Comment
Is it possible to switch between the study programs, i.e., certificate, diploma, and MSc?	Question
In order to be able to progress from the Postgraduate Certificate to the Postgraduate Diploma to the MSc degree, students must normally obtain a pass at the required level in each of the courses they have taken and receive a recommendation from the Examiners that they may proceed to the remaining courses of the respective course.	Answer
Are the 240hrs short courses usually done within one year?	Question
Yes.	Answer
How do the short courses in Animal Health Economics D006, D007 and D008 (Principles of farm animal economic analysis, tools for economic analysis, use of economic tools in epidemiology) differ from 500w (Tools for economic analysis in epidemiology)?	Question
From our web site, there is a short outline for each of our short courses, but I think it is possible you have already seen these: http://www.londonexternal.ac.uk/prospective_students/shortcourses/royal_vet/35_hour/index.shtml I will be pleased to send you further information after this event if it would be helpful.	Answer
For the 50 hour courses please see: http://www.londonexternal.ac.uk/prospective_students/shortcourses/royal_vet/50_hour/index.shtml	Comment
How long are certificates from short courses "valid" - i.e. how soon after finishing the short course would you need to start any further studying?	Question
Is there a particular course which you are considering? [Note - this question was not answered directly as one of the issues is that the 240 hour short course remains part of the degree structure and doesn't get updated or replaced within a degree structure.]	Answer
Apologies if not appropriate but I represent a UK registered charity that would benefit greatly by having more courses structured around the understanding that not everyone who is involved in animal care is a registered vet so courses which are both for the layman and also the experienced animal carer would be appreciated	Comment
We do run a number of 35-hour short courses in Animal Welfare where there are no entrance requirements required.	Comment
If one does the short courses and later decides to do the full MSc, I presume these would not need to be done again if the MSc is started within a certain time period?	Question

That's more or less correct. If you're thinking about eventually going on to the MSc it is best to take one of the 240 hour short courses though as it will work out to be cheaper.	Answer
Can RVC animal health economic courses be tied into UoL economics courses such as the Diploma for graduates in economics?	Question
You would be able to study for our stand-alone 240-hour short course in Epidemiology and Animal Health Economics, but unfortunately there are no links to the Diploma that you mention.	Answer
Are scholarships available to students in certificate, diploma and MSc programs of study	Question
Previously, scholarships have only been available for the MSc programme, however, this may change for the future. Our web site will be updated as soon as further scholarships become available.	Answer
Six Common wealth Scholarships for MSC Epidemiology were offered to Developing countries in Africa where as 20 of such scholarships are available for similar programmes for students from Bangladesh and Sri Lanka.Is it fair?	Question
No it's not. However Commonwealth Scholarships are not offered by the University. They are offered by the Association of Commonwealth Universities, who are funded by various government agencies.	Answer
I am a Bangladeshi, studying in England in present as a overseas student. I passed my DVM [doctor of veterinary medicine], am I eligible for a scholarship?	Question
I am sorry, but the deadline has now closed (1st July) for the receipt of scholarship applications for the MSc in Veterinary Epidemiology and Public Health and Livestock Health and Production by distance learning. Should more scholarships become available next year, then I can assure you that our web site will be updated with this information.	Answer
I am from Peru. Are there any scholarships for people from this part of the world?	Question
While no financial assistance is available from the University, many students receive financial support from their Local Education Authority or their own employers in both the public and private sector. It would certainly be worth asking your employer if they would consider offering such assistance. More information on funding your studies can be found on our website at this address: http://www.londonexternal.ac.uk/study_ep/funding/index.shtml	Answer
How do the exams take place?	Question
Examinations are usually held world-wide at a number of centres in the UK and Eire and centres outside the UK and Eire (either through the local Ministry of Education or the British Council). More information about examinations can be found on our website at this address: http://www.londonexternal.ac.uk/current_students/general_resources/exams/index.shtml	Answer
What's the best time of year to start a subject in order to have maximum time to study and prepare for exams?	Question
Our study year commences in February for the MSc/Postgraduate Diploma and Postgraduate Certificate programmes. As exams always take place in October, I would also recommend that you commence studying for our 240-hour short courses early in the year. However, as there is a revolving registration process, you may commence studying at any time throughout the academic year, but you would need to consider that study time would be reduced prior to the exams. There is a two-year registration period for the 240-hour short courses and you may decide to sit the exam in	Answer

either year 1 or 2. Does this answer your question?	
Do I have to study at London University at any time during my studies?	Question
You do not have to study in London at any of the University campuses during your studies as the course has been designed for you to study independently. When you first register as an External student you will receive: - Student handbook, giving you information on planning your studies, preparing for examinations and study techniques. - Course pack for each course you study. This will contain a folder of directed learning notes, along with a series of readings. The readings will consist of copies of book chapters and articles which have been specially selected from leading academic journals and books. These will present the most concise and readable information and recent developments in the field. - Textbooks for certain courses. - Videos for certain courses. - Samples of past examination papers, and, where a course has previously been examined, an Examiner's report. - CD-ROMs (for certain courses). In subsequent years of your registration you will receive an updated Student handbook; the relevant course pack for any additional courses you begin studying; any sample/past examination papers and reports not previously received. The programme is designed so that you are provided with all the materials you need to study. The materials are comprehensive so you will be able to complete the courses without access to any additional books or readings. There is, therefore, no need to purchase expensive textbooks, or to spend valuable time in trying to locate journals which may not be available locally.	Answer
Is it possible for me to pay my tuition fees in installment? Finance is my problem that I am from country that been in war for the last 21 years so how can go on with studies if you do not give scholarships? Where shall I be doing my Exams if at all I start with you and who supervises?	Question
Again, when you register for Postgraduate study in this area, you can either pay the total amount upfront or, if you would rather, you can pay as you go (a one-off registration fee plus a fee for each course). This makes paying for the qualification easier for students with budget constraints. For more information on where you can take exams in your country can be found on our website at this address: http://www.londonexternal.ac.uk/current_students/general_resources/exams/index.shtml Alternatively, you can tell me where you live and I can give you more information on the examination centres in your country.	Answer
Is the total fee for the Postgraduate Diploma going to be subject to additional charges yearly? And if it is so, does it apply to all scholars, no matter the fee they paid in past?	Question
When you register for these courses, you can either pay the total amount upfront or pay as you go (a one-off registration fee plus a fee for each course). The period of registration does not affect the price of these courses and the total costs are as follows: MSc (this incorporates a discount for payment in advance): £8,520 Postgraduate Diploma: £5,060 Postgraduate Certificate: £2,660 At the start of this course you will be provided with all necessary study materials. Besides the fees payable to the University, you should also budget for the fee levied by your local examination centre to cover their costs (if you do not sit your exams in London).	Answer
I have a leaflet by me in which the fee for the Postgraduate Diploma is £4,900 sterling (for Livestock Health and Production). The fee is now 5,060.	Question
You are correct in that the fee for the Pg Diploma is now £5,060. Unfortunately, our fees are subject to an annual increment, however, they were not increased for last year.	Answer

My intention is to pay each course in subsequent years.	Question
This is fine; when you register for Postgraduate study in these courses you can either pay the total amount upfront or pay as you go (a one-off registration fee plus a fee for each course). The period of registration does not affect the price of these courses.	Answer
How many hours study are required per week to study one subject over a period of 8 or 9 months?	Question
It would be difficult to be precise about the number of study hours required, however, a rough guide would be, that between 10 and 15 hours would be recommended per week in order to study for one module of the MSc programme or one 240-hour short course.	Answer
Regarding time commitments, students registering for the MSc degree programmes have a minimum of two years and a maximum of five years in which to complete, whilst Postgraduate Diploma and Postgraduate Certificate students have a minimum of one year and a maximum of five. The 'study year' is effectively between February and September, with examinations in early/mid-October. Because individuals differ in the number of hours per week they need to devote to study, and in the number of years in which they would like to complete the programme, it is difficult to be precise about the number of hours' study required. A rough guide, however, is that to complete in the minimum period you should be prepared for not less than 10 hours of study per week and 15 hours would be recommended. It is very important that the hours given to study, however many they may be, should be given consistently.	Comment
Gary Ross studied for the MSc in Livestock Health and Production in the USA. He said that the course, "...has been a very positive experience for me. The opportunity to update my veterinary knowledge base has been extremely valuable, but the most valued component of the programme has been the international perspective that it has brought to my professional thought processes. There is an adage which in effect states that, 'those who have plenty to eat have many problems, but those who are hungry have but one'. We, who reside in the developed nations, often take our food supply for granted and fail to remember that for a large portion of the world's population, food and hunger are major concerns. This course of study has brought this message home to me and has given me glimpses into how I might contribute to improving the wellbeing of those less fortunate."	Comment
Is animal food safety emphasized adequately in the MSc for Vet PH and Epi degree	Question
I believe our Veterinary Public Health module of the MSc would cover this topic. Our web site provides a brief outline of what is covered in the course at http://www.londonexternal.ac.uk/rvc however, I would be pleased to e-mail you after this event with a full outline of the subjects covered.	Answer
Ruth, what about food security as a subject or topic which is important in developing societies	Question
Currently, food security is not offered within either of our MSc programmes, however, plans are currently underway to develop a new short course in Sustainable Farming Systems. This will not be available until 2010 but is likely to form a module within our MSc in Livestock Health and Production. Would this interest you?	Answer
What does the Research project imply?	Question
The Research Project is an optional course of both our MSc programmes. The objective is to enable students to conduct a research project and prepare a scientific paper for publication. Does this answer your question?	Answer

I have chosen to apply for the Postgraduate Diploma. Does this mean the research project doesn't concern me?	Question
That is quite correct, the Research Project is not relevant to the Postgraduate Diploma.	Answer
I've just searched the site and there is no Animal disease part 2 available for PgD. It is included only in the structure of core courses for MSc?	Question
The Animal Disease, Part 2 course is to be replaced with the short course, Management of Infectious Viral Disease Outbreaks in Animal Populations. This will be available to both MSc and Postgraduate programmes.	Answer
In order to enrich the study experience, one would need to establish a specific link between the theories instructed in the courses and his/her professional life. Therefore, is it possible to use applied and relevant research problems at work as case studies towards assignments given during the courses.	Question
All of the material which you require to study will be supplied as part of your course material, however, your assignments would definitely benefit from your personal experiences.	Answer
Yes, it would interest me - but hopefully the topic of sustainable animal production and health systems will also be part of the vet public health and epi degree.	Question
Currently, it is very early in the development of this new course and it is foreseen to only form a module of the Livestock programme. By all means, I can feed back your interest.	Answer
Regarding Study Support, although the programme is designed to be followed successfully with a minimum of direct academic support, you are able to receive support in several ways: Up to three written assignments for each course will be provided for you to complete and submit for tutor comment and guidance. The marks for the best of these will count in the formal assessment process. Although the marks obtained for the other essays do not contribute to the overall assessment, students often find it helpful to receive academic feedback on their work to ensure that they are reaching the required standard. In addition, writing essays can be a useful aid in preparing for examinations. You are offered tutorial support for academic matters through the External Programme Office at the Royal Veterinary College. Your enquiry will be answered by an appropriate member of the panel of experts from the RVC academic staff who support this programme. However, the RVC is unable to provide support on non-academic matters. An online discussion board has been introduced for selected courses. This provides the opportunity to collaborate with others via discussion rooms. You will require access to the internet (either dial-up or broadband) to participate. At set times, a tutor will be online to answer questions and we are planning to run tutorials during the academic year. Students are invited to allow us to share their contact details with other students studying on the programme in their locality, so that networking and mutual support can be arranged locally if desired.	Comment
I wanted to ask about access e-journals during the studies.	Question
This is certainly a resource open to students of this course; if you would like access to any of these resources during your study you must contact the course administrator and they will provide you with all of the information needed to access them.	Answer
Is there any practice we are supposed to do for Postgraduate Diploma (in a laboratory, farm or something similar) or only theory?	Question

There are no practicals involved with our studies.	Answer
However this obviously doesn't mean that the studies will be irrelevant to your work. Selene Huntley studied in the UK, she graduated with the MSc in Veterinary Epidemiology and Public Health in December 2006. She said about the course, "I really enjoyed the MSc and despite epidemiology being a challenging subject, the whole course was wide ranging in subject matter and I had a great sense of achievement in overcoming any obstacles. The fact that I was studying in this area enabled me to steer my career path in the right direction and now that I have my MSc, my job prospects have improved further still."	Comment
Catriona Ritchie studied in the UK for her MSc in Livestock Health and Production. She said about the course, "I have found the course to be beneficial for my work, and being registered on it was viewed favourably when I was recently promoted."	Comment
The Application deadline for these courses is the 1 st of November and the application form for these courses can be downloaded at the following address: http://www.londonexternal.ac.uk/forms/application_forms/vets_pgaf.pdf	
Thank you all for taking part, it's been a pleasure talking to you all! If you have any other questions please do not hesitate to email them to enquiries@london.ac.uk ...It all seems to have gone v. quiet so unless there are any last questions I'll close the chat-room shortly. Thank you for your participation. [Chat room closes.]	