



Universiteit Utrecht



**POSTGRADUATE COURSE ON MANAGEMENT, STRATEGY AND LEADERSHIP FOR  
VETERINARY PROFESSIONALS**

Part of the Lifelong Learning Program of the Faculty of Veterinary Medicine Utrecht University  
in co-ownership with Oculus Insights BV.

Program Directors

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## Relevance

Veterinary Medicine is one of the most strenuous academic education programs. Learning about the health and wellbeing of different animal species, human animal bond, food safety, animal production, public health, it all adds up. This does not leave much room for another very important aspect for the future of the 60% of the veterinarians that work in practice being entrepreneurship!

The 2018 survey of the Federations of Veterinarians in Europe showed that 57 % of the veterinarians in Europe anticipated they need more business insights and skills to meet their future challenges.

Veterinary business-related challenges are for example the transition to larger group practices or even bigger conglomerates of practices, the rapid growth of private equity or corporate owned practices, growing professionalism of animal owners, competition of other practices, to name a few.

But there are more challenges for veterinary professionals. It is a lot easier for customers to become well informed nowadays and veterinarians more and more must explain their diagnosis or treatment proposals. This requires new and better skills to communicate with customers, where both the opinion of the veterinary expert and the owners are understood and respected.

To stay connected with the demand from the customers and society, and to upgrade skills, post graduate education plays an important role in the lifelong learning of veterinary professionals.

The Faculty of Veterinary Medicine of Utrecht University, together with Oculus Insights have designed a post graduate course, to add value to the veterinary profession and provide veterinarians, veterinary students and veterinary practice managers who have entrepreneurial-, management- or leadership ambition a state-of-the-art education and implementation experience.

## Target audience

Enrolment is open to candidates who hold an undergraduate degree in Veterinary Science, Veterinary Nursing, or a Business Management related subject. However, for candidates who do not have the prerequisite higher education training but who have been working in Veterinary Business Management for over 12 months, applicants would be considered on a case-by-case basis for entry onto the course, with a minimum of two references required.

This course is like no other and stimulates veterinarians and practice managers to rethink and reinvent their position, practice, or profession. Seasoned educators and coaches will take them on a journey and challenge them to study, (re)search, learn and apply new ideas and insights. This can lead to a reinvention of their current practice or company or open avenues to something new.

The audience we are aiming for:

- Veterinarians who own a veterinary business, who are thinking about buying or starting one or veterinarians who have a leading and managerial role in an existing business or (government) institution.
- Veterinary practice or business managers who are non-veterinarians but have another prior educational degree.

- Veterinary professionals and practice managers who would like to develop a broader view on leadership and entrepreneurship.
- Veterinary students with interest in management, entrepreneurship, and leadership as part of an elective master course.

Language is English and we target a global audience.

## **The unique didactic approach of this post graduate course.**

### **1. Concept**

During this course participants will apply their new knowledge directly in their own working environment, or in another practice, company, or organization of their choice. Participants will dedicate their time to work on module specific topics for their assignments. In the end, the results will be discussed with teachers and peers as another important part in the learning process. This course will help participants to create their path towards sustainable success through education, training, sharing, support, networking, challenging and on the job coaching.

### **2. Content**

In this course content and knowledge from outside the veterinary industry and related to management, strategy and leadership is introduced and made applicable to the current or future working environment of the participants. This is done by the teachers who will educate the participants on this, but who will also challenge the participants to make the translation to their own veterinary realm. The content will be provided through an online platform with live sessions, recorded materials, interactive workgroups, webinars with breakout sessions reading assignments etc.

### **3. Context**

Leading principle of this course is to think “outside in”. What do customers, animals, society expect from a veterinary professional and how does this influence their work, position and future. How can the veterinary profession and the veterinary professional contribute to these needs? Furthermore, the international diversity and the diversity of the different sectors of the veterinary profession will make this a perfect learning and sharing environment. Participants will become part of a new network of entrepreneurial and leading group of veterinarians. When Covid-19 permits this will also include in person study meetings at the university or involve visits to each other’s veterinary practices or companies.

### **4. Coaching**

All modules are related to real situations in the working environment of the participants. We know from our experience that applying this new knowledge in practice is difficult and could do with some outside support. Our students have the full support of faculty and consultants from our global network to help them make the difference in their own working environment. This

course will incentivize you to create your path towards sustainable success through education, training, sharing, support, networking, challenging and on the job coaching

## 5. Competence

We have defined specific competencies that refer to the professional's ability to integrate knowledge, skills, and attitudes, apply them effectively, responsibly, and autonomously to the job role, and being able to respond effectively to contingencies, change and the unexpected.

## Course design.

The course is designed to support our didactical goals and concept. Therefore, we have created five modules that will take the students systematically through their current practice or another company and learn and implement on the go. It can also lead to a completely new concept, practice, or company inside- or outside the veterinary realm.

In **module 1, the dynamics of the veterinary marketplace**, we will look at the broader environment in which the veterinary profession is acting. Slowly we will narrow this down and help the students to find ways to discover how they would fit in with their practice, company, or services and identify new opportunities.

Once we know the market dynamics and desired position, **module 2, leadership and strategy** will help students in the process of setting goals and finding common values for a company and staff. Next step is how to build a strategy to reach these goals and the leadership skills needed for this process, involving and engaging colleagues, and staff.

What your unique value proposition is and how this is delivered to your customers will be discussed in **module 3, running a successful business**. Here we will dig into what is needed to run a successful practice or company for staff and customers on a day to day basis.

**Module 4, creating a sustainable and successful team**, will be completely focused on the biggest asset of a practice being the people. How to find, hire, educate and retain good staff. How to create a good working environment, culture, and team. How to compensate staff properly and keep them engaged.

**Module 5, measuring success**, closes this course with more information on measuring results in your practice. How are you doing from an economic point of view and how do customers and staff value your practice. What is the result from all your hard work in- and on your practice and how can you improve?

## Time investment of the students

Each module is 6 ECTS, equals 150 hours of blended learning. Students will have time to work in their current job, but at the same time work in and on their own working environment with personal

assignments related to the module topics. Veterinary master students will team up with other students or provide a practice or company by themselves or be appointed to one.

Each module will cover a three-month period with 11 course weeks of 14 hours education and studying. This includes 4 hours of webinars, online interactive workshops, group and individual question hours and individual coaching. At the end of each module students will have to deliver their written assignments. During the process of learning and writing they have given short presentations with question and answer session by the other students and teachers to get feedback.

Students will have access to a digital learning environment that also serves as a personal communication tool between the students, faculty, and consultants. It is their personal library of literature, presentations, recorded meetings, and webinars. Recordings will be made available for the students after the live meetings.

## **Accreditation**

The Faculty of Veterinary Medicine of UU is an internationally well known, and respected institution for veterinary education, patientcare, and research and accredited by the AVMA, EAEVE and the NVAO. This post graduate program lives up to these high standards and to the standards of Veterinary Continuous Education in Europe (VetCEE). VetCEE is a joint initiative of EAEVE, EBVS, FVE and UEVP. It has developed a Standard for structured continuing professional development and mutual recognition across Europe. The VetCEE Standard is complemented by separate dossiers of competences based on specific veterinary fields. In 2018 the VetCEE standard for a certificate on Management of Veterinary Practices has been published. This post graduate course on management, strategy and leadership for veterinary professionals fulfills all the recommendations and demands of this standard. (Accreditation process to be started as soon as possible).

The official certificate can only be obtained after finishing all the modules including a positive result (>5,5 out of 10) on the obligatory module specific assignments. This is the full 30 ECTS points (= 750 hours of blended learning). Modules may be done in another sequence (but this does undermine the didactical concept) and the results of each module will remain valid for 3 years.

## **The Modules in more detail**

### **Module1. The dynamics of the veterinary marketplace**

Marketing has always been a bit of an uncomfortable topic in the veterinary profession. However, marketing is more than selling your services. It is also providing the best service to your customers, tailored to their needs and expectations. Society, governments, producers and consumers of animal products, animal owners, the patients, all have expectations that needs to be met by the veterinary professional. On top of this, expectations and demands change overtime and call for (re)action. When you want to be successful and meaningful it is of key importance to understand this dynamic and where you (and your practice, company, or institution) would fit in.

In this module marketing is educated for veterinarians and veterinary organizations where it is becoming increasingly important to develop new policies based on a clear vision where the market is going (and where you and your staff want to go). This module provides tools for developing a marketing strategy and the marketing concept.

Changes in the veterinary industry and a changing role of veterinarians can only be anticipated if you are open to market signals. This can be at various levels, but it all relates to communication with your environment, society, customers, staff, and colleagues. In a world that becomes more demanding through new ways of communication and new technology, communication becomes a multi-channel experience with a lot of opportunities but also a lot of challenges.

<b>Competency</b>	<b>Specific content</b>	<b>Objective</b>
Market Analysis	Market disruption in the veterinary industry	Understanding the veterinary marketplace
	External and Internal Analysis, business trends, PEST, SWOT	Outside-in thinking
Responsibility	Policy and impact in veterinary medicine	Understanding importance and impact
	Role of veterinary professionals in society	
	Business Welfare & Ethics. Professional code of conduct	
	Professional behavior	Professional development
	Sustainability	People, Planet, Profit
Marketing	Basic principles of marketing for veterinary practices	Interaction with market and customers
	Market positioning and Branding of the profession	Building a brand
Effective Communication	Communication in Practice	Connect with market and customers

Development team and core teachers:

Dr. Joop Loomans DVM PhD MBA. Market analysis and Marketing. Overarching, continuity of the education and connecting the modules

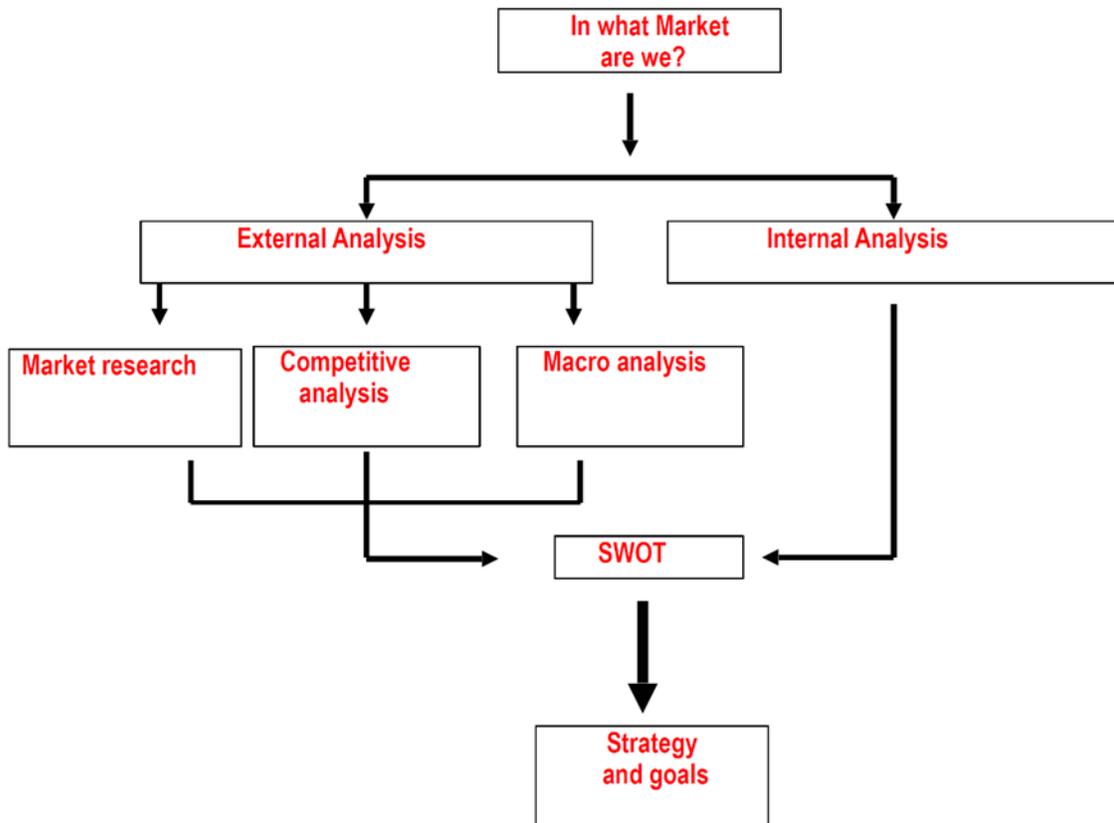
Professor Dr. Merel Langelaar DVM PhD. Policy and impact

Professor Dr. Wim Kremer DVM PhD. Professional behavior

Roeland Wessels DVM. Communication

Module 1 has two assignments, two examples:

1. Doing a market analysis for the services they- or their company provides.
2. Setting up and executing focus group discussions for their company.



## Module 2. Leadership and Strategy

Setting goals and developing a viable and obtainable strategy to reach these goals is key for any kind of company. Knowing where you are and where you want to go is just the beginning. This module is a key step from understanding the market to understanding what your ideal position in this market would be. What is the unique value you can create for your customers (and your staff)? You will learn the skills to develop the right strategy that will take you there.

Leadership starts with understanding your own strengths and weaknesses. You will learn a lot about yourself and the leadership skills you have (and do not have) and how to use these skills effectively. But it is not only about you. The more involved you get your team members in finding and developing this unique service, the more ownership and engagement they will develop and the higher the chance of success.

These leadership skills are also needed in your relationship with your customers. Society, animal owners, governments have high expectations from highly educated veterinary professionals regarding animal welfare, food safety and sustainability.

Competency	Specific content	Objective
Leading with vision	Strategy formulation and development	Creating your own strategic plan
	Organizational Models	Understand how various business models work
Business insights	Business Model Canvas	Create your own business template
	Porter's five forces	Understand competition
	Essentials of entrepreneurship	Understand entrepreneurship
Creativity	Out of the box thinking for you and your team	Innovation and disruption
	Innovations and their impact on the veterinary profession	
Leadership	Leadership styles and situational leadership	Learn about the impact of leadership
	Personal leadership skills	Finding your own leadership style
	Management vs. leadership	

Development team and core teachers:

Dr. Joop Loomans DVM PhD MBA. Strategy. Overarching, continuity of the education and connecting the modules

Rob Kieboom DVM. Leadership.

Peter vd Meer MSc. Strategy and Business Insights

Module 2 has two assignments, two examples:

1. Leadership style assessment
2. Developing a strategic plan

### Module 3 Running a successful business

Veterinary entrepreneurship is not only about starting or reinventing your own business. It is also the capacity to be creative and innovative, act upon opportunities and ideas and to transform them into value for others. Delivering your value proposition on a day to day basis and having impact with your services will be addressed in this module. What is needed in assets and in actions to make this happen in an effective way and in a way that truly satisfies the customer's needs? But also, where can customers find you? How do you relate to your customers? How do you charge for your services?

Competency	Specific content	Objective
Organize	Practice management systems	Make technology work for you
	Role of information technology	

	Customer Relationship Management	Setting- and meeting expectations
	Data security, GDPR	Safe for customers and practice
Financial insights	Budgeting and making a pro forma	Financial planning
	Capital expenditure and investment	Getting return on investment
	Pricing strategy	Understand pricing models
	Invoicing, payments and managing accounts receivable	Oversee the cashflow
Be in control	Operations management	Steering the workflow
	Service design in a veterinary clinic.	
	Workflow and capacity management.	
	Project management	
	Supply chain- and inventory management.	Efficiency
	Legal and statutory compliance medicines regulations	Understand legal framework

Development team and core teachers:

Dr. Joop Loomans DVM PhD MBA. Overarching, continuity of the education and connecting the modules

Peter vd Meer MSc. Organize, Financial Insights

Bob Magnus DVM MBA. Organize, Financial Insights

Professor Dr. Jan Willem Hesselink DVM PhD. Be in control

Module 3 has two assignments, two examples:

1. Define and execute a specific project in the company
2. Execute a workflow analysis

## **Module 4 Creating a sustainable and successful team**

Key asset, specifically in a serving industry like veterinary practice, is staff. Paying enough attention to your people, keeping them motivated and leading them (by example) are so important. However, this is easier said than done. This stream will help you to become the employer of preference for excellent staff. We will go through all the building blocks needed to create a state-of-the-art human resources system for your veterinary practice. We will look at what makes a practice team high performing, the journey how to get there and the consequences for leadership during this journey. And what is perhaps even more important but closely related is creating the right practice culture that fits your customers, your staff and yourself.

Competency	Specific content	Objective
Staff management	HR plan building blocks	Learn to build your own HR plan
Leadership	Resilience, feedback, understanding the different kind of players in your group and their different roles	Learn to build and lead a diverse team
Expectation management	Expectations of veterinary students and young professionals	Keep people engaged
Coaching	Coaching professionals	Make people grow
Education	Learning styles and theories and their application in practice	
Responsibility	Health, Safety, Risk Management	Create a safe environment
	Legal and statutory	Compliance with the law

Development team and core teachers:

Dr. Joop Loomans DVM PhD MBA. Overarching, continuity of the education and connecting the modules

Nicole Mastenbroek DVM PhD. Coaching, Education, Expectation management

Rob Kieboom DVM. Leadership

Mike Pownall DVM MBA. Staff management

Module 4 has two assignments, two examples:

1. Execute an Employee Engagement Survey in a company
2. Develop a strategy for finding, attracting, hiring and retaining good staff

## Module 5 Measuring success

The final module ties everything together and focusses on the outcome of all your efforts. What is the definition of success for your patients, their owners, your staff, the local community, your partners, your family, yourself? What were the expectations, and have they been met?

We will talk business economics and accountancy, profit and loss statements, balance sheets, cashflow, return on investment, debt management and accounts receivable. But also, quality control cycles, customer satisfaction and patient outcomes. Finally, we will educate on practice valuation, exit strategies and alternative business models for veterinary practices.

Competency	Specific content	Objective
Accounting	Basic accounting and terminology	Understanding your financials
	Financial Key Performance Indicators	
	Debt and debt management	
Communication	How to evaluate effective communication	Measure impact

	Accountability for leadership	
Keeping track	Measure quality of care	Continuous improvement
	Quality control.	
	Measure outcome	
	Readjust and improve (PDCA circle)	
Forward thinking	Growth and exit strategies in veterinary businesses	Leading with vision

Development team and core teachers:

Dr. Joop Loomans DVM PhD MBA. Forward thinking. Overarching, continuity of the education and connecting the modules

Professor Dr. Merel Langelaar DVM PhD. Keeping track

Bob Magnus DVM MBA. Accounting, Forward thinking

Module 5 has two assignments, two examples:

1. Develop a balance scorecard for a company
2. Do a financial analysis of a company