

PROGRAM INFORMATION

Academic Year:	2026-2027
Credential:	Graduate Certificate
Program Delivery:	Full-Time
Duration:	1 Year
Length:	2 Semesters
Program Code(s):	H153 - Distance H153W - Distance (Winter intake)

DESCRIPTION

Physical rehabilitation is becoming an essential component of modern veterinary medicine—and Northern College is making advanced training in this field more accessible than ever.

The Companion Animal Physical Rehabilitation Graduate Certificate is now offered fully at a distance, combining flexible online learning with a mandatory one-week, in-person residency at our Haileybury Campus. This structure allows students from across the country to gain specialized skills in animal rehabilitation while maintaining their professional and personal commitments.

This program is designed for veterinary professionals who want to expand their expertise in companion animal physical rehabilitation. Taught by experienced faculty and industry experts, the curriculum includes a strong foundation in advanced anatomy and physiology, therapeutic modalities, and the treatment of orthopedic and neurologic conditions.

Students will engage in a blend of theoretical learning, case-based discussions, and practical skill development. The one-week on-campus residency provides 40 hours of hands-on clinical experience to ensure students gain the confidence and competency required to deliver effective patient care.

Graduates are well-prepared to work in veterinary clinics, rehabilitation and fitness centers, or to expand the services offered within their current practice.

Program Highlights

- **Fully Online Delivery:** Complete coursework from anywhere with reliable internet access.
- **Mandatory One-Week Residency:** Hands-on clinical training at Northern College's Haileybury Campus.
- **Flexible Schedule:** Choose between full-time or part-time pathways.
- **Interactive Learning:** Weekly check-ins, live sessions, and case-based discussions reinforce learning and engagement.
- **Customizable Placement:** Complete your placement hours on a schedule that fits your life and work commitments.

Flexible Learning Options

Assignments and weekly check-ins include suggested due dates to help students stay on track; however, timelines are designed to remain flexible. The program must be completed within two years in accordance with college policy.

Full-Time Option

The **full-time program** can be completed in **two semesters (one year)** following a traditional college calendar.

- **Phase 1:** Approximately 25 hours per week of coursework delivered fully online and primarily self-paced within the semester timeframe.
 - Includes one live, two-hour seminar each week (attendance encouraged but not required).
 - Upon completion of Phase 1, students attend a **mandatory one-week residency** at the Haileybury Campus (40 hours of practical experience).
- **Phase 2:** Approximately 21 hours per week of coursework, plus a **field placement** completed during the semester.

Although this is a full-time program, the flexible online delivery allows students to balance their studies with work or personal responsibilities.

Part-Time Option

For those working full-time or seeking a lighter workload, the program can be completed **part-time over two years**.

- **Phase 1 – Year 1:**
 - Approximately 15 hours per week of coursework in the first semester.
 - Around 10 hours per week in the second semester, with an optional live course available for enrichment and connection.
 - After completing Phase 1 courses, students attend the **mandatory one-week on-campus residency** (40 hours total).
- **Phase 2 – Year 2:**
 - Approximately 10 hours per week of coursework in the first semester.
 - The second semester includes a **200-hour field placement**, with continued access to optional live sessions.

CAREER OPPORTUNITIES

Graduates may choose to establish their own physical rehabilitation business, working in collaboration with referring veterinarians and other animal health professionals. Alternatively, they can pursue employment in veterinary clinics with rehabilitation services, private rehab facilities, or organizations focused on animal conditioning and fitness.

VOCATIONAL LEARNING OUTCOMES

1. Perform patient examination and collect data on vital signs on patients needing physical rehabilitation.
2. Restrain and manage small animal patients in clinical situations where physical rehabilitation is required.
3. Administer medications by common drug routes and prepare pharmaceuticals as prescribed by the veterinarian for patients undergoing physical rehabilitation therapy.
4. Produce standard diagnostic radiographs on patients requiring physical rehabilitation.
5. Collect and process samples of diagnostic laboratory work on patients requiring physical rehabilitation.
6. Perform common veterinary diagnostic tests, such as blood chemistries, differentials, culture and sensitivities, and ECGs on patients requiring physical rehabilitation.
7. Perform basic veterinary practice management including computer applications.
8. Using techniques such as "pain scoring", recognize and evaluate painful conditions from which the veterinarian may prescribe physical rehabilitation therapy.
9. Counsel clients, especially in the area of pet nutrition, for patients requiring physical rehabilitation.
10. Perform functions to enable the patient's optimal physical function by contributing to the development, implementation, and modification of intervention/treatment plans, under the supervision of and in collaboration with the veterinarian.
11. Perform effectively within the roles and responsibilities of the physical rehabilitation technician through the application of relevant knowledge of veterinary sciences, and animal health conditions.
12. Practice competently in a legal, ethical, and professional manner within the role of the companion animal physical rehabilitation technician.

PROGRAM COURSES

The following reflects the planned course sequence for full-time offerings of the program.

Semester 1		Hours
RE1002	Introduction to Animal Physical Rehabilitation	26
RE1003	Companion Animal Rehab Practical I	40
RE1032	Companion Animal Rehab Seminar I	26
RE1034	Companion Animal Assessment	52
RE1035	Advanced Animal Anatomy & Physiology	65
RE1045	Introduction to Modalities	65
RE1055	Applied Therapeutic Techniques	65
Semester 2		
RE1012	Pathophysiology of Pain and Analgesics	28
RE2011	Placement for Case Studies	200
RE2012	Companion Animal Rehab Seminar II	28
RE2023	Neurologic and Orthopaedic Conditions	42

PROGRAM PROGRESSION

The following reflects the planned progression for full-time offerings of the program.

Fall Intake

Sem 1: Fall 2026

Sem 2: Winter 2027

Winter Intake

Sem 1: Winter 2027

Sem 2: Fall 2027

ADMISSION REQUIREMENTS

- Graduate of a Veterinary Technician diploma program.

This graduate certificate program is open to individuals who have completed a Veterinary Technician or Technology diploma. Those who have not yet completed a Veterinary Technician program, are encouraged to first apply to our Veterinary Technician program (Program H058). Upon graduation, they will be eligible to apply for the Companion Animal Physical Rehabilitation program

PROGRAM SPECIFIC REQUIREMENTS & ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Refer to the program page for [Companion Animal Physical Rehabilitation Program Requirements](#) documentation including proof of rabies vaccination, showing a current protective titre.

The OAVT accredits this program for 20 continuing education credits in Category 1 (Medical/scientific).

Work Integrated Learning Opportunities

Students in the Companion Animal Physical Rehabilitation program participate in a field placement, gaining hands-on experience in real-world settings such as veterinary clinics, rehab facilities, or wellness centers. These experiences, guided by industry professionals, help students apply their skills, build confidence, and make valuable professional connections.

Articulation / Transfer Agreements

A number of articulation agreements have been negotiated with universities and other institutions across Canada, North America and internationally. These agreements are assessed, revised and updated on a regular basis. Please contact the program coordinator for specific details if you are interested in pursuing such an option. Additional information can be found at [Articulation Agreements](#).

GRADUATION REQUIREMENTS

11 Program Courses

Graduation Eligibility

To graduate from this program, a student must attain a minimum of 60% or a letter grade of CR (Credit) in each course in each semester unless otherwise stated on the course outline. Students should consult departmental policies and manuals for additional details and exceptions.

Graduation Window

Students unable to adhere to the program duration of one year (as stated above) may take a maximum of two years to complete their credential. After this time, students must be re-admitted into the program and follow the curriculum in place at the time of re-admission.

CONTACT INFORMATION

For questions about being admitted into the program, please contact Northern College Admissions at admissions@northern.on.ca or by phone at 705-235-3211 ext. 7222. For questions about the content of the program, contact the Program Coordinator.

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COURSE DESCRIPTIONS

Semester 1

RE1002 Introduction to Animal Physical Rehabilitation

This foundational course provides an in-depth overview of the principles, goals, and applications of animal physical rehabilitation, with a focus on companion animals. Students will explore the history and scope of the field, the role of the Registered Veterinary Technician (RVT) in the rehabilitation team, and the legal and ethical considerations involved in practice. The course introduces common orthopedic and neurological conditions that benefit from rehabilitation.

RE1003 Companion Animal Rehab Practical I

This intensive, hands-on module provides students with immersive practical experience in companion animal physical rehabilitation. Delivered over five days, students will participate in live patient assessments and treatments, integrating clinical skills and theoretical knowledge. Activities begin with an introduction to the college environment, a site tour, and foundational wet labs using therapeutic modalities on animals. Subsequent days focus on applied anatomy and physiology, patient assessment, and therapeutic technique implementation, with continued exposure to physical rehabilitation modalities.

RE1032 Companion Animal Rehabilitation Seminar I

Through weekly instructor-led meetings, the Companion Animal Rehabilitation Seminars engage in discussions and explore key questions within the program. The course will cover advances in the Companion Animal Rehabilitation industry, and sharing real-world case studies, fostering a collaborative learning environment. This seminar aims to equip students with comprehensive knowledge and practical skills essential for a successful career in animal rehabilitation.

RE1034 Companion Animal Assessment

The student would learn how to conduct a neurological and orthopedic examination on dogs in order to assess gait, posture and movement. Topics would include assessing range of motion and assigning a lameness score. A review of the importance of palpation in order to detect swellings and lumps will be emphasized. Videos or live demonstrations will be used to demonstrate normal and abnormal canine gaits.

RE1035 Advanced Animal Anatomy and Physiology

Focusing on canine anatomy and physiology including directional terminology, anatomic planes, bones, muscles, joints, ligaments and tendons, the nervous system and lymphatics, this course will be, an in-depth study requiring students to name and explain the function of the components of the skeletal and muscle systems, including, muscle origins and insertions, muscle function and muscle innervation and blood supply.

RE1045 Introduction to Modalities

This course provides an in-depth introduction to therapeutic modalities used in companion animal physical rehabilitation. Students will explore the history, scientific basis, and practical applications of various modalities, including laser therapy, ultrasound, electrical stimulation, hydrotherapy, and emerging techniques. The course emphasizes evidence-based practice, ethical considerations, and the integration of multiple modalities for optimal patient outcomes.

RE1055 Applied Therapeutic Techniques

This course reviews the various modalities available for canine physical rehabilitation. These include techniques such as stretching, strengthening and proprioception exercises, application of heat and cold packs, analgesics and massage.

Semester 2**RE1012 Pathophysiology of Pain and Analgesics**

The pathophysiology of pain is covered in depth in this course. Pain sensation, transduction, transmission and perception are discussed, together with ways by which pain pathways can be interrupted. The complementary role of analgesics in contributing to successful companion animal rehabilitation is explored. Students learn about the benefits and risks of specific analgesics that a veterinarian may prescribe to companion animals.

RE2011 Placement for Case Studies

This field placement provides students with supervised, hands-on experience in a professional rehabilitation setting. Students will apply their knowledge of various rehabilitation techniques, assess patient conditions, implement treatment plans, and refine their clinical skills in real-world scenarios. Emphasis is placed on specialized therapeutic modalities, including Laser Therapy, Hydrotherapy/Aquatherapy, Therapeutic Ultrasound, Pulsed Electromagnetic Field Therapy, Electrical Stimulation Therapy, and Shockwave therapy.

RE2012 Companion Animal Rehabilitation Seminar II

Through weekly instructor-led meetings, the Companion Animal Rehabilitation Seminars engage in discussions and explore key questions within the program. The course will cover advances in the Companion Animal Rehabilitation industry, sharing and presenting real-world case studies, and fostering a collaborative learning environment. This seminar aims to equip students with comprehensive knowledge and practical skills essential for a successful career in animal rehabilitation.

RE2023 Neurologic and Orthopaedic Conditions

The pathophysiology of common neurologic and orthopedic conditions is covered. Conditions that accompany ageing in canines are covered in detail. Common therapies that may be used in the rehabilitation of each condition will be discussed and students will design physical rehabilitation protocols and treatment schedules based on individual case details.