

Promotion of stud management using equine applied science programs

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The University of Applied Science and Technology (UAST) was founded in 1992, with the objective to promote the technical as well as the scientific knowledge of the job holders, mainly those who are working as low-skilled or semi-skilled laborers in different sectors of the economy. With a growing importance of the equestrian sports and horse husbandry, there is an increasing need for well-trained professionals in the equine sector. The need for specific equine university programs has been questioned occasionally; however, neither university programs in the equine veterinary medicine (focusing on diseased horses) nor animal science (focusing on food-producing farm animals) meet the broad requirements of today's equine industry. So far four programs in the equine sector have been approved in the UAST; an associate diploma program in the horse husbandry, an associate diploma program in the equine coaching, a bachelor program (2 + 2 years course) in the horse husbandry and a post graduate program in the horse physiotherapy and massage at master level (Msc. program). The main specifications of the applied science programs are; the abilities of the applicants and their attainable jobs are pre-planned before starting the program (each applicant will be aware of what abilities he/she would earn and what jobs he/she would attain after graduating from such scientific and applied programs). The first academic program in the equine science and management in Iran was established in 1998 by the UAST. The 2 year associate diploma program (74 credit points) includes sciences, anatomy, physiology, genetics, nutrition, horse behavior, economics, marketing, management, horse disease and disorders, basics of shoeing and basics of riding. In 2004 when more than 200 students were graduated in this program a two years course (a 2 + 2 bachelor program) was established. In this program almost all subject taught at the previous program were taught, but at advance level. Courses are provided by the partner higher education centers affiliated to the UAST and approved by the Iranian Equestrian Federation and by

the lecturers from practice and riding clubs. Lectures and seminars are complemented by a scientific thesis and placements in the equine industry. Out of 400-500 applicants each year, 60 students are selected (to study in two higher education centers) on the basis of their previous activities, a written test and interviews. The majority of the students enter the program with previous experience of working with the horses and about 35% of the students enter the program directly after leaving secondary school. More than 50% of the graduates enter into the subsequent BSc. program in horse husbandry. Other 50% graduates (almost those with previous experience) return to the horse husbandry business and works as stud managers or management assistants in riding clubs. In conclusion, graduates of the University of Applied Science and Technology programs follow a wide-range of professional and academic activities within the equine industry as well as equine medicine (graduates of the UAST's master program in the horse physiotherapy). This spectrum is by far more extensive than the sector covered by merely academic training. With practical experience obtained on the job, adequately qualified graduates will more and more obtain leading positions.

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