CPD at the Royal Veterinary College

A guide for e-CPD courses

This document contains some practical information and advice which will aid you in your participation of e-CPD learning with the RVC.

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Background information

The first commercial veterinary e-CPD course in the UK was launched by the Royal Veterinary College in May 2003 using a model pioneered by Professor Gilly Salmon at the Open University. This is an ideal mode of study for busy veterinarians, stimulating, relevant and interactive courses conducted online by subject specialists. The courses are hosted on the CPD's online learning environment where participants can access the course materials, participate in group discussions and online sessions, carry out online tasks, and collaborate with a small group of professionals in sharing experiences.

Once registered, via our website, participants will have access to the Online CPD platform and their particular course. Participants will be given detailed guidelines on how to navigate within Online CPD and advice on how to participate effectively in an online course. The resources delivered online can include course notes, published papers, cases, images and radiographs if relevant, and useful Web links. There will also be a discussion board and various online tasks.

The e-CPD courses are run completely online, so there is no need to travel to a distant venue or take time off work. However, for most RVC e-CPD courses participants are expected to commit at least six hours per week to carrying out the set coursework and collaborating actively with their online colleagues. No advanced computer skills are required to take the course apart from a basic confidence working on the computer.

There are also some courses that have an online, real-time 'live' webinar where you can listen to a lecture being given, as well as watch the PowerPoint presentation, view images or video, ask questions, draw on a 'whiteboard', and interact with your fellow students. For these sessions, which are run using an online classroom, participants will be issued with detailed instructions on how to join and participate in the online session. You will need to make sure you are an administrator on your computer and can install the required small software component. If you are unsure, please contact your system administrator.

Computer requirements

Operating System (either one of):
- Windows 7 / 8 / 8.1 / 10 or higher
- Mac OS X 10.6 or higher
- A recent version of Linux, FreeBSD or Solaris
- iOS 9 or higher
- Android 5.0 or higher

Browsers (either one of):
- A recent version of Chrome (currently 50)
- A recent version of Firefox (currently 46) -
- Safari 8 or higher
- Internet Explorer 11 or higher

Internet Connection (either one of):
- Broadband
- 3G or 4G mobile data connection -
- Public WiFi hotspot

Software (recommended):
- A PDF reader (if using Mac OS X or Google Chrome this isn't necessary)
  https://get.adobe.com/uk/reader/
- Flash (if using Google Chrome, this isn't necessary) http://get.adobe.com/flashplayer/

An Office suite:
- Either a free option http://www.libreoffice.org/download - Available on all platforms
- Microsoft Office (Word / Powerpoint /Excel) - On Windows or Mac OS X only
- iWork (Pages / Numbers / Keynote) - for Mac OS X only

Access from Mobile Platforms:
The online CPD site is designed to work as well on mobile devices as on desktops, however, live webinars will need to be accessed via one of the below apps. Recordings of webinars may be available on iOS or Android. Please check with administration staff if you intend to access the course solely with an iPad or Android device.

iPhone / iPad access to live webinars
https://itunes.apple.com/gb/app/blackboard-collaborate-mobile/id546742528?mt=8

Android access to live webinars
https://play.google.com/store/apps/details?id=com.bbcollaborate.collaborate

Note: Older platforms may work to some extent but are no longer supported by their vendors, we will not be able to offer guidance with using these.

English language requirements

You should have an advanced level ability to work in English to participate in an e-CPD course. It is necessary to express your ideas efficiently and effectively, therefore your ability to read, write and understand English is essential. If English is not your first language and if you require further guidance regarding the level of language proficiency required please contact the CPD office for guidance before registering.

Essential information

You may find it useful to keep a record of some details relating to your course. We have created a simple form below where this information may be stored if you wish and have filled in some contact details for your reference.

Website address for course	**https://onlinecpd.rvc.ac.uk/**
My username	This is your email address that you signed up to the CPD website with
My password	The password that you created on the CPD website
Email address I have stated as my contact during this course	
Course tutor(s)	
Technical help	ecpdhelp@rvc.ac.uk
CPD office	cpd@rvc.ac.uk Tel: 01707 666865 Fax: 01707 666877

Before the course starts

If you have not already created an online account, please do so by visiting the CPD Website **http://cpd.rvc.ac.uk** If you have forgotten your password, please visit the same website, where you will be able to reset it. An email will be sent up to five days before the course is due to start to remind you how to log in, please check your spam/trash folder and if there is no email please contact the CPD office. If you find emails from CPD are going in to your spam/trash folder please change your email settings to allow emails from the 'rvc.ac.uk' email addresses so further course correspondence may reach you.

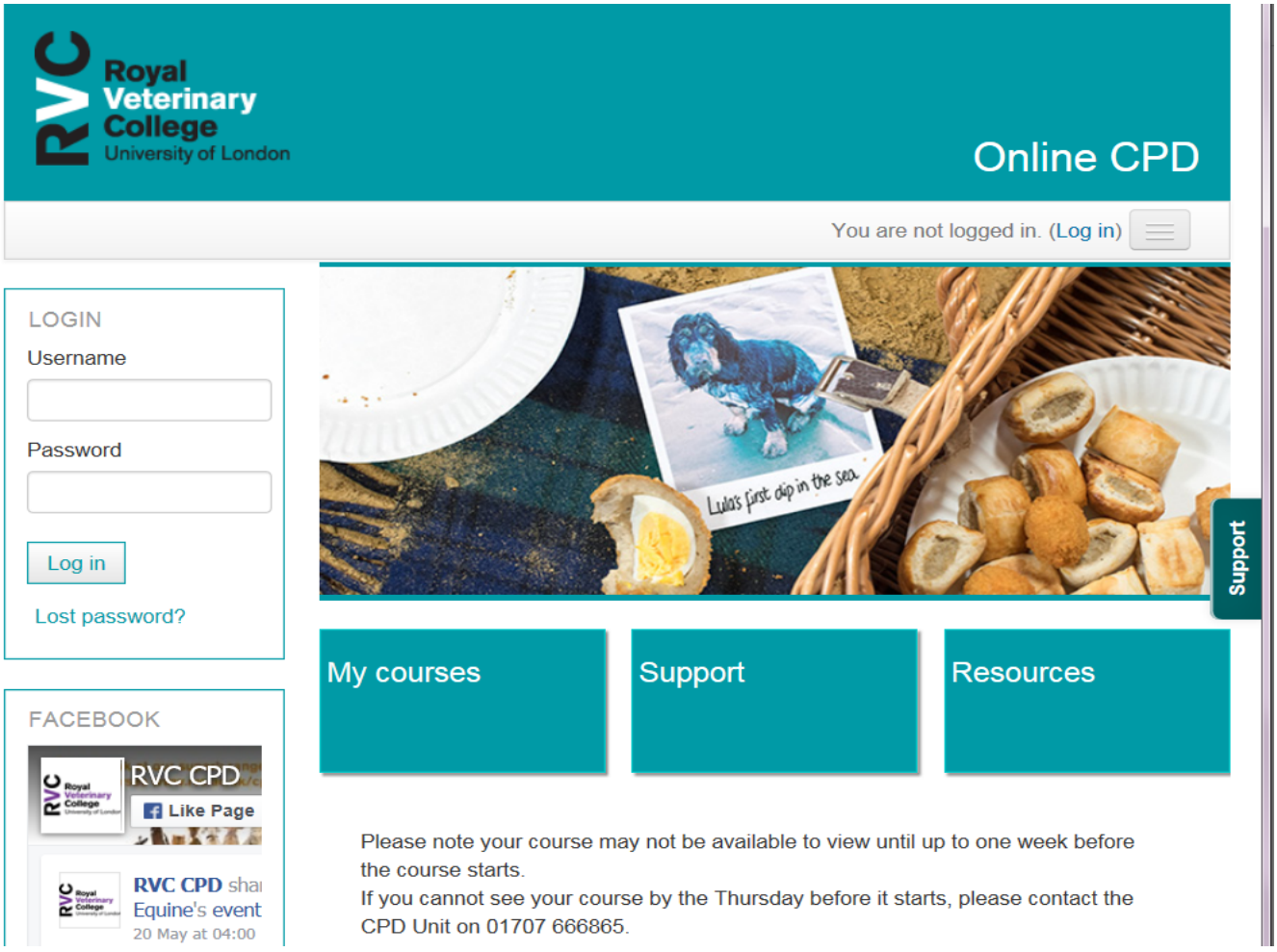
Please check that you have everything you need to participate on the course, and that your computer is ready.

For some courses you will receive a course book in the post to accompany the course. These notes are sent to the address you provided at the time of registration, and are posted out where possible to reach you during the week before the course commences. However, the notes are also available to view within the online course so there should be no delay in your being able to start looking through the course material. For some courses a CD is also provided with course material, so please check the envelope carefully. If you have not received your course notes by the end of the first week on the course please contact the CPD office.

Please log in to the course site at https://onlinecpd.rvc.ac.uk/ to familiarise yourself with the layout and structure of the course you are enrolled in. The course tutors will invite you to post a message to introduce yourself once the course is about to begin. You will find details of the tutors for each course within the course information.

Course website

You can access your e-CPD course from any computer with an internet connection, just use https://onlinecpd.rvc.ac.uk/ and enter your username (email address) and password.



It is a good idea to visit the site regularly each week of the course. You will find regular announcements (these may also be emailed to you), general course information, discussion board forums and other relevant resources.

Netiquette

When participating in discussion boards and emails during the course it is important to be aware of 'netiquette';

- Please use a descriptive subject line in your postings so people know what your message is about.
- Try to avoid sending large attachments to people without warning them first.
- Avoid block capitals, obscure fonts and as this can make messages harder to read and possibly misinterpreted. You will not be able to post to the forum if you use emojis.
- Don't expect to always receive an immediate answer to your message – it may be that people are able to respond quickly but time is often needed to consider appropriate answers, and of course not everyone is online all of the time.

Getting the most out of e-CPD

Many people find they participate far more in an e-CPD course than they first expected. To get the most out of a course try to join in with all activities, read other participant messages and respond as suggested by the course tutor, and have a go at quizzes and assignments. For some very busy courses the core work will not require you to read every posting as the course can become overwhelming. Your course tutor will advise you about this.

You may find it useful to save notes on your computer or with your hard copy course notes for future reference once the course access is closed on the website.

Work safely and comfortably. Make sure you take regular breaks from the screen and are aware of how you are sitting.

Further guidance

- **Downloading and reading a PDF file**
  It is useful to set up a folder on your computer e.g. in 'My documents' before you start downloading any files. To save a PDF file to your computer: Right click on the document name, then choose 'Save target as' from the pop- up menu. A download box will appear briefly, followed by the 'Save as' dialogue box. This will ask you to indicate where you want to save the document and what you want to call it. Click on 'Save' to complete the download.

The end of the course

At the end of an e-CPD course there is an extension of access for six weeks. This is to allow time for participants to finish off any assignments and access the course material. There will be no tutor moderation during the extension period.

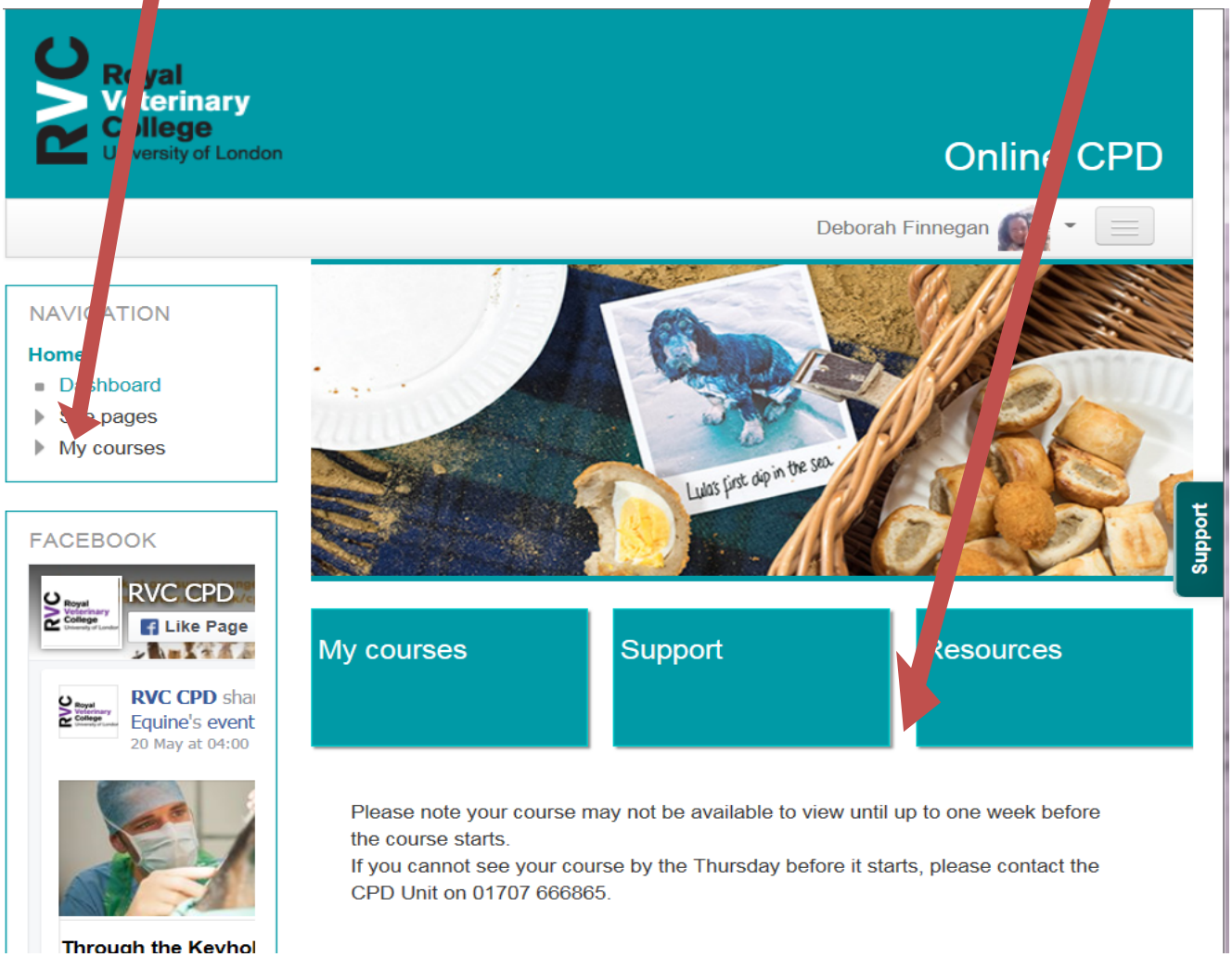
An email will be sent to ask for feedback via a brief online survey. This is usually sent during the two week extended time, or at the end of that period. 1 CPD hour will be awarded for completing the course feedback at the end of the course (please note your name is required to be able to award the hour).

CPD certificates are posted to you once participation in the course and completion of assignments has been assessed. We aim to do this during or at the end of the extended access time and post these out to you as soon as possible.

Welcome to the Online CPD

After you log into Online CPD you will see the home page. From here you can access your courses, support, and resources to assist you with learning online by clicking on the boxes underneath the main image.

Where is my Course?
You can access your course/s by clicking on 'My Courses' in the 'Navigation' tab to the left of the home page.



If you have any queries regarding how to use Online CPD please email ecpdhelp@rvc.ac.uk.

We hope to 'see' you on another online course in the future!