

Diploma of Equine Podiotherapy



Australian College of Equine Podiotherapy

www.equinepodiotherapy.com.au

2026 Course Brief

Welcome to the Australian College of Equine Podiotherapy

Since 2008 the Australian College of Equine Podiotherapy (ACEP) has been training holistic hoofcare professionals. This Diploma is the most comprehensive barehoofcare course in Australia (barehoofcare is the management of equine hooves to be kept bare or protected only with orthotics that don't affect hoof function).

The course produces therapeutically trained specialists capable of traversing the modern paradox of equine performance and longevity.

Our graduates have been able to grow their hoofcare businesses to satisfaction. Many of our past students have progressed to become leaders in the Australian hoofcare industry, being called on to help with the most challenging of cases.

Course content is based on the ground-breaking research of Prof. Robert Bowker (Michigan State Uni.) and is centred on functional anatomy, using scientifically verified external anatomical landmarks to determine trimming parameters that will perpetuate functionality and therefore long-term soundness.

Most importantly, hooves are not considered in isolation but as part of the whole horse, so this course explores biomechanical pathways which are the vital links between hoof and body. This is expertly taught by Dr. Sharon May Davis who is a world-renowned equine anatomist.

Another large component of this course is the rehabilitation of pathological hooves by using functional holistic treatment that considers the underlying causes as well as clinical symptoms. Everything from common hoof management issues to life threatening lameness is covered.

Students also learn the equine lifestyle factors paramount to growing healthy hooves and the latest in sustainable hoof protection when even the best hooves need protection from the hard Australian ground.

The entire course is heavily slanted towards Occupational Health and Safety to give you every chance to have a long and fulfilling career working under horses.

By course end, students will have industry leading observation skill sets and know how to best manage whatever hooves come their way.

2026 – An industry leading, practical and scientific course delivered in a flexible format to suit your learning

Course Overview

Upheaval from the lost Covid years gifted ACEP course designers time to evolve and restart with a 'new' Diploma of Equine Podiotherapy that is no longer a part of the rigid accreditation system. The ACEP Diploma of Equine Podiotherapy aims for maximum flexibility to cater for students with other demands on their schedules that make full time study not possible. Unlike online study this course is unique. There is an extensive number of hours of practical 'hands on'. The course curriculum evolves with current scientific and industry knowledge. The course focuses on practical skills development particularly in equine lameness rehabilitation. In addition, ACEP provides course alumni ongoing support from the College and opportunities for collaboration with fellow students of the ACEP community. The ACEP graduate is therefore fully equipped and supported to forge a successful career in equine podiotherapy.

Flexible Course Format

Students are provided with the unique opportunity to study on site 'in-residence' at Mayfield Farm near Yarck in Victoria over the year via six individual residential blocks (5-6 days) to be completed sequentially. These residential blocks are designed to be completed in one year but can be completed in two or three years depending on a student's individual requirements.

Students will be required to complete assignments in their own time between residential blocks. A case study portfolio must be delivered by each student over a period that extends beyond the formal blocks. This case study portfolio must be completed within a year of the last block.

Evolving Course Content

ACEP course designers have a vast number of years' experience teaching in the hoof care industry. They know that the best way to nurture observation and fine motor skill sets is with multiple residential blocks of face-to-face contact. The residential blocks are spread out over the course year to allow students interim practice gathering experience which can be further built upon in subsequent classes.

Course delivery comprises a great mix of theory and practical sessions with most days beginning in the classroom and finishing with demonstrations and trimming sessions under the watchful guidance of ACEP assessors. Course delivery over a full year provides students valuable exposure to seasonal variation in hooves and associated pathologies. The course is delivered by a team of qualified lecturers comprising of hoof care professionals, vets and musculoskeletal therapists who are all highly regarded in their respective fields.

Course Campus

Mayfield Farm is located near Yarck in picturesque Northeast Victoria. Mayfield is a working cattle and sheep farm that also has an extensive equine enterprise which includes working stockhorses, breeding, retirement agistment and a lameness rehabilitation centre.

Mayfield is a superb learning environment, with a purpose-built comfortable classroom that has ready access to a huge range of freeze dried and skeletal anatomical specimens to bolster theory lectures. For practical demonstration and trimming sessions there is a huge range of equines of all shapes, sizes and hoof issues.

ACEP Graduates

Once qualified you will join the ranks of a highly regarded cohort that has become synonymous with the best quality barehoofcare in Australia. You will also qualify for membership of the Equine Podiotherapists' Association of Australia which provides access to ongoing learning opportunities and great networking with other progressive hoofcare professionals.

Vocational units of Equine Podiotherapy

There are 12 subjects which are all core:

- Safety and health in the equine hoofcare workplace
- Handling equines for hoofcare
- Equine biology
- Functional anatomy of equine limbs
- Equine orthopaedics
- Equine hoof development
- Integrated equine biomechanics
- Equine barefoot rehabilitation
- Sustainable equine hoof protection
- Infection control in the equine industry
- Profitable equine hoofcare
- Equine first aid

Please note these subjects vary in size and complexity and most are taught progressively throughout the duration of the course. Competence in each unit is only possible by completing all six blocks of study. Equine podiotherapy is an applied science so the theory taught in each of these subjects is supported by numerous practical sessions for students to apply their knowledge and skills. Assessment will be both theoretical and practical and to the performance standard expected in the equine hoofcare workplace.

Optional elective unit: Attaching equine orthotics with nails and screws (extra fees apply)

Course prerequisite: Provide First Aid (HLTAID011) To be completed by students independently before commencement of the course in February.

Vocational unit details

<p>Safety and health in the equine hoofcare workplace Setting up and maintaining a safe workplace The ergonomics of hoofcare Managing personal physical health and fitness for hoofcare longevity Managing mental health in the equine industry</p>	<p>Handling equines for hoofcare General principles of equine handling Hoofcare specific horse handling Handling different classes of equines Supervising horse holders Grandpa's tricks of the trade</p>
<p>Equine biology Musculoskeletal system Digestive system Circulatory system Respiratory system Nervous system Reproductive system</p>	<p>Functional anatomy of equine limbs Structures of the lower leg and how they function (including: bones and joints, ligaments, tendons, cartilage, epidermis, dermis, vasculature, nerves, adipose tissue) Functional hoof structure</p>
<p>Equine orthopaedics Equine evolution Hoof function The functional hoofcare model Parameters of functional hooves Hoof balance Hoof deformity Hoof dysfunction Variations with breed, environment and equestrian discipline The functional trim The equine podiotherapy observation skill set</p>	<p>Equine hoof development Foal hoof development Hoof maturity Feral hooves Equine hoof nutrition Hoof response to stress and stimulation Horseshoeing principles and the effects of metal shoes Equine lifestyle factors to grow better hooves Good hoof versus bad hoof – judging hoof development</p>
<p>Integrated equine biomechanics Recognising and analysing stance (conformation, posture, body shape) Recognising and analysing movement Biomechanical pathways Dysfunctional hooves Upper body dysfunction Finding the underlying cause – hoof or body or both?</p>	<p>Equine barefoot rehabilitation Hoof management issues (inc: hoof cracks, separation etc) Hoof infections (inc: seedy toe, thrush, white line disease, canker, mud fever etc) Acute and chronic lameness (inc: laminitis, navicular, ringbone, sidebone etc) Developmental orthopaedic disease Equine cervical vertebral malformation The role of vets in lameness rehab Radiographic examination of hooves Complimentary therapies The use and limitations of therapeutic shoeing</p>
<p>Sustainable equine hoof protection Hoof boots Orthotic inserts Limitations of hoof boots Poly shoes Partial hoof protection Hoof hardeners Hoof casting New products and techniques in an ever evolving industry</p>	<p>Equine first aid and emergency care The vital signs of horses Identifying signs of common illnesses and injuries Providing emergency care Applying treatments under supervision</p>
<p>Profitable equine hoofcare Legal requirements of small business Optimising profit in the hoofcare industry Environmentally sustainable business practices</p>	<p>Infection control in the equine industry Standard precautions for infection prevention and control Infection hazard identification Infection hazard management</p>
<p>Attaching equine orthotics with nails and screws (optional elective unit) An optional unit for those students who wish to learn how to safely and competently nail and screw on various orthotics including tips and polishes.</p>	

Course entry requirements

Previous experience

Experience in handling horses is required. Attendance at a Barefoot Blacksmith trimming workshop (or one of our affiliate's workshops) is recommended.

Physical requirements

The physical requirements for entry into this course are based on the significant demands placed on the human body when handling horses' legs for trimming. A certain level of fitness and agility is essential to ensure a student's safety, as well as the safety of others and the safety of the horses in their care. This career is not for everyone.

Disability restrictions

The equine hoof care workplace is inherently, potentially hazardous. Students need to be able bodied and of sound mind to interact safely with horses. Clear vision and use of limbs are essential. Certain disabilities would create an unacceptably high risk of injury or death to the student, other students, lecturers or horses.

Age

Parental consent will be required for those not yet 18 years of age at the time of course commencement. Training and assessment staff who deliver training to persons under 18 years of age will hold a current Working with Children Check.

Competent English

No minimum education standard is set as a prerequisite to entry into this course. However, a general command of spoken and written English, as well as the ability to write a simple report is required, equivalent to a level 3 of the Australian Core Skills Framework. This course requires the satisfactory completion of oral and written tasks.

The ACSF framework stipulates appropriate levels for: Learning, Reading, Writing, Oral Communication and Numeracy.

Course prerequisite

A current qualification in human first aid (Provide First Aid HLTAID011) is a prerequisite before course commencement.

Pre-training review - Language Literacy and Numeracy

The Australian College of Equine Podiotherapy recognises that reading, writing, listening, speaking and understanding mathematical concepts and processes are integral skills required by Equine Podiotherapists, and are therefore an important component of the training. As all students are individuals with different life experiences, literacy and numeracy, the range of skills will vary.

The course material is only available in English and you must be able to read, write and interpret documents in order to complete assessment tasks such as short/long answer questions and an ability to complete the necessary course forms.

As part of the enrolment process, the student will need to complete a language, literacy and numeracy (LLN) exercise which will be used to assess the LLN ability of each student. If students require special help, they will be given additional assistance.

We encourage students with language literacy or numeracy concerns to undertake LLN training. During your enrolment interview your LLN levels will be assessed and a range of support services can be provided for the student if requested. Please contact the Student Support Officer who will refer you to language, literacy and numeracy programmes available to you through the government agencies.

If you have a language literacy or numeracy concern that is affecting your training program, please don't hesitate to raise the matter directly with your Trainer.

Course Delivery and Duration

The course is designed to be completed in one year.

The course is delivered in six intensive blocks of face-to-face lectures and practicals.

2026 INTAKE BLOCK DATES

Block 1 February	6 days	Monday 9 th – Saturday 14 th February
Block 2 March	6 days	Monday 23 rd – Saturday 28 th March
Block 3 May	5 days	Tuesday 5 th May – Saturday 9 th May
Block 4 August	5 days	Tuesday 4 th – Saturday 8 th August
Block 5 October	5 days	Monday 12 th – Friday 16 th October
Block 6 November	5 days	Monday 23 rd – Friday 27 th November

Assignments are to be completed at home between the blocks. Students are also required to complete a series of in-depth case studies to prove competence in a range of different situations to attain their Diploma. This portfolio must be completed within a year of completing block 6.

The course is flexible and can be completed in 1,2 or 3 years. This allows for individual schedules and “Life Happens” situations. Blocks must be completed in order. Consequently, when taking into consideration the case study portfolio, full qualification can be obtained in 1 ½ -4 years.

College Location

The college is based at Mayfield, 470 Middle Creek Road, Yarck, in North-East Victoria. Mayfield is a picturesque 1000-acre farm that breeds cattle, sheep and horses. Property owners Andrew and Nicky Bowe have developed this farm into a rehabilitation centre for lame horses and an agistment centre for retirees.

There are usually 70-100 equines residing at Mayfield which provides a wide range of learning opportunities for students.

The campus provides a comfortable air-conditioned and heated classroom, full student amenities, accommodation, and camping facilities. There is also a range of off-campus accommodation options within easy driving distance.

Equipment and P.P.E.

Students need to supply their own trimming gloves and it is a condition of the college insurance that students must wear an approved (Australian Standards) safety riding helmet during the handling of live horses. Loan tools and farrier aprons are available from the college but if you are travelling by car, please bring your own if you can. Gloves, aprons and a large inventory of trimming tools are available for purchase, but not safety helmets.

Course Texts

The following texts **are supplied** as part of your course reference material:

- Davies, Z., 2005. *Introduction to Horse Biology*. 1st ed. Oxford: Blackwell Publishing.
- Wagoner, D. (ed.), 2005. *Lameness: Recognizing and Treating The Horse's Most Common Ailment*. Guilford, United States: The Lyons Press.
- Bowe, A. and Bowe, N. 2013. *The Pony That Did Not Die – Healing Laminitis with Barefoot Rehab*. 1st ed. Yarck, Victoria: The Barefoot Blacksmith.
- Edwards, A. 2014. *First Response: A Practical Guide to Caring for your Sick or Injured Horse*. Lal Lal, Victoria: The Equine Care Clinic.
- Kaufmann, S, Cline, C. 2017. *The Essential Hoof Book – The complete Modern Guide to Horse Feet*. Vermont: Trafalgar Square Books

Your lecturers will have suggestions for other textbooks you might like to add to your collection that will help you build a great reference library to assist you in the future.

Research Articles and Handouts Issued in Class

During this course you will be given many published research articles on hoof care. These are meant to help you gain an understanding of the various research projects being undertaken in this field, and to help you develop your knowledge and understanding of anatomical terms.

Some will contain aspects on hoof care practices and methods not shared by your course developers; you are encouraged to discuss these and to question why they have been included in your course material.

It is vital you have knowledge of the various traditional treatments for hoof problems offered to your future clients, so you can discuss with horse owners and attending veterinarians why you feel natural rehabilitation should be considered as a viable alternative.

These articles are offered as an overview of what is happening in this fast evolving industry and to assist you in learning critical thinking skills when reading any research material.

Student support services

Being a student is exciting, but it can also be challenging. College staff can be approached to seek advice on academic and personal issues, offering professional and confidential advice in areas where they can help to ensure a positive learning experience is achieved.

Support services may include but are not limited to:

- Referral to LLN specialists/short courses
- One on one discussions with lecturers/administration
- Payment plans that can be tailored to suit both parties
- 10 % discount on trimming tools purchased from the Barefoot Blacksmith during first year as a student
- Supply of trimming tools and PPE to borrow during course study blocks
- Option to use horses at Mayfield for trimming practice and case studies
- Networking with other lecturers and trimmers for practical trimming experience
- Information for associations and insurance
- Insurance whilst a student
- Perpetual free attendance at future Barefoot Blacksmith trimming workshops
- Perpetual free attendance at herd trimming days at Mayfield
- Printing of notes and assessments

Fees & Charges

The full fee for the Diploma of Equine Podiotherapy includes tuition, course notes and amenities fees. It does not include accommodation.

The total fee for the Diploma is \$8000 and is GST free. This includes a \$1000 non-refundable but transferrable deposit payable at enrolment.

Payment instalments are made prior to blocks as detailed below, payment plans can be tailored to suit students as long as they are paid by the due date.

Payment Due Dates:

Deposit - Due with enrolment documents		\$1,000
Instalment 1. Due: January 26th 2026	(2 weeks prior to Block 1)	\$2,000
Instalment 2. Due: March 16th 2026	(1 week prior to Block 2)	\$1,000
Instalment 3. Due: April 28th 2026	(1 week prior to Block 3)	\$1,000
Instalment 4. Due: July 28th 2026	(1 week prior to Block 4)	\$1,000
Instalment 5. Due: October 5th 2026	(1 week prior to Block 5)	\$1,000
Instalment 6. Due: November 16th 2026	(1 week prior to Block 6)	\$1,000
	TOTAL	\$ 8,000

Master Classes/Seminars

In conjunction with the Equine Podiotherapists Association of Australia, the college helps to facilitate occasional master classes for past and present students and hoofcare/musculoskeletal themed conferences for the wider equine industry.

Career Opportunities

The sky is your limit! This training opens up a huge field of work. In Australia at present the demand for properly trained bare hoof care specialists far exceeds supply. It is impossible to meet the demand for Equine Podiotherapists at this time!

Enrolment Process

Please contact the college via phone, email or the website contact page to request an enrolment application.

Step 1: Complete Student Enrolment forms including Appendix A, B, C and D and email back to the college: admin@equinepodiotherapy.com.au

Step 2: A Zoom, telephone or in person interview will be arranged with College Director Nicole Bowe to determine the suitability of the course for the individual.

Step 3: After completion of the Zoom interview you will be sent the following:

- Participant Acknowledgement of Risk
- Diploma Payment Plan Contract

Complete forms and email back to the college: admin@equinepodiotherapy.com.au

Step 4: Email a copy of the following to admin@equinepodiotherapy.com.au

- Driver's licence or Medicare card to confirm your identity
- Current First Aid certificate

Step 5: Please pay course deposit \$1,000. ***Students are not officially enrolled until the deposit has been paid.***

Account Name: Australian College of Equine Podiotherapy (VIC) Pty Ltd
BSB: 063 711
Account No: 10196334

Step 6: Once your enrolment has been confirmed you will be sent the following:

- ACEP Student Handbook
- Equine Biology Basics unit with pre-course reading and assignments to be completed.

Two course textbooks will be posted to you.

Please Note: The information collected on the Student Enrolment Form is used for administrative and statistical purposes and will remain confidential.

Our Lecturers

Andrew Bowe

Andrew is a career Master Farrier of over 30 years' experience and is at the forefront of barehoofcare education in Australia, teaching both owner trimmers and professionals. Apart from being a qualified trainer and assessor he also has an applied science degree and has authored a text on laminitis rehabilitation. He brings to this course his insights from both sides of the anvil.

Nicole Bowe

After graduating with a B.App.Sc (Agriculture), Nicky ventured into veterinary nursing. After many years of Vet nursing, Nicky and her husband Andrew set up Mayfield Barehoofcare Centre, where she manages the often complex, difficult, and sometimes long term rehabilitation of equine patients. She formulates diets based on the varied and individual needs of each horse undergoing rehabilitation.

She also consults widely with horse owners, offering nutritional advice for both recovery and the future prevention of laminitic episodes.

After years of nursing these difficult cases, Nicky is keen to pass these insights onto Equine Podiotherapists so they too can assist owners faced with the challenge of restoring good health to laminitic horses.

David Leigh

David's (Dave) passion is for horses – everything and anything horse related. His second passion is sharing what he has learnt with others. "Learning about horses is not definitive; there is no destination, only the journey." David is a qualified Equine Podiotherapist that runs his own business 'The barefoot bloke'.

David has completed a BSc Equine Science degree at Charles Sturt University, where his education is continuously enabling him to understand horses even more and enhance their well-being.

Amanda Edwards

Amanda's experience in critical care nursing and health service management has led her to start her own business 'The Equine Care Clinic'. In this she provides recovery care for sick and injured horses on behalf of horse owners. She also delivers First Response Workshops (Equine) to horse owners, Vet Nurses and Equine Therapists. Amanda is a regular speaker at various seminars, expo's, and equine clubs. She has published a book 'First Response – A Practical Guide to Caring for your Sick or Injured Horse'.

Dr Penelope Thompson

Penelope – 'Pos', graduated from Melbourne University in 2001 with a Bachelor of Science and Bachelor of Veterinary Science with Honours. She has worked in the equine industry since. Her current practice focuses on lameness, laminitis, reproduction and veterinary testing for pre-export quarantine for horses being exported, and for the Victoria Mounted Police Branch.

Pos assists Andrew Bowe and his team in providing veterinary advice in treatment and pain relief. She hopes to convey some of the more successful management strategies she has found useful in the daily management of acute and chronic foot issues and pain.

Dr Sharon May–Davis

Sharon's passion for anatomy began at just 14 years of age, with dissecting rabbits, followed by completing her first equine post mortem at 21 and began equine dissecting at 35. Within this time she completed Bachelor of Applied Science (Equine), and later her Masters, along with many other Equine therapy courses.

Sharon is one of Australia's leading experts in the biomechanics & musculo-skeletal system of the equine. Her passion has led her all over the world working with top performance horses and sharing her exceptional understanding of the equine. This has included Australian Champions from 6 different disciplines; Eventing, Dressage, Endurance, Show-jumping, Reining and Vaulting.

Sharon has done a great deal of research into the congenital abnormalities associated with the equine skeleton particularly in relation to the thoroughbred horse. She has published many articles and continues her research both in Australia and Overseas.

Professor Robert Bowker 's work will be presented to the students

Professor Bowker spent many years as Head of the Equine Hoof Laboratory Research team based at Michigan State University in the US. At the university he taught veterinary students and his specialty is hoof research through the study of the functions of the equine foot at cellular level.

Much of his research has been on the microscopic level. Through the dissection and study of literally thousands of cadaver hooves he has given the world amazing insights into the true nature of the functioning of the internal structures and how they remain sound for life.

Professor Bowker's research is the bedrock on which much of the natural hoof care world have based their trimming. His pioneering scientific papers detailing his findings have brought natural hoof care practices into the 21st century and confirmed what the natural hoof care practitioners were finding at the coal face of hoof care.

<https://www.researchgate.net/profile/Robert-Bowker-3>

The Diploma of Equine Podiotherapy has been exceptionally lucky to have Professor Bowker as one of our lecturers as he rarely teaches outside the University of Michigan. So keen is he to bring the hoof care world "up to speed" he has offered to bring his vast knowledge on the subject to Australia through our college.

It is with a heavy heart, that we announce the retirement of Professor Robert Bowker from teaching in person as due to the ever-increasing stresses of coming to Australia and increasing recovery times of these trips, Professor Bowker has made the decision to not come back to Australia any more.

Professor Bowker has been the mainstay of the development of the 'barehoofcare' industry in Australia and his contribution will live on in the large body of students for whom his teachings are both the foundation and loadstone for their very careers.

We will be delivering Professor Bowker's work and will also endeavour to 'hook' up via the internet. Many thanks to Professor Bowker for sharing his research and guiding us on the path of learning to enable us to better serve the horses of Australia.

Guest lecturers - industry updates and introductions

In each block there will be an evening lecture on the equine industry by a guest lecturer. Our guests will include past students, vets, equine company directors and hoofcare industry experts.