



Higher National Unit specification

General information for centres

Unit title: Applied Companion Animal Behaviour

Unit code: F3V0 35

Unit Purpose: This Unit is designed to provide knowledge of the learning patterns that affect animal behaviour and explain how inappropriate behaviour can develop in companion animals. This will include the main theories of learning that relate to companion animals, common inappropriate behaviours and how this can develop as well as the techniques applied to rectify inappropriate companion animal behaviour.

On completion of the Unit candidates should be able to:

- 1 Explain the main theories of learning that relate to companion animal behaviour.
- 2 Evaluate common inappropriate behaviours in companion animals.
- 3 Evaluate the techniques applied to rectify inappropriate companion animal behaviour.

Credit points and level: 1 HN credit at SCQF level 8: (8 SCQF credit points at SCQF level 8*)

**SCQF credit points are used to allocate credit to qualifications in the Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework (SCQF). Each qualification in the Framework is allocated a number of SCQF credit points at an SCQF level. There are 12 SCQF levels, ranging from Access 1 to Doctorates.*

Recommended prior knowledge and skills: Access to this Unit will be at the discretion of the centre however, it is recommended that candidates have first completed the HN Unit F3TY 34 *Animal Behaviour*.

Core Skills: There may be opportunities to develop the written component of the Core Skills in *Communication* at SCQF level 6 and the critical thinking component of the Core Skill *Problem Solving* in this Unit but there is no automatic certification of Core Skills or Core Skills Components.

Context for delivery: If this Unit is delivered as part of a Group Award, it is recommended that it should be taught and assessed within the subject area of the Group Award to which it contributes.

Assessment: Outcome 1 for this Unit could be assessed by restricted response questions conducted under closed-book supervised conditions. Outcomes 2 and 3 may be assessed jointly using a case study project.

Higher National Unit specification: statement of standards

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The sections of the Unit stating the Outcomes, Knowledge and/or Skills, and Evidence Requirements are mandatory.

Where evidence for Outcomes is assessed on a sample basis, the whole of the content listed in the Knowledge and/or Skills section must be taught and available for assessment. Candidates should not know in advance the items on which they will be assessed and different items should be sampled on each assessment occasion.

Outcome 1

Explain the main theories of learning that relate to companion animal behaviour

Knowledge and/or Skills

- ◆ Classical conditioning learning theory
- ◆ Operant conditioning
- ◆ Complex issues

Evidence Requirements

Candidates will need to provide evidence to demonstrate their Knowledge and/or Skills by showing that they can, for dogs, cats and one other small mammal

- ◆ explain classical conditioning learning theory.
- ◆ explain operant learning in terms of positive, negative and secondary reinforcement.
- ◆ evaluate complex issues in companion animal learning. The evaluation must include habituation in terms of extinction, flooding and shaping.

Assessment Guidelines

This Outcome could be assessed by a series of restricted response questions.

Higher National Unit specification: statement of standards (cont)

Unit title: Applied Companion Animal Behaviour

Outcome 2

Evaluate common inappropriate behaviours in companion animals

Knowledge and/or Skills

- ◆ Common types of inappropriate behaviour
- ◆ Significance
- ◆ Development

Evidence Requirements

Candidates will need to provide evidence to demonstrate their Knowledge and/or Skills by showing that they can:

- ◆ evaluate inappropriate behaviour for at least two companion animals. The evaluation must include excessive vocalisation, destructiveness, aggression, inappropriate elimination, fears and phobias.
- ◆ evaluate the significance of inappropriate behaviour. The evaluation must compare human social structure and culture with that of animals and must include the effects of anthropomorphism.
- ◆ describe the development of inappropriate behaviour in at least one species of animal.

Assessment Guidelines

This Outcome could be assessed in conjunction with Outcome 3.

Higher National Unit specification: statement of standards (cont)

Unit title: Applied Companion Animal Behaviour

Outcome 3

Evaluate the techniques applied to rectify inappropriate companion animal behaviour

Knowledge and/or Skills

- ◆ Diagnosis
- ◆ Corrective techniques
- ◆ Owner compliance

Evidence Requirements

Candidates will need to provide evidence to demonstrate their Knowledge and/or Skills by showing that they can:

- ◆ diagnose the causes of two behavioural problems and make recommendations for suitable corrective techniques.
- ◆ evaluate techniques to rectify inappropriate behaviour. The evaluation to include: systematic desensitization, flooding, distraction, aversion therapy and punishments.
- ◆ evaluate the effects of owner compliance on the successful rectification of inappropriate behaviour.

Assessment Guidelines

This Outcome could be assessed in conjunction with Outcome 2 as a case study where candidates are provided with a situation or situations of inappropriate behaviour and asked to evaluate the behaviour, suggest corrective techniques, evaluate owner compliance and make recommendations.

Administrative Information

Unit code: F3V0 35

Unit title: Applied Companion Animal Behaviour

Superclass category: RH

Original date of publication: August 2008

Version: 02

History of changes:

Version	Description of change	Date
02	Minor Amendments to Outcome 1 Evidence Requirements	28/11/2018

Source: SQA

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Higher National Unit specification: support notes

Unit title: Applied Companion Animal Behaviour

This part of the Unit specification is offered as guidance. The support notes are not mandatory.

While the exact time allocated to this Unit is at the discretion of the centre, the notional design length is 40 hours.

Guidance on the content and context for this Unit

This Unit is designed to provide knowledge of the learning patterns that affect animal behaviour and explain how inappropriate behaviour can develop in companion animals. This will include the main theories of learning that relate to companion animals, common inappropriate behaviours and how these develop, as well as the techniques applied to rectify inappropriate behaviour. The Unit can be taken on a standalone basis, but is designed as part of the HNC/HND Animal Care.

Outcome 1

This Outcome looks at the different learning theories that are appropriate to companion animal learning. This could include examples of learnt behaviour that is not of a formal nature (ie not deliberately taught) to aid the understanding of how different types of behaviour can develop.

Outcome 2

This Outcome develops the understanding of the nature of behaviour and the borders of appropriateness to the animal in comparison with the human being. It could be beneficial to elaborate on the concept of anthropomorphism and the concept of unintentional rewards and learning.

Outcome 3

This Outcome develops the different techniques employed in the treatment of inappropriate behaviour. The levels of success and the level of owner compliance should be addressed.

Guidance on the delivery and assessment of this Unit

Whilst this Unit may be delivered on a standalone basis, it has been designed as part of the HNC/HND in Animal Care. It is strongly recommended that candidates are familiar with the influences on animal behaviour and contemporary corrective techniques or interventions prior to undertaking this Unit. This may be evidenced by completion of the SCQF level 7 HN Unit, *Animal Behaviour*.

Delivery could involve candidates exploring a range of behavioural issues and corrective techniques currently used throughout the animal care industry. The delivery could also include the use of practical examples, staff and candidate experience, field trips, video/DVD, visits from trainers and animal behavioural therapists.

Higher National Unit specification: support notes (cont)

Unit title: Applied Companion Animal Behaviour

The assessment would be best conducted using restricted response questions designed to assess candidates' understanding of the key theories used to explain animal behaviour. Outcomes 2 and 3 could be assessed jointly using a case study project where candidates are provided with a situation or situations of inappropriate behaviour and asked to evaluate common inappropriate behaviour, techniques, owner compliance and asked to make recommendations. The case study questions must provide the opportunity for candidates to meet the Evidence Requirements of Outcomes 2 and 3.

Opportunities for developing Core Skills

There may be opportunities to develop the Core Skill of *Communication* and the Critical Thinking component of *Problem Solving* at SCQF level 6 in this Unit, although there is no automatic certification of Core Skills or Core Skills Components.

The response to the case study for Outcomes 2 and 3 may provide the opportunity to develop the written component of the Core Skill of *Communication* at SCQF level 6. Alternatively, if this response is presented orally this may provide the opportunity to develop the oral component of the Core Skill of *Communication*.

Where case studies are used (eg for Outcome 2 and 3), these may develop candidates' critical thinking skills. A case study could require candidates to identify causes of behavioural issues and to make recommendations to remedy these. This would provide the opportunity to develop the Critical Thinking component of the Core Skill of *Problem Solving* at SCQF level 6.

Open learning

This Unit may be delivered by Open Learning provide centres make appropriate arrangements for support materials, delivery support and assessments.

Candidates with disabilities and/or additional support needs

The additional support needs of individual candidates should be taken into account when planning learning experiences, selecting assessment instruments, or considering alternative Outcomes for Units. Further advice can be found in the SQA document *Guidance on Assessment Arrangements for Candidates with Disabilities and/or Additional Support Needs* (www.sqa.org.uk).

General information for candidates

Unit title: Applied Companion Animal Behaviour

This Unit is designed to provide you with knowledge of the learning patterns that affect animal behaviour and to explain how inappropriate behaviour can develop. It would be beneficial if you have successfully completed the SCQF level 7 HN Unit *Animal Behaviour*, before undertaking this Unit.

The Unit covers the main theories of learning that relate to companion animals, common inappropriate behaviours and how these develop as well as the techniques applied to rectify inappropriate companion animal behaviour. It is ideally placed within the HNC/HND Animal Care and is relevant for those who work in the animal care industry, or anyone who wishes to care for animals.

The Unit comprises four Outcomes.

Outcome 1 covers the main theories of learning that relate to companion animal behaviour including the classical conditioning learning theory, the theory of operant conditioning (positive, negative and secondary reinforcement) and more complex issues in companion animal learning such as habituation in terms of extinction, flooding and shaping.

Outcome 2 covers the common types of inappropriate behaviour including excessive vocalisation, destructiveness, aggression, inappropriate elimination, fears and phobias. In addition, the significance of inappropriate behaviour when comparing human social structure and culture with that of animals and effect of anthropomorphism and how it develops, will be discussed.

In Outcome 3 the techniques applied to rectify inappropriate companion animal behaviour are considered. This includes diagnosis of the nature of the behaviour and techniques such as systematic desensitization, flooding, distraction, aversion therapy and punishments as methods of rectification.

In order to complete this Unit successfully you will be required to achieve a satisfactory level of performance. The first Outcome may consist of restricted response questions designed to assess your knowledge of the underlying theories that help explain animal behaviour. Outcomes 2 and 3 may be assessed as a case study approach that requires you to consider behavioural situations and make recommendations to remedy the behaviour.

There may be opportunities to develop Core Skills in this Unit. The response to the case study for Outcomes 2 and 3 may provide the opportunity to develop the written component of the Core Skill of *Communication* at SCQF level 6. Alternatively, if this response is presented orally this may provide the opportunity to develop the Oral Communication component of *Communication*.

Requiring you to identify causes of behavioural issues and to make recommendations to remedy these, the case study may also provide the opportunity to develop the Critical Thinking component of *Problem Solving*, at SCQF level 6.