



Higher National Unit specification

General information for centres

Unit title: Specialist Animal Care: Reptiles and Amphibians

Unit code: F3VE 34

Unit purpose: This Unit will enable the candidate to develop knowledge and understanding of how to identify and care for a range of exotic reptile and amphibian species commonly kept as pets in the UK. It would be very beneficial for candidates to have practical experience of working in the Animal Care industry. This Unit is suitable for candidates seeking employment in animal care industries or for those people with a special interest in reptile and amphibian care.

On completion of the Unit the candidate should be able to:

- 1 Identify and describe the main species of reptile and amphibian commonly kept in the UK.
- 2 Explain the specialist care requirements of Reptiles and Amphibians kept in the UK.
- 3 Explain relevant legislation regarding the keeping of reptiles and amphibians in captivity.

Credit points and level: 1 HN credit at SCQF level 7: (8 SCQF credit points at SCQF level 7*)

**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: Whilst entry is at the discretion of the centre, it would be very beneficial for candidates to have practical experience of working in the animal care industry. Study of Animal Care or related subjects at SCQF level 5 would be beneficial eg D7E9 11 *Reptile and Amphibian Care*.

Core Skills: There are opportunities to develop the Core Skills of *Problem Solving* at SCQF level 5 and *Communication* at SCQF level 6 in this Unit, although 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: The Unit should be assessed by a combination of closed-book assessment, identification tests using diagrams or live specimens and open-book assignments.

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

Identify and describe the main species of reptile and amphibian commonly kept in the UK

Knowledge and/or Skills

- ◆ Snakes, Lizards, Chelonia, Frogs or Toads, Newts or Salamanders
- ◆ External anatomical features
- ◆ Skeletal system
- ◆ Internal anatomical features
 - Respiratory system
 - Digestive system
 - Cardiovascular system
 - Skin and special senses
 - Urogenital system

Evidence Requirements

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

- ◆ identify a minimum of ten species drawn from the following groups:
 - snake
 - lizard
 - chelonian
 - frog or toad
 - newt or salamander
- ◆ identify key external anatomical features of a reptile and an amphibian
- ◆ identify key internal anatomical features of a reptile and an amphibian
- ◆ describe key features of the skeletal system of a reptile and an amphibian.
- ◆ explain the specialised function of key external and internal anatomical features in reptiles and amphibians.

Higher National Unit specification: statement of standards (cont)

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Assessment Guidelines

A closed-book assessment could be conducted using short answer questions. Diagrams, skeletons or live specimens may be used for identification.

Higher National Unit specification: statement of standards (cont)

Unit title: Specialist Animal Care: Reptiles and Amphibians

Outcome 2

Explain the specialist care requirements of reptiles and amphibians kept in the UK

Knowledge and/or Skills

- ◆ Environmental and housing requirements
- ◆ Feeding Requirements
- ◆ Clinical signs, treatment and control of common diseases

Evidence Requirements

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

- ◆ explain the environmental and housing requirements for a minimum of one reptile species and a minimum of one amphibian species.
- ◆ explain the feeding requirements and how food is presented for a minimum of one reptile species and minimum of one amphibian species.
- ◆ describe one disease or condition of a reptile and an amphibian

Assessment Guidelines

This Outcome could be assessed by an assignment covering the specialist requirements of one chosen reptile and one amphibian species. Candidates should consider all aspects of environment including dimensions, water requirements, substrate, furniture, plants, temperature, humidity, heat gradient, lighting and security and feeding as well as considering the implications keeping these exotic species in captivity.

A short answer question assessment could assess knowledge and understanding of aspects of health and ill health of both reptiles and amphibians, or these could be incorporated into the assignment.

Higher National Unit specification: statement of standards (cont)

Unit title: Specialist Animal Care: Reptiles and Amphibians

Outcome 3

Explain relevant legislation regarding the keeping of reptiles and amphibians in captivity

Knowledge and/or Skills

- ◆ Current legislation

Evidence Requirements

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

- ◆ explain the relevant legislation relating to the captivity and specialised care for one reptile species and one amphibian species

Assessment Guidelines

This Outcome could be assessed by a short report. Assessment of this Outcome could be integrated with that for the HN Unit, *Specialist Animal Care: Avian*.

Administrative Information

Unit code: F3VE 34

Unit title: Specialist Animal Care: Reptiles and Amphibians

Superclass category: SP

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History of changes:

Version	Description of change	Date
02	Simplification of evidence requirements for outcome 1 and 2 to make less prescriptive	08/04/16

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Higher National Unit specification: support notes

Unit title: Specialist Animal Care: Reptiles and Amphibians

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 intended for candidates who are working in or seeking a career in the animal care industry or for candidates who have an interest in the specialist care of reptiles and amphibians. The teaching and learning should be delivered in this context.

Additional information relating to each Outcome is given below.

Outcome 1 covers the anatomy and physiology of reptiles and amphibians. Due to the obvious differences between many of the reptile and amphibian species the main taxa should be considered individually but the candidates should be able to evaluate the major differences in comparative anatomy between the main taxa. The main taxa covered could be serpents, sauria, chelonian, anura and caudata.

- ◆ Identification of the external anatomical features
- ◆ Skeletal System — recognition of individual bones and the specialised features
- ◆ Respiratory System
- ◆ Digestive system
- ◆ Cardiovascular system
- ◆ Skin and special senses
- ◆ Urogenital System

This Outcome should also cover identification which will allow the candidate to become familiar with selected species of reptiles and amphibians from the different groups: Snakes, lizards, chelonian, frogs, toads, newts and salamanders. The tutor should select a representative sample of some of the commoner or more important species from each group. Identification should be confined to legally available and non venomous species.

Outcome 2 covers the general husbandry, nutrition, disease and health control of reptiles and amphibians. It may be beneficial to integrate aspects of health and safety, especially in the areas of handling and zoonoses.

Housing and Environment: Theoretical tuition should cover desert, savannah, tropical, temperate, semi aquatic and aquatic habitats as well as terrestrial and arboreal environments. The candidates should be able to describe vivarium size, design and dimensions in context of these environmental requirements. They should also be able to describe and identify suitable substrate, vivarium furniture and required equipment, temperature ranges including heat gradient, humidity and lighting requirements. The ability of the animal to express normal behaviour and environmental enrichment should be considered.

Higher National Unit specification: support notes (cont)

Unit title: Specialist Animal Care: Reptiles and Amphibians

Nutrition: The candidates should be able to describe the range of foods available to feed reptiles and amphibians and presentation methods. Foods should cover commonly used items for carnivores, piscivores, insectivores, omnivores and herbivores. Presentation of foods could include live (invertebrate), dead, processed, frozen, fresh, mineral supplementation and frequency and method of presentation. The importance of balanced diets and variety and causes of nutritional deficiencies should be considered.

Disease and Health Control: Candidates should be able to describe the clinical signs, treatment and control of common diseases of captive reptiles and amphibians. Theoretical tuition could cover bacterial infections (Salmonella, mouth rot and red leg), viral infections (paramyxovirus, Inclusion Body Disease of birds) fungal infections especially in amphibians, endoparasites (nematodes, ascarids and cestodes), ectoparasites (ticks and mites including snake mites), incorrect environmental conditions (MBD and dysecdysis) and nutritional imbalance (Obesity, Gout, Hypovitaminosis A and B, MBD and egg binding).

Outcome 3 covers the relevant legislation relating to reptiles and amphibians and their care in captivity. The following legislation should be covered; C.I.T.E.S, The Animal Health and Welfare (Scotland) Act 2006, The Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981, The Dangerous Wild Animals Act 1976 and The Zoo Licensing Act 1981. Legislation should be up to date and incorporate any new changes that are introduced at a later date.

Guidance on the delivery and assessment of this Unit

This Unit is likely to be part of a Group Award designed to provide candidates with the ability to work in the animal care industry. It could also be a stand alone Unit for those wishing to improve their knowledge and understanding of captive reptiles and amphibians. Although there is no practical component to this Unit, candidates would benefit from the opportunity to care for captive reptiles and amphibians to ensure that they have the practical skills to complement the theoretical knowledge gained in this Unit. Photographs, videos, slides, visits to specialist facilities and presentations by visiting speakers could all enhance delivery, reinforcing learning and widening candidates' range of experience.

One or two closed-book assessments and one or two assignments may be used to assess candidates' learning.

The first Outcome could be a closed-book assessment with short answer questions. Diagrams, skeletons or live specimens may be used for identification. Live specimens may be used if a collection of a sufficiently wide range is available.

The second Outcome could be assessed by an assignment to cover the requirements of one chosen reptile and one amphibian species. A short answer question assessment could assess knowledge and understanding of aspects of health and ill health of both reptiles and amphibians, or these could be incorporated into the assignment.

Higher National Unit specification: support notes (cont)

Unit title: Specialist Animal Care: Reptiles and Amphibians

The third Outcome could be assessed by a short report to cover the specific legislation relating to the captivity and specialised care for one reptile species and one amphibian species. This Outcome could be assessed with HN Unit *Specialist Animal Care: Avian*.

Opportunities for developing Core Skills

There are opportunities to develop the Critical Thinking component of the Core Skill of *Problem Solving* at SCQF level 5, and the Written Communication of the Core Skill of *Communication* at SCQF level 6 in this Unit, although there is no automatic certification of Core Skills or Core Skills components.

The assessment for Outcome 2 could be structured in such a way that candidates have to research the care requirements of reptiles and amphibians and present their findings in the form of a formal report. This should provide the opportunity to develop the written component of the Core Skill *Communication* at SCQF level 6.

Candidates learn about different disease conditions, and will be asked to identify and recommend solutions to assist in the management of them. This may offer opportunities to develop the Critical Thinking component of the Core Skill of *Problem Solving* at SCQF level 5.

Open learning

This Unit may be delivered on an open learning or flexible learning basis. However, centres would have to make arrangements to ensure the authenticity of candidate work.

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: Specialist Animal Care: Reptiles and Amphibians

This Unit is intended to prepare you for work in the animal care industry but is equally valuable if you have an interest in reptile and amphibian care.

The Unit has three main areas with each given a separate Outcome. Initially, you will study the anatomy and physiology of reptiles and amphibians. This will assist you in the later Outcomes and is especially useful when studying health and disease. This Outcome will enable you to recognise a variety of different species of captive reptiles and amphibians. A wide range of species are covered from the main taxa.

The second Outcome deals with reptile and amphibian husbandry and covers housing and environment, nutrition, health and disease.

In the third Outcome you will gain knowledge of the current legislation in the relevant areas which is an essential component of many animal related jobs.

You are advised to gain as much practical experience as possible. Visits or voluntary work would allow you to increase both your practical skills and knowledge and understanding of the many different aspects of captive reptile and amphibian care. Zoos, specialist pet retailers and rescue centres may be able to offer valuable experience.

To complete this Unit successfully, you will need to achieve a satisfactory level of performance in all assessment and assignment.

There are opportunities to develop Core Skills in the areas of *Problem Solving* and *Communication* in this Unit.