



## Higher National Unit specification: general information

**Unit title:** Veterinary Nursing: Companion Animal Health and Welfare

**Unit code:** H0YB 34

**Superclass:** SP

**Publication date:** March 2012

**Source:** Scottish Qualifications Authority

**Version:** 01

### Unit purpose

This Unit is designed to develop knowledge and understanding of the health needs of a range of companion animal species in terms of their husbandry and nutritional needs. It also allows the candidate to identify the social factors that may influence the health and welfare of animals and the organisations that are involved in their rescue and rehoming.

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

- 1 Explain the health needs of a range of companion animal species.
- 2 Explain for each life stage the nutritional requirements of a range of companion animals.
- 3 Describe social and legislative factors that influence the health and welfare of companion animals.
- 4 Describe the roles and responsibilities of a range of organisations that are involved in the rescue and rehoming of companion animals.

### Recommended prior knowledge and skills

Candidates should have achieved a credit level pass in Standard Grade Biology or equivalent and should have a good knowledge of the anatomy and physiology of healthy animals. In addition, candidates should have developed knowledge of animal health and welfare through the completion of related Units such as *Large Animal Healthcare Studies* and *Exotic Animal Healthcare Studies* prior to undertaking this Unit.

## **General information (cont)**

### **Credit points and level**

1 Higher National Unit 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.*

### **Core Skills**

There are opportunities to develop the Written component of *Communication* at level 6 and the Planning and Organising component of *Problem Solving* at level 5 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. It is included in the framework of the HND in Veterinary Nursing.

## Higher National Unit specification: statement of standards

**Unit title:** Veterinary Nursing: Companion Animal Health and Welfare

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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 health needs of a range of companion animal species.

#### Knowledge and/or Skills

- ◆ Normal and abnormal presentation of companion animals.
- ◆ Normal and abnormal excretion in a range of companion animals.
- ◆ Exercise routines/activities for dogs, cats and exotic pets.
- ◆ Grooming requirements for dogs, cats and exotic pets.
- ◆ Foot care.
- ◆ Dental care.
- ◆ Prophylactic procedures such as worming and vaccination.
- ◆ Mating, pregnancy and parturition.

#### Evidence Requirements

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

- ◆ explain the health needs of four species, two of which must be species that are routinely vaccinated.

## Higher National Unit specification: statement of standards (cont)

**Unit title:** Veterinary Nursing: Companion Animal Health and Welfare

### Outcome 2

Explain for each life stage the nutritional requirements of a range of companion animals.

#### Knowledge and/or Skills

- ◆ The roles of each of the main nutrients in companion animal diets.
- ◆ The variation in nutrient requirements at each life stage.
- ◆ The variation in nutrient requirements during or following illness.

#### Evidence Requirements

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

- ◆ explain the nutritional requirements at each life stage of the dog, the cat and one other companion animal.

### Outcome 3

Describe social and legislative factors that influence the health and welfare of companion animals.

#### Knowledge and/or Skills

- ◆ Species, breed and gender identification in a range of companion animals.
- ◆ Current primary welfare legislation relating to companion animals.
- ◆ Current breeding legislation and health schemes relevant to companion animals.
- ◆ Welfare codes of practice and their application to animal welfare.
- ◆ Animal passports and records associated with the movement and use of medication in companion animals.
- ◆ Methods of identification of animals for legislative purposes.
- ◆ The roles of government organisations in the enforcement of legislation to protect animals.

#### Evidence Requirements

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

- ◆ identify 10 dog breeds, five cat breeds and five exotic species
- ◆ identify the genders of three companion animals
- ◆ describe the current welfare and breeding legislation relating to companion animals
- ◆ describe welfare codes and health schemes and their enforcement
- ◆ outline the current passport and identification requirements for one species that is being transported internationally within Europe
- ◆ describe government involvement in the enforcement of companion animal legislation

## Higher National Unit specification: statement of standards (cont)

**Unit title:** Veterinary Nursing: Companion Animal Health and Welfare

### Outcome 4

Describe the roles and responsibilities of a range of organisations that are involved in the rescue and rehoming of companion animals.

#### Knowledge and/or Skills

- ◆ Social factors affecting the health and welfare of animals.
- ◆ Identification of non-government funded organisations that are involved in the rescue and rehoming of stray or abandoned companion animals.
- ◆ Roles in society of a range of rescue organisations.
- ◆ Rehoming methods used by rescue organisations.
- ◆ The roles of charitable organisations in the support of current animal welfare legislation.
- ◆ Welfare responsibilities regarding the introduction of new animals into an established group.

#### Evidence Requirements

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

- ◆ outline for two species the reasons why animals may have to be cared for and rehomed by charitable organisations
- ◆ evaluate the rehoming methods of two rescue charities
- ◆ describe for two species how each may be introduced into an established group of animals — one must be within a group of the same species and the other for a household containing a mix of companion animal species.

## Higher National Unit specification: support notes

**Unit title:** Veterinary Nursing: Companion Animal Health and Welfare

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 husbandry procedures required to ensure that animals are cared for in the correct manner in terms of their health, nutritional and welfare needs. Current legislation should be taught and considered in terms of animal welfare and the passports and identification methods that are in use for certain species. The government organisations and charities that are involved in the enforcement of animal welfare legislation should be evaluated in terms of their work and involvement in the rescue and rehoming of companion animals

Although this Unit may be taken on a standalone basis by candidates in employment wishing to develop and/or enhance their skills, it is primarily intended for candidates who are studying towards the HND in Veterinary Nursing and the teaching and learning should be delivered in this context.

#### Outcome 1

This Outcome develops an understanding of the health requirements of dogs, cats and exotic species and should include reference to their needs in terms of avoiding behavioural problems and the problems caused by a poor environment and/or poor general husbandry. The importance of exercise facilities and the need to exercise regularly must be emphasised for all species. Dental, coat/skin and foot care should be covered and the implications of poor animal management highlighted (eg in terms of teeth: malocclusion, overgrown teeth, dental caries, gum disease, tooth spurs, mouth ulceration, bad breath and tartar).

Prophylactic measures such as those used for endo/ectoparasite control and vaccination should be covered, as a minimum, for dogs, cats and rabbits. For each species covered by the Unit, the candidate should be taught how to identify normal and abnormal urinary and faecal excretions.

In terms of reproduction, this must include the care of the dam in preparation for parturition and the care of her and her offspring once they are born. Visits from reputable breeders may enhance the teaching of this part of the Unit.

#### Outcome 2

This Outcome allows the candidate to focus on the nutritional needs of the species range. This includes all the main essential nutrients and their roles in maintaining a healthy animal through different life stages (growth, adult and geriatric) and at times of special dietary needs such as for heart disease, kidney/ urinary tract disease, obesity/ underweight, convalescence, for breeding and when working.

## Higher National Unit specification: support notes (cont)

**Unit title:** Veterinary Nursing: Companion Animal Health and Welfare

### Outcome 3

This Outcome covers the use of current primary legislation in enforcing animal welfare legislation and should also include the welfare codes, the 'five freedoms' and the duty of care as it applies to owners and anyone in charge of vertebrate animals. The roles and responsibilities of those government organisations involved in enforcement of the legislation such as the police, DEFRA/SEERAD and local authorities should be outlined and referred to in terms of the relevant legislation. The involvement of the British Veterinary Association, the Kennel Club and the Governing Council of the Cat Fancy in health screening schemes should also be covered as part of this Outcome as there is an increasing interest by breed organisations and the veterinary profession in the ways in which breeding of animal is managed.

The Outcome should also refer to current legislation that is designed to control the breeding of companion animals. In terms of identification of animals this must include the use of tattoos and microchips and the requirements for passports. Teaching should also include DNA and blood testing. The identification of genders and breeds and small animal companion animal species should include those that are more commonly kept as companions in the UK.

### Outcome 4

This Outcome introduces the importance of the vital work of charities involved in the rescue and rehoming of animals in the UK. It would be advisable to emphasise the function of these organisations in dealing with the vast quantity of unwanted, neglected and abused animals in society. This Outcome also describes the social factors that may affect animal welfare such as a lack of knowledge of animal husbandry; cruelty or neglect through ignorance or intent and the reasons why these things may be happening in modern society. In terms of charities that are involved in the rescue and rehoming of animals, as a minimum, organisations such as the Ulster/Royal/Scottish SPCA, Dogs Trust, Cats Protection, Blue Cross should be covered and mention also made of the work of small animal/exotic rescue and breed specific rescue organisations. The role of the People's Dispensary for Sick Animals must also be mentioned as, while not directly involved in rescue and rehoming, they have a role in an economic solution to the provision of veterinary care for the animals belonging to people on benefits.

## Higher National Unit specification: support notes (cont)

**Unit title:** Veterinary Nursing: Companion Animal Health and Welfare

### Guidance on the delivery of this Unit

Whilst this Unit may be delivered on a standalone basis, it has been designed as part of the HNC/D in Veterinary Nursing. Candidates may develop their knowledge and understanding of animal health and welfare during their veterinary placements blocks and through completion of the SCQF Level 7 Unit *Veterinary Nursing: Canine and Feline Anatomy and Physiology*.

Delivery could involve lectures and class discussions within the college environment supported by workplace experience of working with animals and caring for their needs in the practice. The delivery could also include the use of case studies, staff and candidate experience and the use of DVD and visiting speakers such as breeders, representatives from animal charities or government organisations involved in the care and welfare of animals.

### Guidance on the assessment of this Unit

Outcomes 1–2 could be assessed jointly using a combined closed-book assessment consisting of structured questions and Outcomes 3–4 could be assessed by an open-book assignment. The identification evidence required for Outcome 3 could be collected separately using a closed-book test.

### Assessment Guidelines

#### Outcome 1

The assessment of this Outcome can be combined with Outcome 2, details of which are given under Outcome 2.

#### Outcome 2

The assessment of this Outcome can be combined with Outcome 1 and could be assessed as a closed-book test consisting of structured questions, lasting two hours and undertaken in controlled conditions.

#### Outcome 3

The identification evidence for this Outcome can be collected using a closed-book test consisting of photographs or live animals.

The remaining evidence for this Outcome can be combined with that of Outcome 4, details of which are given under Outcome 4.

#### Outcome 4

The assessment of this Outcome can be combined with the knowledge Evidence Requirements for Outcome 3 and could consist of an open-book assignment. The assignment report must cover all of the knowledge Evidence Requirements for Outcome 3 and all Evidence Requirements for Outcome 4.



Higher National Unit specification: support notes (cont)

**Unit title:** Veterinary Nursing: Companion Animal Health and Welfare

## **Online and Distance Learning**

If this Unit is delivered by open or distance learning methods, additional resources will be required for candidate support, assessment and quality assurance. For further information and advice, please refer to the SQA guide: *Assessment and Quality Assurance for Open and Distance Learning* ([www.sqa.org.uk](http://www.sqa.org.uk)).

## **Opportunities for developing Core Skills**

There may be opportunities to develop components of the Core Skills of *Communication* and *Problem Solving* at SCQF levels 6 and 5 respectively in this Unit, although there is no automatic certification of Core Skills or Core Skills Components.

The assignment report for Outcomes 3 and 4 could provide the opportunity to develop the *Written* component of *Communication* at SCQF level 6 and the Planning and Organising component of *Problem Solving* at SCQF level 5.

## **Disabled candidates and/or those with additional support needs**

The additional support needs of individual candidates should be taken into account when planning learning experiences, selecting assessment instruments, or considering whether any reasonable adjustments may be required. Further advice can be found on our website [www.sqa.org.uk/assessmentarrangements](http://www.sqa.org.uk/assessmentarrangements)

## History of changes to Unit

Version	Description of change	Date

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## General information for candidates

### **Unit title:** Veterinary Nursing: Companion Animal Health and Welfare

This Unit is designed to provide knowledge of the husbandry required to ensure that companion animals are cared for in the correct manner in terms of their health, nutritional and reproductive needs. Current legislation should be considered in terms of animal welfare and the passports and identification methods that are in use for certain species. The government organisations and charities that are involved in the enforcement of animal welfare legislation should be described in terms of their work and involvement in the rescue and rehoming of companion animals

The Unit comprises four Outcomes:

#### **Outcome 1**

This Outcome develops an understanding of the health requirements of dogs, cats and exotic species and will include reference to their needs in terms of avoiding behavioural problems and poor health caused by poor husbandry. The importance of exercise facilities and the need to exercise regularly will be emphasised for all species. Dental, coat/skin and foot care will be covered and the implications of poor animal management highlighted. Prophylactic measures such as those used for endo/ectoparasite control and vaccination will be covered and you will learn about identifying normal and abnormal urinary and faecal excretions. In terms of reproduction, the care of the dam in preparation for parturition and the care of her and her offspring once they are born will be covered.

#### **Outcome 2**

This Outcome allows you to focus on the nutritional needs of the species range. In terms of nutrition this includes all the main essential nutrients and their roles in maintaining a healthy animal through different life stages and at times of special dietary need such as for heart disease, kidney/urinary tract disease, obesity/ underweight, convalescence, for breeding and when working.

#### **Outcome 3**

The use of current primary legislation in enforcing the support of animal welfare will also include health schemes, welfare codes, the 'five freedoms' and the duty of care as it applies to owners and anyone in charge of vertebrate animals. The roles and responsibilities of those government organisations involved in enforcement of the legislation such as the police, DEFRA/SEERAD and local authorities will be outlined and referred to in terms of the relevant legislation. The Outcome also refers to current legislation that is designed to control the breeding of companion animals. The identification of breeds and small companion animal species will be covered and will include those that are more commonly kept as pets in the UK.

## **General information for candidates (cont)**

**Unit title:** Veterinary Nursing: Companion Animal Health and Welfare

### **Outcome 4**

This Outcome covers the social factors that may affect animal welfare such as a lack of knowledge of animal husbandry; cruelty or neglect through ignorance or intent and the reasons why these things may be happening in modern society. This Outcome also introduces the importance of the vital work of charities involved in the rescue and rehoming of animals in the UK.

In order to complete this Unit successfully you will be required to achieve a satisfactory level of performance. Outcomes 1 and 2 will be assessed jointly using a closed-book assessment consisting of structured questions. Outcomes 3 and 4 will be assessed by an open-book assignment incorporating the Evidence Requirements for both Outcomes apart from breed and species identification evidence which will be obtained by a closed-book test.