



## National Unit Specification: general information

**UNIT** Animal Care: Behaviour of Small Animals (SCQF level 5)

**CODE** F6T3 11

### SUMMARY

The candidate will acquire and apply knowledge of the normal behaviour of small animals. This Unit is aimed at those who wish to develop skills in recognising normal and abnormal behaviour patterns in small animal species.

### OUTCOMES

- 1 Describe physical factors which affect normal behaviour of small animals.
- 2 Describe social behaviour of small animals.
- 3 Describe common behavioural abnormalities encountered in domesticated small animals and methods of prevention and treatment

### RECOMMENDED ENTRY

Entry is at the discretion of the centre.

### CREDIT VALUE

1 credit at SCQF level 5 (6 SCQF credit points at SCQF level 5\*).

*\*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.*

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### Administrative Information

**Superclass:** SP

**Publication date:** May 2009

**Source:** Scottish Qualifications Authority

**Version:** 01

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## **National Unit Specification: general information (cont)**

**UNIT**      Animal Care: Behaviour of Small Animals (SCQF level 5)

### **CORE SKILLS**

There is no automatic certification of Core Skills in this Unit.

There are opportunities for Core Skill development; these are highlighted in the Support Notes of this Unit Specification.

## **National Unit Specification: statement of standards**

### **UNIT      Animal Care: Behaviour of Small Animals (SCQF level 5)**

Acceptable performance in this Unit will be the satisfactory achievement of the standards set out in this part of the Unit Specification. All sections of the statement of standards are mandatory and cannot be altered without reference to SQA.

#### **OUTCOME 1**

Describe physical factors which affect normal behaviour of small animals.

##### **Performance Criteria**

- (a) The description of the natural habitat and reasons for domestication of small animals is correct.
- (b) The description of how physical characteristics affect normal behaviour of small animals is correct.
- (c) The description of how senses affect normal behaviour of small animals is correct.

#### **OUTCOME 2**

Describe social behaviour of small animals.

##### **Performance Criteria**

- (a) The description of intraspecific social behaviour is correct.
- (b) The description of socialisation and bonding with humans is correct.

#### **OUTCOME 3**

Describe common behavioural abnormalities encountered in domesticated small animals and methods of prevention and treatment.

##### **Performance Criteria**

- (a) The identification of common behavioural abnormalities in small animals is correct.
- (b) The description of the prevention and treatment of common behavioural abnormalities in small animals is correct.

## **National Unit Specification: statement of standards (cont)**

**UNIT**      Animal Care: Behaviour of Small Animals (SCQF level 5)

### **EVIDENCE REQUIREMENTS FOR THIS UNIT**

**All relevant operational procedures undertaken in this Unit must adhere to current legislation, regulations, codes of practice and manufacturers' recommendations where appropriate.**

Written and/or oral recorded evidence is required to demonstrate that candidates have met the requirements of all Outcomes and Performance Criteria (PC).

#### **Outcome 1 — Written and/or recorded oral evidence**

The candidate must describe the physical factors which affect behaviour including:

- ◆ Natural habitat
- ◆ Domestication
- ◆ Physical Characteristics
- ◆ Senses

A minimum of four small animals should be covered in the assessment.

#### **Outcome 2 — Written and/or recorded oral evidence**

The candidate must describe the social behaviour of small animals including:

- ◆ Socialisation
- ◆ Handling
- ◆ Bonding

A minimum of four small animals should be covered in the assessment.

#### **Outcome 3 — Written and/or recorded oral evidence**

The candidate must identify common behavioural abnormalities and describe prevention and treatment of common disorders.

A minimum of three small animals should be covered in the assessment.

## **National Unit Specification: support notes**

### **UNIT      Animal Care: Behaviour of Small Animals (SCQF level 5)**

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 is an optional Unit within the National Certificate in Animal Care at SCQF level 5, but may also be taken as a free-standing Unit.

This Unit is a knowledge based Unit which relates to the whole industry and as such does not align to a specific National Occupational Standards Unit (NOS).

On completion of this Unit the candidate will be able to describe the natural habitat and domestication of small animal species. He/she will be able to describe socialisation and bonding of animals with members of his/her own species and with humans. The candidate will be able to describe common behavioural problems in small animal species and methods to prevent and treat them.

Part of the skills for this Unit must be achieved by the handling and observation of small mammal species. Access to appropriate species must be available.

Physical Resources recommended: video evidence may be required to recognise common behavioural abnormalities.

This Unit is designed primarily for small animal species.

The Unit aims to ensure that the candidate is competent in describing normal behaviour and environment for small animal species. They should be able to advise as to the behaviour of small mammal species and their degree of bonding with humans. Common behavioural problems should be recognised and appropriate preventative or therapeutic action described.

#### **Outcome 1**

The candidate should demonstrate his/her ability to describe the natural habitat of small animal species with respect to climate and terrain. The candidate should also be aware of the typical activity of the species with respect to daily and seasonal variations in order to relate this to normal behaviour patterns in captivity. The main reasons for the species first being domesticated should be described.

The candidate should be able to recognise how the physical structure of the animal affects its behaviour. In particular, adaptations to allow for burrowing and climbing should be recognised. The ability of the species to escape from or pursue other species should be related to their physical stature. The candidate should be able to describe how the type and length of coat affects the time spent and techniques used in grooming behaviour. The candidate should be able to relate relative dependency on sight, sound or smell to normal behaviour patterns.

Aspects of natural habitat covered should include: climate; type of cover; circadian rhythms; hibernation.

## **National Unit Specification: support notes (cont)**

### **UNIT      Animal Care: Behaviour of Small Animals (SCQF level 5)**

Reasons for domestication covered should include: guard; pest control; sport; food; pets.

Physical characteristics that affect behaviour should include: leg length; balancing ability; coat type and length; burrowing adaptations.

Senses covered should include: sight; sound; smell; touch.

Small animals covered could include: dog; cat; rabbit; hamster; gerbil; guinea pig; rat; mouse; ferret.

#### **Outcome 2**

The candidate should be able to describe the normal social behaviour of small domestic animals. This should cover whether the species is naturally solo, paired or group-living and whether there are any life stage differences. The degree of bonding between members of a group should be emphasised as well as an implication of the effects of separation from other members of the species. The methods of socialising small animal species with humans should be described, with emphasis on the importance of age of exposure and whether the animal is solo or part of a group. Appropriate methods and quantity of handling should be described. A brief description of the expectation of degree of bonding with humans should be described.

Small animals covered could include dog; cat; rabbit; hamster; gerbil; guinea pig; rat; mouse; ferret.

#### **Outcome 3**

The candidate should be able to recognise the most common behavioural abnormalities encountered in small animal species and describe how they most commonly arise. The candidates should demonstrate his/her ability to advise pet owners as to how to tackle the problem with respect to appropriate socialisation, environment and handling. The candidate should recognise when referral to an expert is appropriate.

Behavioural abnormalities covered should include: aggression; destructiveness; inappropriate elimination.

Small animal species covered could include: dog; cat; rabbit; hamster; gerbil; guinea pig; rat; mouse; ferret.

Prevention and treatment covered should include: socialisation; appropriate environment. The use of video material and visiting speakers are recommended to enhance the subject

## **National Unit Specification: support notes (cont)**

**UNIT**      Animal Care: Behaviour of Small Animals (SCQF level 5)

### **GUIDANCE ON LEARNING AND TEACHING APPROACHES FOR THIS UNIT**

Class teaching should explain the basis of the Unit and deliver the theoretical knowledge.

### **OPPORTUNITIES FOR CORE SKILL DEVELOPMENT**

There may be opportunities to gather evidence towards Core Skills in this Unit, although there is no automatic certification of Core Skills or Core Skills components.

*Communication* (SCQF level 4), *Information Technology* (SCQF level 4) and *Working with Others* (SCQF level 4) components will be some of the Core Skills used in this Unit.

### **GUIDANCE ON APPROACHES TO ASSESSMENT FOR THIS UNIT**

#### **Outcome 1**

The candidate could be presented with 12 restricted response questions, four for each Performance Criteria, to satisfy PCs (a), (b) and (c).

Satisfactory achievement of this Outcome will be based on the candidate producing three correct responses for each of the Performance Criteria.

A minimum of five animals from the suggested list should be covered during the assessment.

#### **Outcome 2**

The candidate could be presented with 10 restricted response questions to describe intra- and interspecific social behaviour of the small animal species.

Satisfactory achievement of this Outcome will be based on the candidate producing seven correct responses to satisfy PCs (a) and (b).

A minimum of five animals must be used when referring to social behaviour.

## National Unit Specification: support notes (cont)

### UNIT      Animal Care: Behaviour of Small Animals (SCQF level 5)

#### Outcome 3

The candidate could be presented with three real, video or simulated case studies to satisfy PCs (a) and (b).

Each case study may include questions based on:

- (i) identification of the abnormality.
- (ii) explanation of how the abnormality has arisen.
- (iii) advice to the owner on how the animal should be treated regarding socialisation, environment and handling.
- (iv) whether further specialist treatment may be required.

Satisfactory achievement of this Outcome will be based on the candidate getting, at minimum, i, ii and iii correct for each case study.

A minimum of three animals must be used when assessing behavioural abnormalities.

Time should be allowed for any necessary re-assessment.

#### Opportunities for the use of e-assessment

E-assessment may be appropriate for some assessments in this Unit. By e-assessment we mean assessment which is supported by Information and Communication Technology (ICT), such as e-testing or the use of e-portfolios or e-checklists. Centres which wish to use e-assessment must ensure that the national standard is applied to all candidate evidence and that conditions of assessment as specified in the Evidence Requirements are met, regardless of the mode of gathering evidence. Further advice is available in *SQA Guidelines on Online Assessment for Further Education (AA1641, March 2003)*, *SQA Guidelines on e-assessment for Schools (BD2625, June 2005)*.

#### 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)