

Higher National Unit Specification

General information for centres

Unit title: Small Animal Health and Disease

Unit code: DJ09 35

Unit purpose: This Unit is designed to provide candidates with knowledge and understanding of health and disease in small companion mammals. The knowledge gained from this unit will enable candidates to effectively assess the health of small companion mammals, to recognise the symptoms of common diseases and to understand the physiological responses to disease. This Unit is suitable for candidates seeking employment in veterinary nursing, animal care or similar professions.

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

1. Assess the health status of small companion mammals.
2. Explain how the animal body responds to disease and injury.
3. Analyse the spread and control of disease.
4. Explain infectious diseases of small companion mammals.
5. Explain non-infectious diseases of small companion mammals.

Credit points and level: 2 HN Credits at SCQF level 8: (16 SCQF credit points at SCQF level 8*)

**SCQF 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 points at an SCQF level. There are 12 SCQF levels, ranging from Access 1 to doctorates.*

Recommended prior knowledge and skills: Candidates should have achieved passes in relevant level 7 Units in the HNC/D Veterinary Nursing framework, or equivalent. Achievement of the Units *Small Animal Anatomy and Physiology* and *Animal Nursing: Pharmacology* would be particularly beneficial.

Core skills statement: 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.

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.

General information for centres (cont)

Assessment: One holistic written assessment consisting of structured questions undertaken in controlled conditions and lasting two and a half hours could be used to collect the necessary evidence of knowledge and understanding for Outcomes 2 – 5 of this Unit. There should be a practical assessment for Outcome 1. Performance evidence should be assessed by an in-house assessor and may be supported by witness statements.

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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

Assess the health status of small companion mammals

Knowledge and/or skills

- ◆ Relevant personal protective measures.
- ◆ Dog, cat and rabbit restraints.
- ◆ Patient case history records.
- ◆ Clinical examination, including:
 - temperature
 - pulse
 - respiration
 - heart rate
 - mucous membranes
 - discharges
 - posture/appearance.
- ◆ Assessment of health status.

Evidence Requirements

Candidates will need performance evidence to demonstrate their knowledge and skills by showing that they can:

- ◆ assess and record the health status of one dog, one cat and one other small companion mammal, paying due regard to health and safety.

All performance evidence should be generated at the candidate's practice placement and must be supported by case logs and confirmation that the candidate was actively involved and was directly responsible for the implementation of all procedures.

Each case log should include the following minimum information in order to demonstrate the candidate's competence:

- ◆ record of patient's temperature
- ◆ record of patient's pulse
- ◆ record of patient's respiration
- ◆ record of patient's heart rate

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- ◆ record of patient's mucous membranes
- ◆ record of any discharges
- ◆ record of patient's posture / appearance
- ◆ overall assessment of patient's health status.

Case logs should also include copies of relevant supporting documentation but, in the interests of client confidentiality, should not include identification details.

Assessment Guidelines

Performance evidence could be supported by witness testimony. Copies of the case logs and the assessor's summary checklists should be retained for authentication purposes.

Outcome 2

Explain how the animal body responds to disease and injury.

Knowledge and/or skills

- ◆ Non-specific defence mechanisms, including barriers, inflammatory response and phagocytosis.
- ◆ Specific defence mechanisms – humoral and cellular immunity.
- ◆ Specific defence mechanisms – active and passive immunity.
- ◆ First intention healing of wounds.
- ◆ Second intention healing of wounds.

Evidence Requirements

Candidates will need evidence to demonstrate their knowledge and skills by showing that they can:

- ◆ explain the role of two non-specific defence mechanisms in the body's response to disease and injury
- ◆ explain the role of active and passive immunity in the protection of one young mammal
- ◆ explain the role of humoral and cellular immunity in the body's response to disease and injury
- ◆ explain first intention and second intention healing.

Assessment Guidelines

The assessment of the knowledge and understanding of this Outcome can be combined with Outcomes 3, 4 and 5, details of which are given under Outcome 5.

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Outcome 3

Analyse the spread and control of disease.

Knowledge and/or skills

- ◆ Methods of spread of disease, including:
 - direct contact
 - indirect contact
 - aerosols
 - contamination of food and/or water
 - carriers.
- ◆ Methods of disease control, including:
 - vaccination
 - hygiene
 - environmental conditions
 - isolation
 - quarantine
 - euthanasia.
- ◆ Common zoonotic diseases caused by:
 - viruses
 - bacteria
 - fungi
 - protozoa
 - helminths
 - ectoparasites.

Evidence requirements

Candidates will need evidence to demonstrate their knowledge and skills by showing that they can:

- ◆ explain three ways in which disease can be transmitted between patients
- ◆ explain three methods of diseases control
- ◆ analyse the routes of transmission and control of two zoonotic diseases.

Assessment Guidelines

The assessment of this Outcome can be combined with Outcomes 2, 4 and 5, details of which are given under Outcome 5.

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Outcome 4

Explain infectious diseases of small companion mammals.

Knowledge and/or skills

- Signs of common infectious diseases of dogs, cats and other small mammals, including:
 - ◆ viral diseases
 - ◆ bacterial diseases
 - ◆ fungal diseases
 - ◆ protozoan diseases
 - ◆ helminth diseases
 - ◆ ectoparasite diseases.
- ◆ Prevention of common infectious diseases of dogs, cats and other small mammals.
- ◆ Control of common infectious diseases of dogs, cats and other small mammals.
- ◆ Treatment and prognosis of common infectious diseases of dogs, cats and other small mammals.

Evidence Requirements

Candidates will need evidence to demonstrate their knowledge and/or skills by showing that they can:

- ◆ explain the signs, prevention, treatment, control and prognosis of two named infectious conditions each of the dog, the cat and one selected small mammal.

Assessment Guidelines

The assessment of this Outcome can be combined with Outcomes 2, 3 and 5, details of which are given under Outcome 5.

Outcome 5

Explain non-infectious diseases of small companion mammals.

Knowledge and/or skills

- ◆ Signs of common non-infectious diseases of dogs, cats and other small mammals, including:
 - metabolic conditions
 - nutritional conditions
 - neoplastic conditions
 - poisonings.
- ◆ Prevention of common non-infectious diseases of dogs, cats and other small mammals.
- ◆ Control of common non-infectious diseases of dogs, cats and other small mammals.

Higher National Unit specification: statement of standards (CONT)

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- ◆ Treatment and prognosis of common non-infectious diseases of dogs, cats and other small mammals.

Evidence Requirements

Candidates will need evidence to demonstrate their knowledge and/or skills by showing that they can explain, in relation to small companion animals, the signs, treatment and prognosis of:

- ◆ two metabolic conditions
- ◆ two nutritional conditions
- ◆ two neoplastic conditions
- ◆ two cases of poisoning, each due to a different agent,

Assessment Guidelines

The assessment of this Outcome can be combined with Outcomes 2, 3 and 4. This could be conducted as a written, closed-book, holistic test consisting of structured questions undertaken in controlled conditions and lasting two and a half hours.

Administrative Information

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Superclass category:	SN
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Version	Description of change	Date
02	Minor clarification of outcome 4 and 5 evidence requirements	18/08/16

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Higher National Unit specification: support notes

Unit title: Animal Health and Disease

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 80 hours.

Guidance on the content and context for this Unit

This Unit is intended for candidates who are studying towards the HND in Veterinary Nursing. The teaching and learning should be delivered in this context. The Unit will also be useful for animal care professionals or enthusiasts who wish to increase their knowledge of health and disease of small companion mammals.

This Unit should, ideally, be delivered at the same time as the Unit *Veterinary Nursing: Diagnostic Techniques* so that candidates have a clear understanding of the roles of the different classes of micro-organisms in disease.

Additional information relating to each Outcome is given below.

1. The knowledge and understanding of this Outcome should be delivered in a practical context. Candidates should be instructed how to examine animals and make an accurate assessment of their health status. Emphasis should always be given to appropriate health and safety guidelines, including the use of personal protective equipment and animal restraints. Health status assessments should include a thorough history of the patient that may contribute to the diagnostic process.
2. This Outcome covers the basic mechanisms by which the body protects itself from trauma and disease. Reference should be made to both non-specific barriers such as the skin and also to the immune response. Acquired and natural immunity should be included. The different types of wound healing and appropriate uses of each should be covered.
3. This Outcome covers knowledge and understanding of the means and control of the spread of infectious organisms. The distinction between prevention of the introduction of disease (quarantine) and measures used to control an established infection (isolation) should be explained. Common zoonotic conditions such as ringworm, sarcoptic mange and Salmonella infections, together with their control in animals and humans, should be included.
4. This Outcome covers the causes, signs and prognoses of a range of common infectious diseases. Treatment options should be included but it is not necessary to name specific drugs or their dosage rates. Prevention and control specific to common infections should be included where appropriate (for example, vaccination for parvovirus).

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5. This Outcome covers the causes, signs and prognoses of a range of common non-infectious, including metabolic, neoplastic and nutritional conditions. As for Outcome 4, treatment options should be included but it is not necessary to name specific drugs or their dosage rates. Prevention and control should be included where appropriate (for example, diet and husbandry factors which may predispose specific conditions).

Guidance on assessment and delivery

This Unit has been devised with the intention that it forms part of the core framework of an HND in Veterinary Nursing and should be delivered with that in mind. Reference should be made to the most current version of the RCVS syllabus if candidates are also being prepared for the professional exam. However, this should in no way limit the delivery of this unit.

Centres should feel free to adopt an appropriate assessment strategy provided that it meets the specifications given in the Statement of Standards for this Unit.

Guidance on Open 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* (A1030, February 2001).

Candidates with additional support needs

This Unit specification is intended to ensure that there are no artificial barriers to learning or assessment. 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. For information on these, please refer to the SQA document *Guidance on Special Assessment Arrangements for Candidates with Additional Support Needs* (BA 2399, SQA, due 2004).

General information for candidates

Unit title: Animal Health and Disease

This Unit is designed to provide knowledge and understanding of health and disease in small companion mammals. The knowledge gained from this unit will enable you to effectively assess the health of small companion mammals, to recognise the symptoms of common diseases and to understand the physiological responses to disease.

The content of the Unit is organised into five Outcomes, as follows.

- ◆ Assessing the health status of small companion mammals.
- ◆ Responses to disease and injury.
- ◆ The spread and control of disease.
- ◆ Infectious diseases of small companion mammals.
- ◆ Non-infectious diseases of small companion mammals.

There are two assessments for this Unit. Knowledge and understanding will be tested by a two and a half hour closed-book. There will also be a practical assessment in which you will be required to make accurate assessments of the health status of small companion animals.

This Unit is included in the framework for the HNC/D in Veterinary Nursing and also addresses the relevant parts of the RCVS syllabus. Please note that if you intend to become a registered veterinary nurse, you must also pass the RCVS external examinations. The 2002 Amendment to Schedule 3 of the Veterinary Surgeons Act 1966 states that only registered veterinary nurses may carry out any medical treatment or minor surgery to an animal.

Although the HNC/D prepares you for the RCVS examinations, it does not confer this qualification automatically.