



Higher National Unit specification

General information for centres

Unit title: Specialist Animal Care: Avian

Unit code: F3VA 34

Unit purpose: This Unit is designed to enable candidates to gain a knowledge and understanding of the care of the common species of birds kept in the UK. It will also allow the candidates to develop an understanding of current legislation in this area. The Unit should give the candidate the underpinning knowledge that is needed to work in the animal care industry.

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

- 1 Describe the anatomy and physiology of birds.
- 2 Explain the roles of various species of birds in society.
- 3 Explain and apply the care requirements of birds.
- 4 Describe the influence of current legislation on the keeping of birds in the UK.

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: Access to this Unit is at the discretion of the centre, however it would be beneficial if the candidate had practical knowledge of avian care, and to have completed a Unit of study in avian care prior to undertaking this Unit eg D7EL 11 *Small Animal Husbandry: Avian Care*.

Core Skills: There may be opportunities to develop the Core Skills of *Communication* and *Working with Others* at SCQF 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.

Assessment: It is recommended that this Unit is assessed by a combination of closed-book assessments, identification tests using diagrams or live specimens and practical performance evidence.

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

Describe the anatomy and physiology of birds

Knowledge and/or Skills

- ◆ External anatomical features
- ◆ Skeletal system
- ◆ 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:

- ◆ for one bird species, describe a minimum of five external avian anatomical features and a minimum of five internal features of the skeletal system
- ◆ for one bird species describe how each of the following systems work:
 - Skeletal System (this must include structure, functions and adaptations for flight)
 - Respiratory System (this must include choanae, syrinx and air sacs)
 - Digestive System (this must include beak types, digestive type and digestive tract),
 - Cardiovascular System (this must include the renal portal system)
 - Skin And Special Senses (this must include feathers, preen gland, eyes and ears) and
 - Urogenital System (this must include urinary and reproductive)

This Outcome must be assessed under closed-book, supervised conditions.

Assessment Guidelines

This Outcome could be assessed using short answer questions. A live specimen, skeletons or diagrams may be used for identification.

Higher National Unit specification: statement of standards (cont)

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Outcome 2

Explain the roles of various species of birds in society

Knowledge and/or Skills

- ◆ Bird Species
- ◆ Societal Roles
 - Commercial Purposes
 - Sport
 - Recreation
- ◆ Advantages
- ◆ Disadvantages

Evidence Requirements

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

- ◆ identify two species from each of the following groups of birds: psittacines, passeriformes, anseriformes, raptors, columbiformes, galliformes and the soft bill group
- ◆ explain at least two contributions to society of one species of bird reared for commercial purposes
- ◆ explain at least two contributions to society of one species of bird reared for sport and recreation
- ◆ explain a minimum of four advantages and four disadvantages of keeping two named species

This Outcome must be assessed under closed-book, supervised conditions.

Assessment Guidelines

This Outcome could be assessed using short answer questions. A live specimen, skeletons or diagrams may be used for identification.

Higher National Unit specification: statement of standards (cont)

Unit title: Specialist Animal Care: Avian

Outcome 3

Explain and apply the care requirements of birds

Knowledge and/or Skills

- ◆ Environmental and housing requirements
- ◆ Feeding Requirements
- ◆ Disease condition and health problems
- ◆ Disease control
- ◆ Zoonoses
- ◆ Health and Safety
- ◆ Routine maintenance

Evidence Requirements

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

- ◆ explain the different housing and environmental requirements for two species of birds; one species from an aviary and one that requires another type of housing such as a caged or other enclosure. The explanation must cover heating and lighting requirements.
- ◆ explain the feeding requirements of at least three species of birds: one species from raptors, one species from psittacines and one species from one other group identified in the previous Outcomes.
- ◆ describe the clinical signs or manifestations associated with one of each of the following disease conditions and health problems: bacterial infection, viral infection, fungal infection, endoparasites, ectoparasites, nutritional deficiency and behavioural problem.
- ◆ explain the use of the following procedures: vaccination, disinfection, quarantine, slaughter and isolation in the management of disease control, zoonoses and health and safety.
- ◆ on at least three separate occasions perform the practical skills associated with feeding routines, cleaning, disinfection and husbandry in the routine maintenance of a bird enclosure.

This Outcome must be assessed under closed-book, supervised conditions.

Assessment Guidelines

Assessment could comprise a mixture of short answer questions and an observation checklist for the practical skills.

Higher National Unit specification: statement of standards (cont)

Unit title: Specialist Animal Care: Avian

Outcome 4

Describe the influence of current legislation on the keeping of birds in the UK

Knowledge and/or Skills

- ◆ Current legislation
- ◆ Current Statutory Enforcement Bodies

Evidence Requirements

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

- ◆ describe the influence of current legislation on the keeping of three different species of birds from two groups of birds identified in previous Outcomes
- ◆ describe the advisory and policing role of current statutory enforcement bodies related to the keeping of birds

This Outcome must be assessed under closed-book, supervised conditions.

Assessment Guidelines

This Outcome could be assessed through an assessment consisting of questions based on two given scenarios/case studies which require candidates to describe how current legislation could apply to the management of the situation.

Administrative Information

Unit code: F3VA 34
Unit title: Specialist Animal Care: Avian
Superclass category: SP
Original date of publication: August 2008
Version: 01

History of changes:

Version	Description of change	Date

Source: SQA

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Higher National Unit specification: support notes

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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 birds. The teaching and learning should be delivered in this context.

Health and safety procedures should always be followed, for example when considering handling and zoonoses. The use of field visits, visiting speakers throughout the Unit would be beneficial.

Additional information relating to each Outcome is given below:

Outcome 1

This Outcome covers avian anatomy and physiology. Candidates should be able to identify the external aspects of a bird and the internal features of a bird. The use of examples, diagrams and live specimens to enable candidates to describe the Skeletal System, Respiratory System, Digestive System, Cardiovascular System, Skin and Special Senses and Urogenital System would be beneficial.

Outcome 2

This Outcome covers identification which will allow the candidate to become familiar with selected species of bird from the different groups: psittacines, passeriformes, anseriformes, raptors, columbiformes, galliformes and the soft bill group. A representative sample of some of the more common or more important species from each group could be covered in the delivery of this Outcome.

It is suggested that the role of birds in society could be wide ranging. The keeping of birds for special interest, food and egg production, sport (falconry, shooting,) showing, reintroduction into the wild as part of breeding programmes and the breeding of birds commercially could all be covered.

The suitability of keeping different species in captivity could be explored and the different characters of species of aviary bird emphasised. This could provide the candidate with the understanding necessary to be able to work successfully in the animal care industry.

Outcome 3

This Outcome covers general husbandry, nutrition, housing and the health and disease of a range of species of bird.

A sample of birds from the groups identified in Outcome 2 could be chosen. Some categories are very large and diverse eg the soft bill group. A selection of species from each group to ensure that the candidate understands the different husbandry requirements of each group could be covered. Access to an aviary is required for the practical aspects of this Unit.

Higher National Unit specification: support notes (cont)

Unit title: Specialist Animal Care: Avian

The different types of feed for all the different bird groups and the methods of preparing and giving feed should be covered. Candidates could be given the opportunity to gain practical experience of feeding at least some of the different species of bird. The advantages and disadvantages of some types of diet eg those for psittacines and raptors could be discussed.

An awareness of aviary design and the different types of accommodation needed for different species. Environmental factors such as heating and lighting to be included.

Health and disease should include the diseases and conditions of major importance and examples under the key areas in the mandatory section could include:

- ◆ Bacterial Infection; psittacosis and avian tuberculosis, bumblefoot, salmonellosis
- ◆ Viral Infection- Newcastle disease, pigeon pox
- ◆ Fungal Infection: aspergillosis
- ◆ Endoparasites: ascarids, capillaria, syngamus trachea
- ◆ Ectoparasites: red mite dermanyssus gallinae, lice and ticks
- ◆ nutritional diseases: vitamin and mineral deficiencies
- ◆ Behavioural Conditions: feather plucking and feather pecking
- ◆ other: egg binding, Hypoglycaemia in Raptors, Poisoning (lead and pesticide)

Outcome 4

This Outcome covers important aspects of current legislation relevant to the keeping of the bird species mentioned. Legislation should be up to date and incorporate any new changes that are introduced at a later date. The following legislation could be covered:

C.I.T.E.S, The Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981, The Animal Health Act 1981, The Abandonment of Animals Act 1996, The Pet Animals Act 1951, Importation of Birds, Poultry and Hatching Eggs Order 1997, Prevention of Avian Flu — Directive 2005/94/EC

Additionally, candidates could be made aware of the role of current statutory government bodies such as DEFRA.

Guidance on the delivery and assessment of this Unit

This Unit is likely to be part of a Group Award designed to provide candidates seeking to develop a career in the animal care industry. It could also be a stand alone Unit for those wishing to improve their knowledge and understanding of birds. There is a practical component to this Unit. Candidates will have to undertake the routine maintenance of an aviary or enclosure to demonstrate 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 this Unit. This will reinforce learning and widen candidate experience.

There are four closed-book assessments, with an additional practical assessment which could be accomplished through the development of an observational checklist. The use of live specimens, diagrams, photographs could aid the assessment process.

Higher National Unit specification: support notes (cont)

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The practical component requires candidates to perform the task on at least three occasions and this will require centres to make the necessary arrangements with the candidate for access to an aviary. It may be possible, with the use of an appropriate checklist, to use witness testimony to confirm candidate achievement of the practical tasks us.

Opportunities for developing Core Skills

There may be opportunities to develop the Core Skills of *Communication* and *Working with Others* at SCQF level 5 in this Unit, although there is no automatic certification of Core Skills or Core Skills components.

Candidates' maintenance of written notes and records of field trips, visits and guest speakers to aid their preparation for assessment, may provide the opportunity to develop the written component of the Core Skill of *Communication*. The practical activity may require candidates to liaise with peers and with others within and outwith the delivering centre. This may provide the opportunity to develop the Core Skill of *Working with Others*.

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.

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: Avian

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

The Unit has four main areas. To begin with you will study the anatomy and physiology of birds. This will assist you in the later Outcomes and is especially useful when studying health and disease.

The second Outcome will enable you to recognise a variety of different species of bird. A wide range of species may be covered and the importance of birds in society may be discussed. This may include the keeping of birds for pleasure, showing, sport, and food production. You will gain a knowledge of the current legislation in the relevant areas.

The third Outcome is avian husbandry and covers handling, nutrition, accommodation, health and disease. There will be an emphasis on health and safety, especially in the areas of handling and zoonosis. In addition to the course assessments you will have to undertake practical experience in the care of birds and demonstrate that you have gained the relevant practical skills. The practical experience may be arranged through your Course Tutor.

In the fourth Outcome you will gain a 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 bird care. Aviaries and zoos could offer valuable experience.

To complete this Unit successfully you will have to achieve a satisfactory level of performance in the class based and practical assessments.

The Core Skill of *Communication* at SCQF level 5 may be developed when producing written notes and records of field trips, visits and guest speakers to aid preparation for assessment. Practical activities may require you to liaise with peers and with others within and outwith your centre which may provide opportunities to develop the Core Skill of *Working with Others*.