



Higher National Unit specification: general information

Unit title: Exotic Animal Healthcare Studies

Unit code: H0YE 34

Superclass: SP

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Unit purpose

This Unit is designed to provide the candidate with knowledge and understanding of the anatomy and physiology of exotic species. It will enable the candidate to identify key anatomical differences between these species and to appreciate their general care and environmental requirements. Knowledge and understanding of potential diseases and associated nursing care will also be provided. The Unit is suitable for candidates wishing to work in veterinary nursing or related fields.

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

- 1 Identify and compare the anatomy and physiology of exotic species.
- 2 Describe a range of care and environmental requirements of exotic species.
- 3 Describe a range of diseases and other conditions affecting exotic species and their specialist nursing requirements.

Recommended prior knowledge and skills

Candidates should have achieved a credit level pass in Standard Grade Biology or equivalent.

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.*

General information (cont)

Core Skills

There are opportunities to develop the Critical Thinking component of the *Problem Solving* Core Skill 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.

Higher National Unit specification: statement of standards

Unit title: Exotic Animal Healthcare Studies

Unit code: H0YE 34

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 compare the anatomy and physiology of exotic species.

Knowledge and/or Skills

- ◆ Internal and external anatomical features
 - musculoskeletal landmarks
 - major internal organs
 - venous and arterial access points
 - external genitalia
- ◆ Comparative skeletal structure
 - axial skeleton
 - appendicular skeleton
- ◆ Digestive system
 - location, structure and function of the alimentary tract from oral cavity to anus
 - comparative digestion and excretion
 - dental formulae for small mammals and reptiles
 - species variation
- ◆ Reproductive system
 - comparative features of the male and female gonad and tubular system
 - accessory male sex organs
 - comparative oestrus cycles
 - DNA and sexing
- ◆ Special senses
 - integument
 - eye
 - ears
- ◆ Respiratory system
- ◆ Cardiovascular system
- ◆ Urinary system
- ◆ Normal biological parameters, including temperature, pulse and respiration
- ◆ Thermoregulation

Higher National Unit specification: statement of standards (cont)

Unit title: Exotic Animal Healthcare Studies

Evidence Requirements

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

- ◆ identify 10 anatomical features of each of three different exotic species to include one bird, one reptile and one mammal
- ◆ compare the digestive systems of one bird and one mammal
- ◆ compare the reproductive anatomy of one reptile and one mammal
- ◆ compare one of the special senses (integument, eye, ear) of one bird and one reptile
- ◆ compare the cardiovascular system or respiratory system of one bird and one mammal.

Outcome 2

Describe a range of care and environmental requirements of exotic species.

Knowledge and/or Skills

- ◆ Housing and accommodation requirements of individual species
 - temperature
 - lighting
 - substrate
 - cleaning
- ◆ Nutritional requirements
 - feeding patterns
 - methods of feeding
- ◆ Management and general husbandry
- ◆ Basic breeding procedures
- ◆ Methods of transportation
- ◆ Current legislation regarding the keeping of exotic species
- ◆ Preventative healthcare

Evidence Requirements

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

- ◆ describe the housing requirements of one bird and one small mammal
- ◆ evaluate housing requirements with respect to optimal and acceptable conditions for one reptile and one small mammal
- ◆ describe the feeding patterns and methods of feeding for two exotic species
- ◆ explain the basic breeding procedures for one exotic species
- ◆ describe how one reptile or one bird should be transported
- ◆ explain one item of legislation relating to the keeping of exotic species
- ◆ describe a preventative healthcare regime for one exotic species

Higher National Unit specification: statement of standards (cont)

Unit title: Exotic Animal Healthcare Studies

Outcome 3

Describe a range of diseases and other conditions affecting exotic species and their specialist nursing requirements.

Knowledge and/or Skills

- ◆ Nutritional diseases
- ◆ Diseases caused by poor husbandry
- ◆ Bacterial diseases
- ◆ Viral diseases
- ◆ Other common conditions
 - feather picking/plucking in birds
 - feather cysts in birds
 - malocclusions
- ◆ Common parasites including worms, mites and ticks
- ◆ Nursing requirements of exotic species
 - observation of signs of pain and distress
 - assisted feeding and oral therapy
- ◆ Euthanasia

Evidence Requirements

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

- ◆ Describe the clinical signs and nursing requirements of:
 - one nutritional disease in a named exotic species
 - one disease caused by poor husbandry in one reptile and one bird
 - one bacterial or viral disease affecting a named exotic species
 - one endoparasite and one ectoparasite affecting a named exotic species
- ◆ explain the nursing care requirements of two exotic species suffering from different named infections
- ◆ describe the signs of pain and distress exhibited by one exotic species
- ◆ explain the process of euthanasia in one exotic species

Higher National Unit specification: support notes

Unit title: Exotic Animal Healthcare Studies

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 primarily intended for candidates who are studying towards the HNC/D in Veterinary Nursing and 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 the anatomy and physiology of exotic species of animal.

This Unit is specifically designed to introduce Veterinary Nursing students or other interested parties to the management and care of exotic animals. In particular, the emphasis should be on budgerigars, parrots, snakes, lizards, tortoises, rabbits, guinea pigs and rats.

Health and Safety should also be borne in mind, particularly when considering handling and possible zoonoses.

Additional information relating to each Outcome is given below.

Outcome 1

This Outcome covers the variations in the anatomy and physiology of exotic species of animal. Candidates should have a clear understanding of the structure and functioning of the main body systems and how they operate as integrated systems to maintain the life of the animal. Temperature, pulse and respiration rates are very important when nursing animals: these parameters should be covered for each of the species mentioned above. Comparisons to dog and cat anatomy should be made where appropriate

Outcome 2

This Outcome is designed to introduce candidates to the accommodation requirements necessary to maintain healthy exotic species of animals. General husbandry should include various aspects of housing, feeding and general management of exotic species. The breeding requirements of exotic species should also be covered in this Outcome. The correct methods of transportation and the legal requirements of owning exotic species of animal should be covered.

Outcome 3

This Outcome focuses on the common diseases, preventative healthcare and general nursing care of exotic species of animal. Emphasis should be placed on the specialist nursing care required for these animals when they are sick. Minimising the stress that is associated with handling of these species, understanding the role of euthanasia and the legal requirements in these cases should all be included.

Higher National Unit specification: support notes (cont)

Unit title: Exotic Animal Healthcare Studies

Guidance on the delivery of this Unit

This Unit has been devised with the intention that it forms part of the framework of the HNC/D in Veterinary Nursing and should be delivered with that in mind. Ideally, this Unit should be delivered at the same time as, or after, the level 7 Unit *Veterinary Nursing: Canine and Feline Anatomy and Physiology*.

It is envisaged that most of the delivery of this Unit will be a combination of classroom-based lectures and practical sessions. The students should be given guidance to ensure that they use practical opportunities in the workplace to increase their knowledge and understanding of the topics concerned.

Guidance on the assessment 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.

Assessment Guidelines

Outcome 1

The assessment of the Outcome could be conducted as a closed-book written test undertaken in controlled conditions and lasting one hour.

Outcome 2

The assessment of this Outcome could be combined with Outcome 3, details of which are given under Outcome 3.

Outcome 3

The assessment of this Outcome could be combined with Outcome 2. This could be conducted as a closed-book written assessment consisting of structured questions undertaken in controlled conditions and lasting one and a half hours.

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).

Higher National Unit specification: support notes (cont)

Unit title: Exotic Animal Healthcare Studies

Opportunities for developing Core Skills

There are opportunities to develop the Critical Thinking component of the *Problem Solving* Core Skill at level 5 throughout this Unit. Note that there is no automatic certification of this Core Skill and Core Skill component.

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

History of changes to Unit

Version	Description of change	Date

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General information for candidates

Unit title: Exotic Animal Healthcare Studies

This Unit is designed to introduce you to exotic species of animal such as birds, reptiles, chelonians and small mammals. Specifically, the aim of the Unit is to introduce you to some of the variations you may be faced with when working in a small animal veterinary practice or exotic referral practice. The Unit will also be useful when interacting with owners of exotic animals within the practice environment.

You are advised to use any opportunities that arise to increase your practical knowledge and understanding of exotic species. Veterinary practices could be useful in this context, especially for the care and handling topics associated with diseases.

The Unit is organised into three learning Outcomes covering the following topics:

- ◆ comparative anatomy and physiology of exotic species
- ◆ care and environmental requirements of exotic species
- ◆ diseases and specialist nursing requirements of exotic species

Assessments: Outcome 1 will be assessed using a closed-book test consisting of extended response questions and diagrams lasting one hour. Outcomes 2 and 3 will be assessed together using a closed-book assessment consisting of structured questions lasting one and a half hours.