



August 2021

Subject guidance for internally assessed qualifications in 2021–22

Please read this document in conjunction with guidance for the assessment of internally assessed qualifications issued to centres in August 2021.

Group award title:	National Certificate in Animal Care
Group award code:	G9D7 45

Course aims

The Group Award is designed to enable learners to develop skills, knowledge and understanding relevant to the animal care industry.

- ◆ Demonstrate suitable skills and knowledge in the animal care industry which will enable them to reflect on their present situation and identify future opportunities.
- ◆ Consider options open to them and make informed career choices.
- ◆ Qualify for entry into further qualifications, such as Higher National Qualifications and Vocational Qualifications in Animal Care, Animal Nursing and other related areas.
- ◆ Demonstrate specific, relevant and transferable skills demanded by employers for entry into a wide range of animal care-related occupational areas.
- ◆ Apply relevant core skills to animal care-related occupations and further study in the sector.

There are two key target groups for this course: school leavers seeking careers or progression to further study in the land-based sector, and adult returners seeking a career change.

It is anticipated that, for these group of learners, the course will rely on and build on existing partnerships between further education colleges, schools and/or land-based enterprises (e.g. estates, farms, equestrian centres etc) delivering specialisms in animal care services. It may also be delivered in conjunction with training providers or employers specialising in the sector. These partnerships will enable the course to be delivered in a variety of appropriate learning environments with access to relevant teaching expertise.

Exceptions to the generic guidance on adjustments

There are elements of the course aims that may not be achieved through adjustments made in line with the generic guidance (ie where adjustments are not acceptable for reasons of risk to self, others or critical competence).

Placement or work experience plays a large part in the delivery of this course and this has been disrupted by COVID-19 restrictions. There are practical activities in the units with an emphasis on the health, wellbeing and handling of animals and equipment. Health and safety requirements are also highlighted. However, it is possible to teach and assess these using a combination of written and oral questioning with limited practical activities.

The practical elements of this course would be achieved, in normal circumstances, through site visits to farms, estates, veterinary practices, equestrian businesses; volunteering or placement opportunities; and other realistic work environments. Going forward, it may be possible to use virtual site visits, using video or live streaming from a farm or other site where animals are kept and cared for. The use of digital 'visiting speakers' is also encouraged.

This course has a mandatory and optional structure with eight mandatory units. A total of 72 SCQF points must be achieved for the group award (12 SQA unit credits).

The following section contains details of how the units may be assessed to mitigate the impact of COVID-19 restrictions. This is based on the feedback we have received and the agreed adaptations and amendments to the units.

	Risk level		
	Low	Medium	High
Risk to self		X	
Risk to others		X	
Critical competence		X	

Appropriate action if existing conditions of assessment cannot be met

Restrictions on access to placements or workplaces and other sector-related sites, coupled with school closures, have had a significantly adverse effect on delivery and assessment. The impact of COVID-19 restrictions and public health advice have made it difficult for learners to gain practical experience. However, it is hoped that a return to school and college in the coming weeks will make it possible for practical activities to be undertaken.

Centres are reminded that prior verification of centre-devised assessments would help to ensure that the national standard is being met. Where learners experience a range of assessment methods, this helps them to develop different skills that should be transferable to work or further and higher education. A variety of methods can be used by learners to present their findings. Teachers and lecturers, where possible, should give learners the choice as to the preferred method.

Assessment Support Packs (ASP) are available to provide guidance.

Although delivery and assessment have been severely affected by COVID-19 restrictions and extended school and college closures, some centres have been able to complete knowledge-based outcomes and partially deliver practical components. Consequently, learners may have been able to generate some evidence of practical activity and this could be used to infer knowledge and skills across other outcomes and units.

Where it is not possible, for the remainder of session 2021–22, for learners to generate evidence from hands-on practical experience through placement or visits, a range of approaches could be explored, including:

- ◆ remote, virtual visits with practitioners demonstrating the activities
- ◆ expert speakers
- ◆ videos
- ◆ internet research
- ◆ simulated activities to offer the opportunity to experience a range of practical activities remotely

This will give learners the opportunity to witness demonstrations of, for example, animal handling, use of equipment, and health and safety procedures, including the correct use of PPE.

Assessments could then focus on projects, case studies and questioning. In addition, use could be made of existing checklists to facilitate assessment.

Possible integration of units

The following table gives examples of where integration of unit delivery and assessment is possible.

Key: M = mandatory, O = option

Unit code and title	Possible integration with
F6SK 11 Animal Care: Health Care (M)	F6T2 11 Animal Care: Safe Working Practices (M) F6SM 11 Animal Care: Accommodation and Handling (M) F6T0 11 Animal Care: Parasitology (O)
F6SL 11 Animal Care: Anatomy and Physiology of Mammals (M)	F6SS 11 Animal Care: Breeding (O)
F6SM 11 Animal Care: Accommodation and Handling (M)	F6SK 11 Animal Care: Health Care (M)
F6T3 11 Animal Care: Behaviour of Small Animals (O)	F6SX 11 Animal Care: An Introduction to Dog Training (O)
F6SS 11 Animal Care: Breeding (O)	F6SL 11 Animal Care: Anatomy and Physiology of Mammals (M) F6T7 11 Animal Care: Neo-natal Care (O)
F6T8 10 Animal Care: Record Keeping (O)	F3GC 11 Information and Communication Technology (O)

Unit details and assessment guidance

M = mandatory O = optional

Centres are reminded that all relevant operational procedures undertaken in this qualification must adhere to current legislation, regulations, codes of practice and manufacturers' recommendations where appropriate and to the duty of care concerning pet and farmed animals.

Unit code	Title	Outcome	Evidence requirements	Guidance
F6SK 11 (M)	Animal Care: Health Care	<p>1 Describe the signs of normal health and of ill health in small animals.</p> <p>2 Administer routine health care for small animals.</p> <p>3 Describe the preventative health care for small animals.</p>	<p>Outcome 1: Written and/or recorded oral evidence of the candidate's ability to describe signs of health and ill health in at least two species. Performance evidence of candidate's ability to carry out a basic examination in two species. Written and/or recorded oral evidence of learner's ability to describe two actions to take for five signs of ill health or injury.</p> <p>Outcome 2: Performance evidence of learner's ability to demonstrate at least two health care procedures. The learner must select the correct equipment and products, monitor the animal and record procedure correctly.</p> <p>Outcome 3: Written and/or recorded oral evidence in the form of an assignment to plan a health care programme. This</p>	<p>For Outcome 1, the description of two actions to take for five signs of ill health or injury may be reduced to four signs.</p> <p>For Outcome 2, learners would normally be required to demonstrate how to correctly administer routine medication to the animal and complete one health check on a live animal on campus. It is anticipated that this will still be possible with the other health check being carried out by learners at home (either using their own animals, where possible, or a stuffed animal). Learners could be provided with a health form/checklist to complete during their health check. The health check could be videoed and uploaded for marking. During the simulated health check, learners should explain and demonstrate how to correctly administer a routine medication to their animal. They should</p>

			<p>should include appropriate environment for animals, the provision of exercise or physical activity, vaccination and endo/ecto parasite regime and variations to the programme for young, adult and geriatric lifestages.</p>	<p>explain the correct equipment required and explain how they would monitor the animal after the procedure has been carried out.</p> <p>Learners should still achieve the same level of knowledge and understanding through this approach as they still need to understand the keys signs of good health to look out for and the correct steps to carrying out a health check and the learners may have access to one live on campus health check. Online demonstrations of the correct procedure of the health check and the points required should be made to facilitate learning.</p>
F6SL 11 (M)	Animal Care: Anatomy and Physiology of Mammals (M)	<p>1 Identify the organisation of named body systems.</p> <p>2 Describe the structure and function of body systems.</p> <p>3 Describe how a common disease affects the function of a body system.</p>	<p>For Outcomes 1 and 2: written and/or recorded oral evidence is required which demonstrates that the candidate has achieved outcomes 1 and 2 to the standard specified in the outcomes and performance criteria. The evidence should be produced under closed-book, supervised conditions and should last no more than one hour. This assessment should cover four of the body systems, but the candidates will not be told which four are to be assessed. The assessment will utilise structured questions of a variety of formats but be</p>	<p>Closed-book assessment may be changed to open book.</p> <p>The number of body systems to be covered may be reduced from four to three.</p> <p>Practical experimental work used to demonstrate and investigate key processes within the animal's body may be demonstrated online and using videos.</p>

			<p>primarily of the restricted response type, with Outcome 1 partly assessed by learners annotating relevant diagrammatic representations of the animal body.</p> <p>Outcome 3: Written and/or recorded oral evidence produced as a result of a short investigation is required for this Outcome. Learners will be given an investigation brief which will allow them to achieve all performance criteria.</p>	
F6SM 11 (M)	Animal Care: Accommodation and Handling	<p>1 Describe accommodation for small animals</p> <p>2 Describe and carry out appropriate maintenance routines for small animal accommodation</p> <p>3 Describe and carry out appropriate handling techniques for small animals</p>	<p>Outcome 1 - written and/or recorded oral evidence: the learner must describe the accommodation requirements of at least three species and three different circumstances for the small animal.</p> <p>Outcome 2 - performance evidence and written and/or recorded oral evidence: the learner must clean at least two different types of accommodation and correctly dispose of waste and checking for hazardous defects and deterioration. Written and/or oral evidence that the candidate can describe routines for two additional types of accommodation.</p> <p>Outcome 3: performance evidence that the learner can safely handle at least four species of animal and one of these</p>	<p>Performance evidence for Outcomes 2 and 3 is the ideal method of assessment. However, access to live animals may be affected by current COVID-19 restrictions. Remote delivery of demonstrations of animal care and handling could be used as could stuffed animals. The care of companion animals in a domestic setting could also be used as evidence using video, photographs or live streaming.</p> <p>The practical activities for Outcome 2 could be amended to questions to establish the learner's knowledge and understanding of correct cleaning procedures and the importance of correct disposal of waste. This should also cover the correct use and disposal of PPE.</p>

			species in at least three different situations. Centres must be satisfied that the evidence submitted is the work of individual learners. When using performance evidence, assessor observation checklists and other assessment records should be maintained.	For Outcome 3, the minimum requirement may be reduced from four species to two species in two situations. If necessary, correct handling may be demonstrated using stuffed animals with supplementary questions to establish the learner's knowledge and understanding.
F6SJ 11 (M)	Animal Care: Small Animal Feeding	<p>1 Describe the basic nutrient requirement for small animals.</p> <p>2 Describe appropriate food presentations for small animals.</p> <p>3 Prepare and supply appropriate food</p>	<p>Outcome 1: written and/or recorded oral evidence to describe the nutrients and their requirements by a selection of small animals. All the basic nutrients listed in the support notes should be covered. At least three species of animals and two special groups of animals should be covered for each performance criteria.</p> <p>Outcome 2: written and/or recorded oral evidence demonstrating knowledge of appropriate foods and their advantages and disadvantages relating to all species mentioned in the content statement. Food preparations and behavioural and physical requirements relating to feeding should all be covered. A minimum of four small animals from the list in the support notes should be covered for the outcome.</p>	<p>For Outcome 1, the minimum number of animals may be reduced from three to two and the special groups from two to one.</p> <p>For Outcome 2, the minimum number of animals may be reduced from four to three.</p> <p>For Outcome 3, the observation could be remote if learners cannot return to the classroom. Alternatively, learners could be asked to describe the correct preparation of appropriate feed as detailed in the evidence requirements. The minimum number of animals may be reduced from three species to two and from two special groups to one.</p>

			Outcome 3 - performance evidence: using an observation checklist, to demonstrate competence in the preparation and supply of appropriate food presentations for small animals. At least three species of animal and two special groups should be covered for the outcome.	
F6SN 11 (M)	Animal Care: Avian Care	<p>1 Identify species of birds and describe their suitability for cage and aviary.</p> <p>2 Identify and carry out suitable husbandry routines for a range of cage and aviary birds.</p> <p>3 Recognise common health problems in a range of cage and aviary birds.</p>	<p>Outcome 1: Performance evidence to identify 10 commonly kept cage and aviary species. Written and/or recorded oral evidence of the suitability of five commonly kept species, as cage and aviary birds.</p> <p>Outcome 2: Performance evidence of preparing and maintaining one indoor bird accommodation and one outdoor bird accommodation. Performance evidence of supplying food to at least three different species of birds with different dietary requirements. Written and/or recorded oral evidence of dietary requirements and accommodation requirements of at least three different species. Performance evidence of handling one bird species.</p> <p>Outcome 3: Performance evidence of the learner's ability to recognise symptoms of ill health and two common</p>	<p>For Outcome 1, performance evidence may be replaced by written and/or oral identification of commonly kept cage and aviary species. The number to be identified may be reduced to eight.</p> <p>For Outcome 2, performance evidence may be replaced with written and or oral evidence which requires the learner to describe the preparation and maintenance of indoor and outdoor bird accommodation. Similarly, learners may be asked to describe the supplying of appropriate food for two different species with differing dietary requirements.</p> <p>It is recommended that learners have the opportunity to handle a live bird. However, if this is not possible, they may be asked to describe the correct procedure and demonstrate using a stuffed bird. This may</p>

			diseases. Written and/or recorded oral evidence of candidate's ability to describe remedial treatments for five common diseases.	be carried out online or by video/photograph. For Outcome 3, the identification of symptoms and common diseases could be done remotely, online or using photographs/video. The number of remedial treatments for five common diseases may be reduced to four.
F6SY 11 (O) (F6SY 44)	Animal Care: Breed Identification and Selection	<p>1 Identify the breeds and breed groups of dogs and describe their work activities.</p> <p>2 Identify the recognised breeds of cats kept as pets.</p> <p>3 Identify other small mammal species commonly kept as pets.</p> <p>4 Explain suitable home environments for a variety of small mammal species.</p>	<p>Outcome 1: Evidence is required of the learner's ability to identify a minimum of 10 breeds of dog, their breed groups and a description of a common use of one breed for a work activity in the UK. The assessment should be conducted under closed-book conditions.</p> <p>Outcome 2: Evidence is required of the learner's ability to identify a minimum of 10 breeds of domestic cat. The assessment should be conducted under closed-book conditions.</p> <p>Outcome 3: Evidence is required of the learner's ability to identify a minimum of two guinea pig breeds, two rabbit breeds and six other small mammal species commonly kept as pets. The assessment should be conducted under closed-book conditions.</p>	<p>Agreed adaptation: learners be assessed under open-book conditions with time constraints (based on average time taken for closed-book assessment) to prevent learners relying on researching the identification of the pictures as they complete the assessment.</p> <p>The assessment is identifying species or breeds of animals from photographs.</p> <p>Learners are still required to meet all the requirements of the descriptor other than to sit the assessments in closed-book conditions – the limited time restrictions of which they will be notified will encourage learners to prepare for the assessment as if closed book.</p>

			Outcome 4: Evidence is required of the learner's ability to select suitable pets for five given home environments, providing two reasons to justify each pet selected.	
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The above guidance is subject to review and relates to assessment for session 2021–22.

If you have any questions, please contact qualification.development@sqa.org.uk.