

ENSURING CONSISTENCY OF PRACTITIONER STANDARDS

The ABTC aims to ensure that practitioners on the Register are competent to the Standard which they state to have achieved. Ensuring that is the case requires a multi-faceted approach to cover the underlying Knowledge and Understanding (K&U) and practical assessment of Performance Criteria for applicants aspiring to be added to the Register. The processes that ABTC uses have been consistent over a number of years and have been improved and honed over time. In essence they include a regular review of content and processes as appropriate to the role being assessed. Those reviews are conducted on a rolling timetable for all Practitioner Organisations and any improvements to processes have always been, and continue to be, the result of identified need and are achieved through dialogue with Practitioner Organisations (e.g. through PAWG). Significant developments are presented to Council at the bi-annual meetings.

In addition, new courses that intend to cover some or all of the K&U for any role are examined in detail to ensure that both the teaching input, and the assessments, are conducted thoroughly and at an appropriate level as required by the ABTC standards. The process for doing so is similar to the re-evaluation of K&U undertaken at each review.

As ABTC moves forward to acquire UKAS accreditation, those procedures become increasingly critical. In particular, the Performance Criteria assessments carried out by Practitioner Organisations are a point of focus for UKAS because that is the final check of the competence of individual applicants.

Over the past year ABTC has been working with a number of Practitioner Organisations to assure their assessment processes as part of the normal schedule of review. That assurance includes examining the training of assessors to ensure consistency and that the processes undertaken provide a fair and accurate practical assessment. The process has been iterative with the ABTC Practitioner Assessment Committee (PAC) providing advice, support and assistance throughout the process to achieve the required standard.

Two Practitioner Organisations have successfully completed the current scheduled review process with help from PAC. Unfortunately ASAB Accreditation has not achieved the necessary standard in assessor training and practical assessment, in spite of considerable advice from PAC over the past year. We are saddened that ASAB Accreditation have now decided to split the training and behaviour sector by continuing with their separate assessment processes whilst ABTC has consistently strived for unity. Consequently we need to reaffirm a number of factors that may affect current and aspiring practitioners:

1. Any practitioner currently on the ABTC CAB Register will be very welcome to remain as long as they belong to an ABTC Practitioner Organisation and maintain the ABTC requirements to continue practising;

2. Any aspiring practitioner who is already registered on a course approved by ABTC or ASAB Accreditation will be enabled to undertake their Practical Assessment at any time in the future by an ABTC Practitioner/Assessing Organisation;
3. Any aspiring practitioner who commences training after 1st September 2023 will only be eligible to be entered on the ABTC CAB Register if they have achieved K&U by passing an ABTC recognised course (for that role) or via ABTC APEL and their Practical Assessment is undertaken by an ABTC Practitioner/Assessing Organisation.

ABTC trustees have tried hard to help ASAB Accreditation achieve the necessary standard of assessment for compatibility with the ABTC standards and assessment requirements. We consider that animal welfare, and the training and behaviour sector are best served by maintaining unity within the sector, something we have repeatedly tried to achieve through dialogue with ASAB Accreditation. We remain open to any organisation, including ASAB Accreditation, that wishes to achieve the highest standards of assurance, wishing to join the ABTC family.