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**Standards for the “Knowledge and Understanding” elements of the ABTC defined roles for practitioners of animal training and behaviour by role and module**

It is expected for an individual to be regarded as successfully possessing the knowledge and understanding elements of each subject area that they should have achieved at least a pass in each relevant module. Learning Outcomes must be formally assessed at the required level for the role.

**Animal Trainer Level 3**

A minimum of 50 credits, of which 400 hours must be guided learning, all at a minimum of Level 3. Learning Outcomes must be formally assessed at Level 3.

**Animal Behaviour: (Minimum 5 credits)**

1. The natural behaviour patterns, body language and communication methods of the animal.

**Animal Health and Welfare: (Minimum 10 credits)**

2. How the needs of animals under your duty of care may be assessed and addressed.

3. The suitability, action, welfare and ethical considerations of training equipment and techniques for the species' and animals' physical and mental capabilities.

4. How training will impact on animal welfare and how to analyse whether it is in the best interests of the animal involved.

5. How to assess when training might not be appropriate.

**Animal Learning and Training: (Minimum 30 credits)**

6. The process of establishing measurable goals and objectives for the training of animals.

7. How to formulate training plans based on the objectives agreed between trainer and owner/handler and available resources.

8. The factors which may affect the progress and success of training.

9. Learning theory including operant conditioning, its use, effects and practical application, including the differences between positive and negative reinforcement and positive and negative punishment.

10. The practical effects and consequences of classical conditioning on animal learning and behaviour.

11. Schedules of reinforcement and how they can be used to establish and maintain desired behaviour.

12. The need to guard against unintentional classical and operant conditioning creating undesirable behaviour.

13. How behaviour can be extinguished by the removal of reinforcement and the principle of spontaneous recovery.

14. The importance of reviewing and revising a training plan to meet the objectives.

**Animal Husbandry, Management and Welfare legislation (Minimum 5 credits)**

15. Your responsibility and accountability for duty of care of animals under the current animal welfare legislation.

16. Health and safety policy and how to carry out a risk assessment related to the training environment.

17. The importance of establishing and maintaining training records.

18. Employment law, health and safety legislation and the UK-GDPR (United Kingdom General Data Protection Regulation); and their implication for the Trainer, their clients and others.

**Animal Training Instructor Level 4**

A minimum of 75 credits, of which 525 hours must be guided learning, all at a minimum of level 4 unless otherwise stated. Learning Outcomes must be formally assessed at Level 4

**Animal Behaviour:** (**Minimum of 10 credits**)

1. The natural behaviour patterns, body language and communication methods of the animal.

**Animal Health and Welfare**: (**Minimum 10 credits**)

2. How the needs of animals under your duty of care may be assessed and addressed.

3. The suitability, action, welfare and ethical considerations of training equipment and techniques for the species' and animals' physical and mental capabilities.

4. How training will impact on animal welfare and how to analyse whether it is in the best interests of the animal involved.

5. How to assess when training might not be appropriate.

**Animal Learning and Training**: (**Minimum 30 credits**)

6. The process of establishing measurable goals and objectives for the training of animals.

7. How to formulate training plans based on the objectives agreed between trainer and owner/handler and available resources.

8. The factors which may affect the progress and success of training.

9. Learning theory including operant conditioning, its use, effects and practical application, including the differences between positive and negative reinforcement and positive and negative punishment.

10. The practical effects and consequences of classical conditioning on animal learning and behaviour.

11. Schedules of reinforcement and how they can be used to establish and maintain desired behaviour.

12. The need to guard against unintentional classical and operant conditioning creating undesirable behaviour.

13. How behaviour can be extinguished by the removal of reinforcement and the principle of spontaneous recovery.

14. The importance of reviewing and revising a training plan to meet the objectives.

**Animal Husbandry, Management and Welfare Legislation** (**Minimum 5 credits**)

15. Your responsibility and accountability for duty of care of animals under the current animal welfare legislation.

16. Health and safety policy and how to carry out a risk assessment related to the training environment.

17. The importance of establishing and maintaining training records.

18. Employment law, health and safety legislation and the UK-GDPR (United Kingdom General Data Protection Regulation); and their implication for the Animal Training Instructor, their clients and others.

**Communication and Instruction** (**Minimum 20 credits**)

19. What motivates owners/handlers generally and individually.

20. How to adapt exercises to the physical limitations/constraints of the owner/handler.

21. How to identify people's needs for information and knowledge and their motivations for acquiring it.

22. How to establish people’s preferred communication media, styles, timing and pace.

23. The importance of checking the currency, accuracy and completeness of the information and knowledge you are communicating, and how to do so.

24. How to take action to minimise any interference or disruption to your communication.

25. The importance of structuring your communication in ways that facilitate people's reception and understanding, and how to do so.

26. Techniques to gain and maintain people's attention and interest and to help them retain information and knowledge, and how to use a variety of relevant techniques.

27. The importance of using verbal and non-verbal feedback to help you fine-tune your communication, and how to do so.

28. The importance of communicating the level of confidence that can be placed on the information and knowledge, i.e. whether it is based on rigorously researched evidence, widely accepted facts or personal opinion.

29. The importance of carefully explaining jargon, technical terms or abbreviations to avoid any confusion as to their meaning.

30. The importance of confirming that people have received and understood the information and knowledge you have communicated, and how to do so.

**Animal Behaviour Technician Level 5**

A minimum of 100 credits, of which 750 hours must be guided learning, all at a minimum of level 5. Learning Outcomes must be formally assessed at Level 5

**Animal Behaviour** (**Minimum 20 credits**)

1. The ethology of vertebrate animals, including perceptual abilities, maintenance and social behaviours and communication, their function and their motivational basis in the most commonly kept domestic species.

2. How to recognise, evaluate and report on the behavioural states of the most commonly kept domestic animals and those that most commonly contribute to the caseload of a Clinical Animal Behaviourist, to include signals indicative of ill health as well as key behavioural states such as fear, nervousness, aggression, frustration, threat-reduction, play and relaxation.

3. Behavioural ontogeny; to include sensitive periods, socialisation and attachment theory.

4. The interaction between biological and evolutionary influences and the environment in which an animal is kept, and their roles in the development of behavioural disorders for a range of the most commonly kept domestic animals.

**Animal Health and Welfare** (**Minimum 10 credits**)

5. The key ethological, psychological and physiological concepts that underpin animal welfare.

6. The physiological and behavioural indicators of welfare in vertebrate animals.

7. Welfare considerations in the management and training of animals.

**Animal Learning and Training** (**Minimum 15 credits**)

8. The theory of animal learning to include habituation; sensitisation, classical conditioning, operant conditioning, insight and social learning, animal cognition and the concept of consciousness.

9. The theory underlying learned problem behaviour and training techniques.

10. The principles and rationale behind the use of the range of training, preventative and behavioural modification techniques, to include systematic desensitisation, counter-conditioning and the use of clickers or other markers/conditioned reinforcers.

11. The techniques most appropriate for the prevention and/or modification of problematic behaviour, the rationale for their use/application, and the strengths and weaknesses of each.

12. The theory underpinning strategies and techniques for the implementation of preventative behavioural interventions, in both young and adult animals.

**The Interaction between Health and Behaviour** (**Minimum 25 credits**)

13. The functional anatomy and physiology of the vertebrate nervous and endocrine systems and their role in mediating behaviour.

14. The signs of ill-health and common conditions influencing behaviour and associated veterinary terminology.

15. The behavioural consequences of medical disorders.

16. Psychopharmacology and the mode of action of the major classes of drugs used in clinical animal behaviour.

17. Commonly used complementary and alternative or non-prescription or prescribed therapies or products and there claimed/potential benefits.

**Clinical procedures** (**Minimum 30 credits**)

18. The general understanding of the range of common behavioural disorders in animals.

19. The appropriate application of the principles of ethology and learning theory to the prevention and/or modification of problematic behaviour.

20. The delivery of appropriately structured programmes for the prevention and/or modification of problematic behaviour that are likely to be effective for target behaviours identified.

21. The range of effective communication skills, both in the collection of relevant information and provision of advice in face to face or remote communication via telephone, email, letters and reports with clients and relevant professionals, and how to assess and resolve issues relating to client understanding.

22. Relevant techniques and approaches for the recording of progress of an animal through a training plan and the reporting of progress to owners/handlers and relevant professionals.

23. The interactions appropriate in professional relationships and how to apply these in practice.

24. The common professional, ethical or other issues that need to be considered in animal care settings and the action that is appropriate to address these, including an appreciation of the value of referral.

25. How to identify situations where further action may be necessary, including ways in which compliance with an extended programme for the prevention and/or modification of problematic behaviour may be encouraged.

26. UK and other relevant legislation that relates to the ownership and use of animals and the role and duties of the Animal Behaviour Technician, Clinical Animal Behaviourist, Veterinary Surgeon, paraprofessionals, owners/handlers and others within it; to include the legal implications and duties associated with the provision of advice and professional liability and client confidentiality.

27. Employment law, health and safety legislation and the UK-GDPR (United Kingdom General Data Protection Regulation); and their implication for the Animal Behaviour Technician, their clients and others.

**Clinical Animal Behaviourist Level 6**

A minimum of 120 credits, of which 750 hours must be guided learning. All subject areas to be covered at a minimum of Level 6.

Learning Outcomes must be formally assessed at Level 6

**Animal Behaviour** (**Minimum 15 credits**)

1. The ethology of vertebrate animals, including perceptual abilities, maintenance and social behaviours and communication, their function and their motivational basis in the most commonly kept domestic species.

2. How to recognise, evaluate and report on the behavioural states of the most commonly kept domestic animals and those that most commonly contribute to the caseload of a clinical animal behaviourist, to include signals indicative of key behavioural states such as fear, nervousness, aggression, ill-health, threat-reduction, play and relaxation.

3. Behavioural ontogeny; to include sensitive periods, socialisation and attachment theory.

4. The interaction between biological and evolutionary influences and the environment in which an animal is kept, and their roles in the development of behavioural disorders for a range of the most commonly kept domestic animals.

5. The process of domestication and its effects on the behaviour of animals and the common interactions between animals and humans and how these can contribute to the development of problematic owner/animal relationship, to include animal abuse, abandonment, animal-hoarding.

**Animal Health and Welfare** (**Minimum 10 credits**)

6. The key ethological, psychological and physiological concepts that underpin animal welfare.

7. The physiological and behavioural indicators of welfare in vertebrate animals and their limitations and how to use these practically to assess welfare in the commonly kept domestic species.

8. Welfare considerations in the management and training of animals and in clinical practice.

**Animal Learning and Training** (**Minimum 15 credits**)

9. The theory of animal learning to include habituation; sensitisation, classical conditioning, operant conditioning, insight and social learning, animal cognition and the concept of consciousness.

10. The theory underlying learned problem behaviour and training techniques.

11. The principles and rationale behind the use of the range of behavioural modification techniques, to include systematic desensitization, counter-conditioning and the use of clickers.

12. The techniques most appropriate for the treatment of a range of common behavioural disorders and learned problem behaviours, the rationale for their use/application, and the strengths and weaknesses of each.

**The Interaction between Health and Behaviour** (**Minimum 15 credits**)

13. The functional anatomy and physiology of the vertebrate nervous and endocrine systems and their role in mediating behaviour.

14. The concept of neural plasticity and the relevance and influence of environmental and genetic factors in the development of the nervous system.

15. The signs of ill-health and common conditions influencing behaviour and associated veterinary terminology.

16. The interaction between health and behaviour in vertebrate animals.

17. The behavioural consequences of medical disorders.

18. The evidence for and against a medical component contributing to competing explanations of a behaviour.

19. Psychopharmacology and the mode of action of the major classes of drugs used in clinical animal behaviour, their role and correct application, and constraints and contra-indicators to their use.

20. The ethics of psychopharmacological intervention and legal position of the Clinical Animal Behaviourist, Veterinary Surgeon and others regarding the diagnosis, prescription and use of drugs and provision of advice.

**Clinical procedures** (**Minimum 30 credits**)

21. The range of common behavioural disorders in animals to include phobias, aggression, stereotypies, anxiety related behaviours, and how to identify and critically evaluate contributing factors.

22. The appropriate application of the principles of ethology and learning theory to the diagnosis and treatment of common problems.

23. The key principles in human and family psychology, to include attitude theory, processes of inter-personal relationships, grief and bereavement.

24. The principles of effective counselling and how to apply to facilitate and maintain behavioural change.

25. The range of effective communication skills, both in the collection of relevant information and provision of advice in face to face or remote consultations and communication via telephone, email, letters and reports with clients and relevant professionals, and how to assess and resolve issues relating to client understanding.

26. The interactions appropriate in professional relationships and how to apply these in practice.

27. The common professional, ethical or other issues that need to be considered or may arise before, during and after a consultation; and the action that is appropriate to address these, including an appreciation of the value of further referral.

28. Methods for gathering and recording information relevant to the diagnosis of a behavioural disorder and how to critically evaluate and appraise it.

29. The construction and delivery of appropriately structured treatment regimes that are likely to be effective for behavioural disorders identified.

30. How to identify situations where further action may be necessary, including ways in which compliance with an extended treatment regime may be encouraged.

**Law and Ethics** (**Minimum 5 credits**)

31. UK and other relevant legislation that relates to the ownership and use of animals and the role and duties of the Clinical Animal Behaviourist, Veterinary Surgeon, paraprofessionals, owners/handlers and others within it; to include the legal implications and duties associated with the provision of advice and professional liability and client confidentiality.

32. Employment law, health and safety legislation and the UK-GDPR (United Kingdom General Data Protection Regulation); and their implication for the Clinical Animal Behaviourist, their clients and others.

33. The ethical guidelines relating to the use of animals.

**Critical Analysis and Research** (**Minimum 30 credits**)

34. How to critically evaluate the quality of research in terms of the methodology, robustness of data gathered and validity of findings and conclusions, from a range of publications and other sources, in order to judge its suitability as evidence on which to base clinical practice.

35. How to demonstrate understanding of cognitive biases (e.g. availability and confirmation) and their impact on the clinician and clients.

36. How to use appropriate methods for the assessment of the effectiveness of suitably structured treatment regimes.