



## **Applicant Guidelines**

### **Assessment of Prior Experience and/or Learning (APEL)**

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## Welcome to the APEL process

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Welcome to the guidance and support document for the Animal Behaviour and Training Council's APEL (Assessment of Prior Experience and/or Learning) process.

This document is intended for APEL applicants and is designed to provide a clear explanation of the structure and process of APEL Assessment.

If you require further assistance after reading through this document, please contact the ABTC Assessment Administrator ([assessments@abtc.org.uk](mailto:assessments@abtc.org.uk)).

## ABTC Role Standards

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The Animal Behaviour and Training Council (ABTC) has set Standards for two training roles:

- Animal Trainer (AT)
- Animal Training Instructor (ATI)

And two behaviourist roles:

- Animal Behaviour Technician (ABT)
- Clinical Animal Behaviourist (CAB)

Individuals must demonstrate that they meet the Standard for a role if they wish to become a registered ABTC practitioner for that role. To view these Role Standards in full please visit:

- Animal Trainer (AT)  
<https://abtc.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2021/12/ABTC-Standard-Animal-Trainer-November-2021.pdf>
- Animal Training Instructor (ATI)  
<https://abtc.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2021/12/ABTC-Standard-Animal-Training-Instructor-November-2021.pdf>
- Animal Behaviour Technician (ABT)  
<https://abtc.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2021/12/ABTC-Standard-Animal-Behaviour-Technician-November-2021.pdf>
- Clinical Animal Behaviourist (CAB)  
<https://abtc.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2021/12/ABTC-Standard-Clinical-Animal-Behaviourist-November-2021.pdf>

Each Role Standard is split into two parts, both of which are assessed.

1. Knowledge & Understanding (theoretical/academic understanding)
2. Performance Criteria (practical application of knowledge and skills)

## Assessment of Knowledge & Understanding (K&U) Statements

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This guidance and support document focuses solely on the assessment of the Knowledge and Understanding (K&U). This is the underlying basis of being a professional practitioner. A practitioner needs to *know* and *understand* before they can apply that knowledge effectively and appropriately in practice. Assessment of the K&U may be achieved in several ways.

### 1. ABTC recognised course

An individual may have completed a course recognised by the ABTC as meeting the K&U requirements. For a full list of ABTC recognised courses for each role please visit:

<https://abtc.org.uk/practitioners-info/careers/>

**Please note:** *These individuals may apply to become a provisional (or similar) member of an ABTC Practitioner Organisation as soon as they complete their course and do not need to apply for APEL.*

### 2. Accredited Animal Behaviourists (AAB)

The ABTC made the decision, following discussions with Practitioner/Assessing Organisations, to accept the registration of current AAB practitioners as evidence of having demonstrated the Knowledge and Understanding required for the CAB and ABT role. This allows those practitioners **already on the AAB register** to be acknowledged as having covered the Knowledge and Understanding through previous assessment. This is a temporary register which is now closed to new applicants.

**Please note:** *These individuals may apply to become a provisional (or similar) member of an ABTC Practitioner Organisation and do not need to apply for APEL.*

### 3. Assessment of Prior Experience and/or Learning (APEL)

APEL is a recognised way to progress all learners into and through higher education or to meet a professional standard. Currently ATs and ATIs have their K&Us assessed by the Practitioner Organisation (PO)/Assessing Organisation (AO). ABTs and CABs can have their K&U assessed via APEL by the ABTC.

## APEL Assessment

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It is clear to the ABTC that APEL is very applicable to the progression of vocational learners into an ABTC role and from one ABTC role to another.

The APEL process provides an accessible route designed to acknowledge the knowledge and understanding that can be gained through a range of sources including practical experience and both formal and informal learning. These can include:

- A formal course not yet recognised by the ABTC
- Life experience
- Work experience, both within and outside of the **professional animal** industry
- Unassessed learning e.g. conferences, webinars, reading and courses

APEL enables those looking to practice as an Animal Behaviour and Training Council (ABTC) registered Animal Behaviour Technician (ABT) or Clinical Animal Behaviourist (CAB) to demonstrate they meet the Knowledge and Understanding as set out in the relevant Role Standard.

Applicants demonstrate this Knowledge and Understanding through their evidence. This includes written evidence, interviews and reflection of relevant learning activities.

This may be relevant for individuals who:

- Have not had the opportunity to undertake formal study at a college/university
- Have undertaken formal study but in a different subject area
- Have undertaken formal study relevant to animal behaviour and training but the course is not yet recognised by the ABTC as meeting the K&U requirements

The ABTC aims to provide a common, consistent and diligent approach to APEL that is supportive, objective, fair, transparent, timely and confidential.

## K&U sections and statements

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The Knowledge and Understanding statements for ABT and CAB are listed on the mapping document for each role (*see Appendices 1 and 2*).

The ABT role requires K&U to be demonstrated for 27 statements across 5 different sections:

1. Animal Behaviour (*4 statements*)
2. Animal Health and Welfare (*3 statements*)
3. Animal Learning and Training (*5 statements*)
4. The interaction between Health and Behaviour (*5 statements*)
5. Clinical Procedures (*10 statements*)

The CAB role requires K&U to be demonstrated for 36 statements within 7 different sections:

1. Animal Behaviour (*5 statements*)
2. Animal Health and Welfare (*3 statements*)
3. Animal Learning and Training (*4 statements*)
4. The interaction between Health and Behaviour (*8 statements*)
5. Clinical Procedures (*10 statements*)
6. Law and Ethics (*3 statements*)
7. Critical Analysis and Research (*3 statements*)

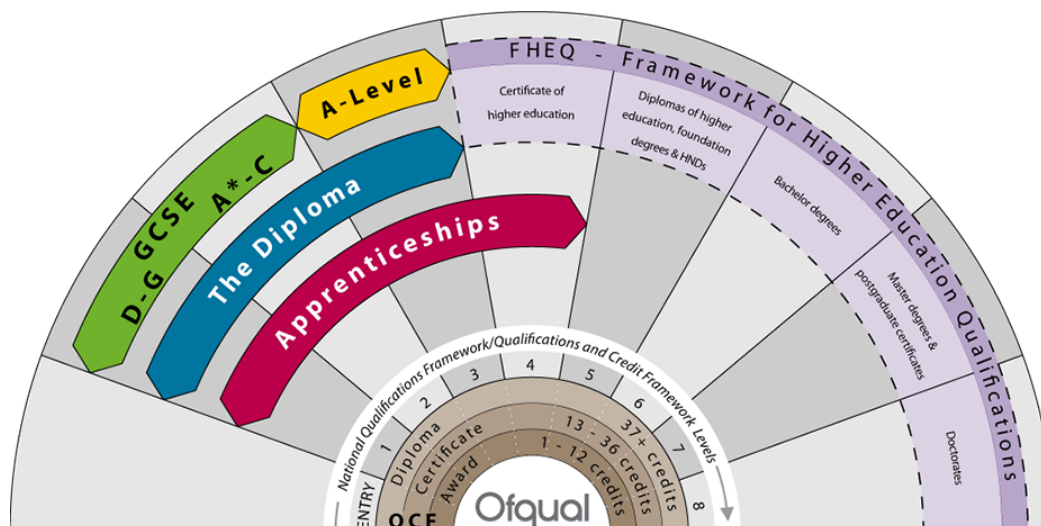
These statements outline the difference in the depth and breadth of knowledge that separates these two roles.

## K&U Levels

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The term 'Level' refers to the level at which knowledge is taught and assessed. Levels are defined in the National Qualifications Framework (<https://www.gov.uk/what-different-qualification-levels-mean/list-of-qualification-levels>) and relate to increasing levels of depth of knowledge, and the ability to synthesise and critically assess information. For the ABTC roles the K&U are assessed as follows:

- Animal Trainer (Level 3)
- Animal Training Instructor (Level 4)
- Animal Behaviour Technician (Level 5)
- Clinical Animal Behaviourist (Level 6)



### **Animal Trainer**

The K&U for the ABTC AT role must be demonstrated at Level 3 which is the equivalent to A Level, National Certificate or the final year of a Diploma.

Those who are taught at Level 3 are expected to have a good level of factual, procedural and theoretical knowledge. They can solve non-routine problems within their field based on their knowledge and understanding.

### **Animal Training Instructor**

The K&U for the ABTC ATI role must be demonstrated at Level 4 which is equivalent to a Higher National Certificate.

Those who are taught at Level 4 can work on complex and non-routine issues within their field based on their knowledge and understanding.

### **Animal Behaviour Technician**

The K&U for the ABTC ABT role must be demonstrated at Level 5 which is equivalent to a Foundation degree or Higher National Diploma.

Those who are taught to Level 5 are expected to have the knowledge and understanding needed to respond to complex problems and situations. They will evaluate the situation and respond based on their knowledge and understanding of the situation.

### **Clinical Animal Behaviourist**

The K&U for the ABTC CAB role must be demonstrated at Level 6 which is equivalent to the final year of study for a University (Bachelor) degree.

## Applicant Guidelines for APEL

Those who are taught to Level 6 are expected to have more highly developed and complex levels of knowledge, which enables them to **critically evaluate** a situation and develop **original responses** to complicated and unpredictable problems and situations.

APEL applicants who have gained knowledge and understanding through informal study and life experience can demonstrate they meet the K&U by reflecting on their experiences and the knowledge they have gained. When reflecting on the K&U it is important that applicants remember the Level of the role they are applying for and ensure they demonstrate how their K&U meets that Level.

For example:

**Learning outcome: to show knowledge and understanding of the process of extinction in operant conditioning.**

This could be assessed at different levels as follows:

**Level 3 (Animal Trainer):** Describe the process of extinction in operant conditioning.

**Level 4 (Animal Training Instructor):** Discuss the relationship between extinction and reinforcer contiguity and contingency in operant conditioning.

**Level 5 (Animal Behaviour Technician):** For a given problem behaviour, such as jumping up at people, explain how resistance to extinction is implicated in its development and evaluate the use of positive punishment and positive reinforcement methods to prevent the development of this behaviour.

**Level 6 (Clinical Animal Behaviourist):** For a given problem behaviour, such as jumping up at people, describe one aetiology and critically compare the use of Differential Reinforcement of Other (DRO) schedules of Extinction schedules as behaviour modification tools. This should include consideration of learning theory and physiological, behavioural and psychological consequences.



## Which behaviourist role is right for me?

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Before applying for APEL, behaviour applicants should consider which of the following roles, Animal Behaviour Technician or Clinical Animal Behaviourist, best suits their professional practice.

### **Animal Behaviour Technician**

The ABT role is a good fit if:

- The applicant wants to provide preventative advice to owners, handlers and/or co-professionals to protect against the development of problem behaviours.
- The applicant wants to provide behavioural first-aid advice to owners/handlers/guardians (to prevent the problem from worsening) prior to referral to a suitably qualified practitioner.
- The applicant wants to implement behaviour modification plans developed by a Clinical Animal Behaviourist (CAB) or Veterinary Behaviourist (VB).

Some examples of this role in practice might include:

- A veterinary nurse running puppy parties offering advice to owners to protect against the development of problem behaviours.
- A practitioner working in a rescue setting providing behavioural first-aid to owners of a newly adopted dog before referring to a local Clinical Animal Behaviourist (CAB/VB).
- A practitioner working in private practice implementing a behaviour modification plan in conjunction with a CAB/VB, following assessment/evaluation by that same CAB/VB.

For a more detailed overview of the ABT role please refer to the ABTC ABT Standard:

<https://abtc.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2021/12/ABTC-Standard-Animal-Behaviour-Technician-November-2021.pdf>

### **Clinical Animal Behaviourist**

The CAB role is a good fit if:

- The applicant has an extensive understanding of clinical animal behaviour and the related scientific/clinical literature.
- The applicant wants to assess and evaluate the behaviour of animals demonstrating all types of undesirable, inappropriate, problematic or dangerous behaviour.
- The applicant wants to develop effective behaviour modification plans for owners, handlers or co-professionals caring for the animal.

## Applicant Guidelines for APEL

Some examples of this role in practice might include:

- A practitioner in private practice assesses, evaluates, develops and implements a behaviour modification plan.
- A practitioner in private practice assesses, evaluates, develops and implements a behaviour modification plan and works in conjunction with a local ABT and/or ATI.
- A practitioner in private practice assesses, evaluates and develops a behaviour modification plan before referring to a local Animal Behaviour Technician (ABT) to implement the plan.
- A practitioner working in the rescue and rehabilitation sector who assesses, evaluates and develops a behaviour modification plan for animals within a centre or going to a new home.

For a more detailed overview of the CAB role please refer to the ABTC CAB Standard:

<https://abtc.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2021/12/ABTC-Standard-Clinical-Animal-Behaviourist-November-2021.pdf>

## The Application Process

### Step 1: Download and complete the relevant paperwork

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The assessors are looking to see that applicants have met the Knowledge and Understanding requirements for the role. The following documents will help applicants provide this evidence and make up their APEL application. These documents are available to download at: <https://www.apbc.org.uk/apel/>

1. ABT Mapping Document (*Appendix 1*)

To be completed by those applying for the ABT role only. This document demonstrates to the assessors where the applicant gained their knowledge and understanding from. It provides a record of evidence mapping the applicant's knowledge and understanding against each of the ABTC criteria for the ABT Standard.

2. CAB Mapping Document (*Appendix 2*)

To be completed by those applying for the CAB role only. This document demonstrates to the assessors where the applicant gained their knowledge and understanding from. It provides a record of evidence mapping the applicant's knowledge and understanding against each of the ABTC criteria for the CAB Standard.

3. Reflective Accounts Form (*Appendix 3*)

Applicants should provide a Reflective Account form for each Knowledge and Understanding section. This means there should be a minimum of 5 completed Reflective Accounts forms for the ABT role and a minimum of 7 Reflective Accounts forms for the CAB role.

Animal Behaviour Technician K&U sections	Clinical Animal Behaviourist K&U sections
1. Animal Behaviour	1. Animal Behaviour
2. Animal Health and Welfare	2. Animal Health and Welfare
3. Animal Learning and Training	3. Animal Learning and Training
4. The Interaction between Health and Behaviour	4. The Interaction between Health and Behaviour
5. Clinical Procedures	5. Clinical Procedures
	6. Law and Ethics
	7. Critical Analysis and Research

A Reflective Account should give specific examples of how the applicant’s experience and learning has allowed them to acquire the Knowledge and Understanding for each of the K&U statements. These require more than simply saying what experience / course addressed which K&U statement. These reflective accounts are where the applicant provides the evidence of their Knowledge and Understanding at the required level.

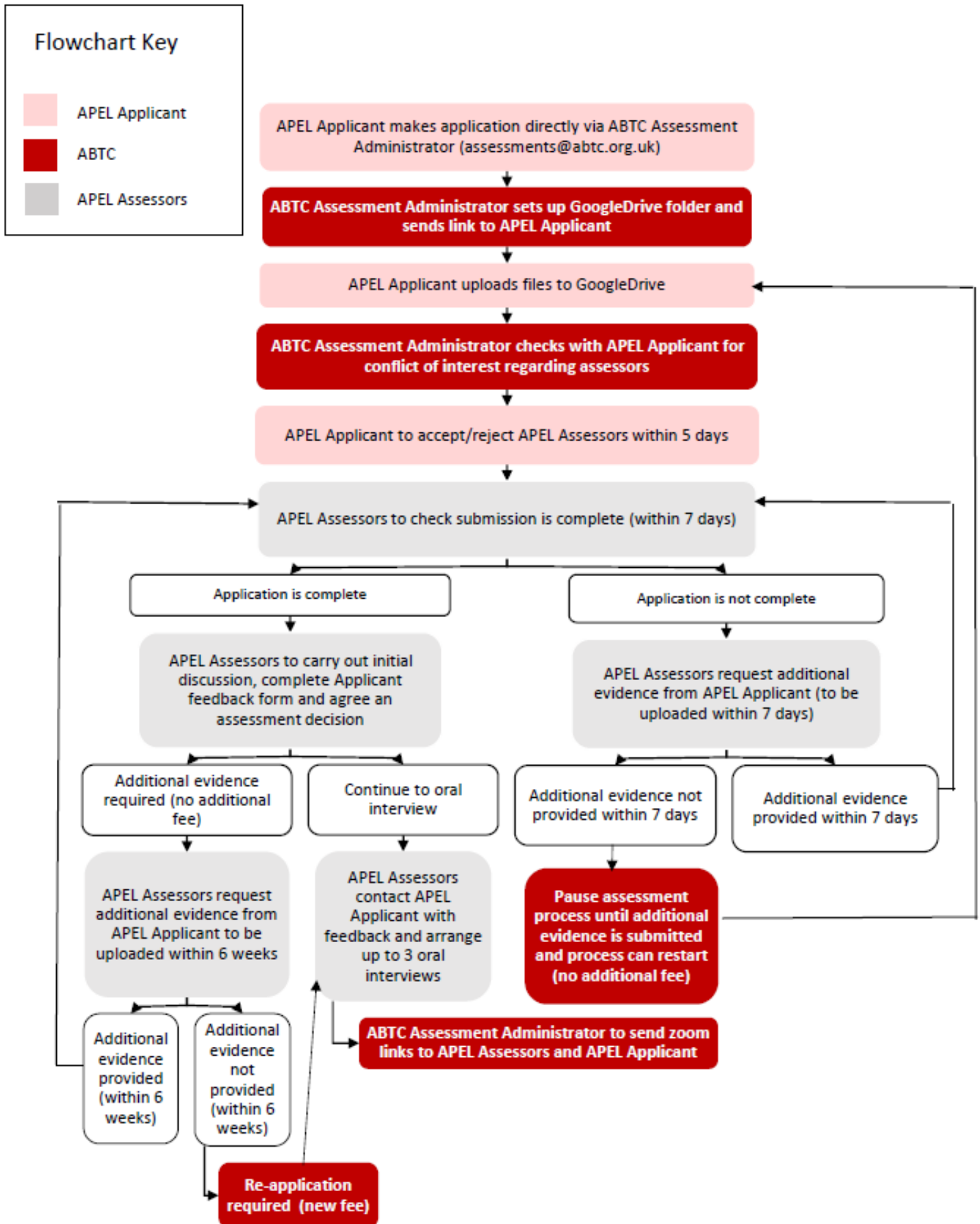
#### 4. APEL Index of Supporting Documentation (*Appendix 4*)

It may be that the applicant submits several supporting documents/certificates etc as part of their application. This document enables applicants to clearly label and present their supporting evidence to assessors.

More detailed information regarding how to complete these documents is included later in this guide (*please see ‘Completing the documentation’*).

Once all the documents are complete the applicant is ready to submit these to the ABTC for APEL Assessment.

A diagrammatic representation of the Assessment process is given below, and the following sections provide more detailed information.



## Step 2: Submit APEL application to the ABTC

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Once all documentation is complete, applicants should contact the ABTC Assessment Administrator ([assessments@abtc.org.uk](mailto:assessments@abtc.org.uk)) and apply for APEL using the APEL Application form (*Appendix 5*).

The cost of the application process is £325. This application fee covers the work of the ABTC Assessment Administrator and the time it takes for the APEL Assessors to thoroughly review all written and oral evidence gathered (see Step 4). For full transparency, these costs are shown below.

APEL Assessor 1	£150
APEL Assessor 2	£150
Admin Fee	£25
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>£325</b>

Once the application form and payment has been received, the ABTC Assessment Administrator will send the applicant a link to a GoogleDrive folder who will then upload all relevant documentation. The applicant will also be assigned an assessment window based on availability of APEL assessors. This window will inform the applicant of the timeframe in which their application will be reviewed.

<b>APPLICATION WINDOW</b>	<b>APEL APPLICATION DEADLINE</b>
1 <sup>st</sup> February - 31 <sup>st</sup> May	1 <sup>st</sup> February
1 <sup>st</sup> June - 30 <sup>th</sup> September	1 <sup>st</sup> June
1 <sup>st</sup> October - 31 <sup>st</sup> January	1 <sup>st</sup> October

Once all relevant files and documentation have been uploaded to the folder, this will be shared with the allocated APEL Assessors. The applicant is given the opportunity to request a different assessor, if for example the person is known to them.

The assessors will spend time reviewing the documentation before completing a feedback form.

### Step 3: Written feedback

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Applicants will receive written feedback on their APEL application clearly outlining which criteria have been Fully met (Y), Partially met (P) or Not yet met (N).

In cases where additional evidence is required, applicants will be asked to submit this within a given timeframe at no further cost.

It may be that the application is not complete and is missing certain elements of the required documentation e.g. an Index or a Reflective Account form for one of the K&U sections. In this instance the applicant is asked to provide the missing documentation within 7 days or the assessment process will be paused.

It may be that, after reviewing the initial evidence, the assessors request further evidence in the form of an updated Reflective Account to more clearly demonstrate the K&U. In this instance the applicant is asked to provide the additional evidence within 6 weeks. If additional evidence is not provided at this stage, the applicant is asked to make a re-application (requiring a new fee).

### Step 4: Oral Interviews

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All applicants will be invited to **at least** one oral interview.

If an applicant's written evidence fully meets all K&U statements, the oral interview provides assessors the opportunity to meet with the applicant and discuss their application.

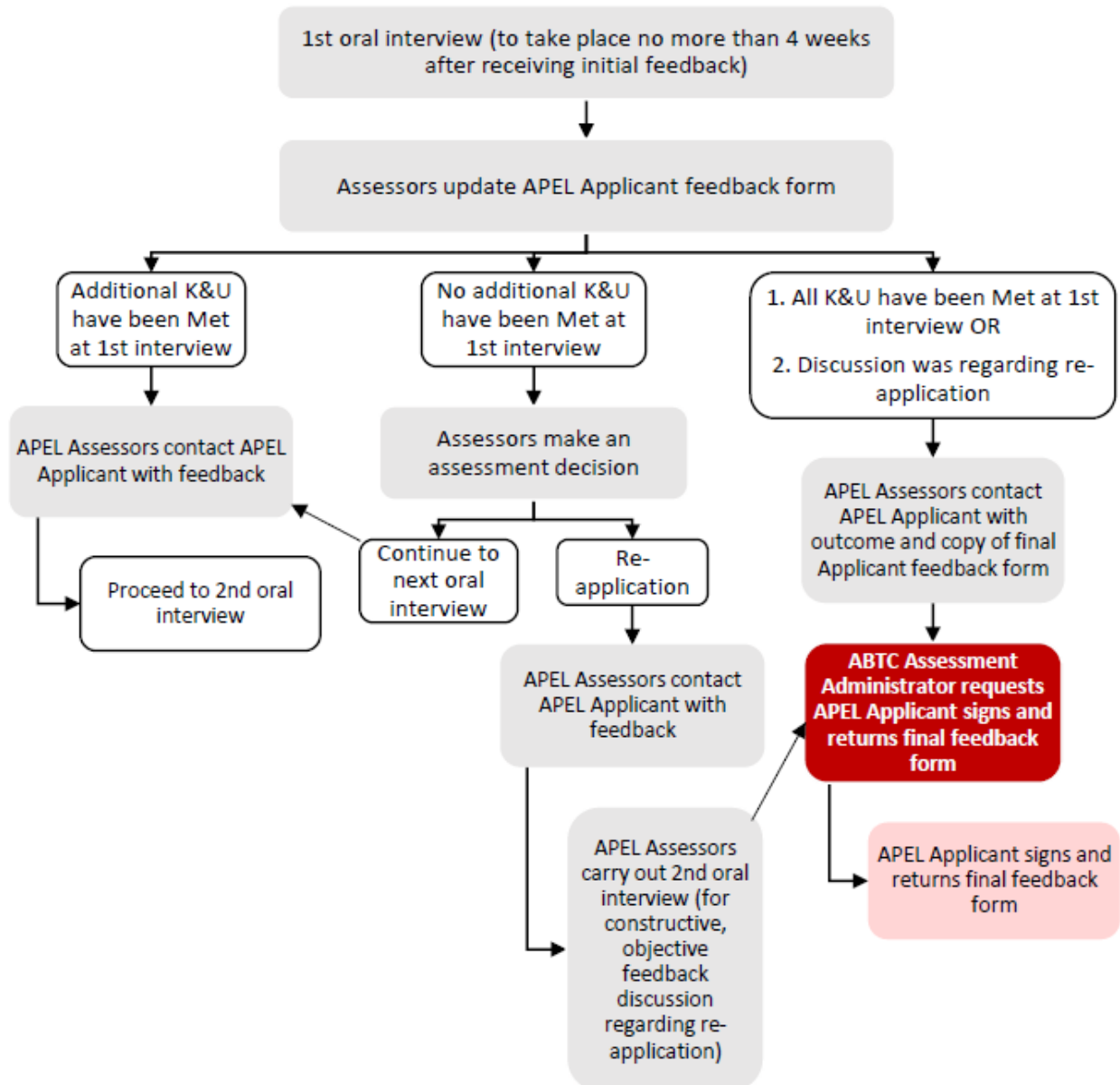
Where a written application does not fully meet all statements, applicants will be invited to an oral interview to discuss any statements which remain partially or not yet met. The purpose of the oral interview is to give applicants further opportunity to demonstrate their knowledge and understanding.

APEL Assessors may invite applicants to up to 3 oral interviews.

In some cases, written evidence may fail to meet most, or all, of the K&U statements. In this situation an applicant will be advised they have been unsuccessful. However, they will be invited to an oral interview for constructive, objective feedback to help with their re-application.

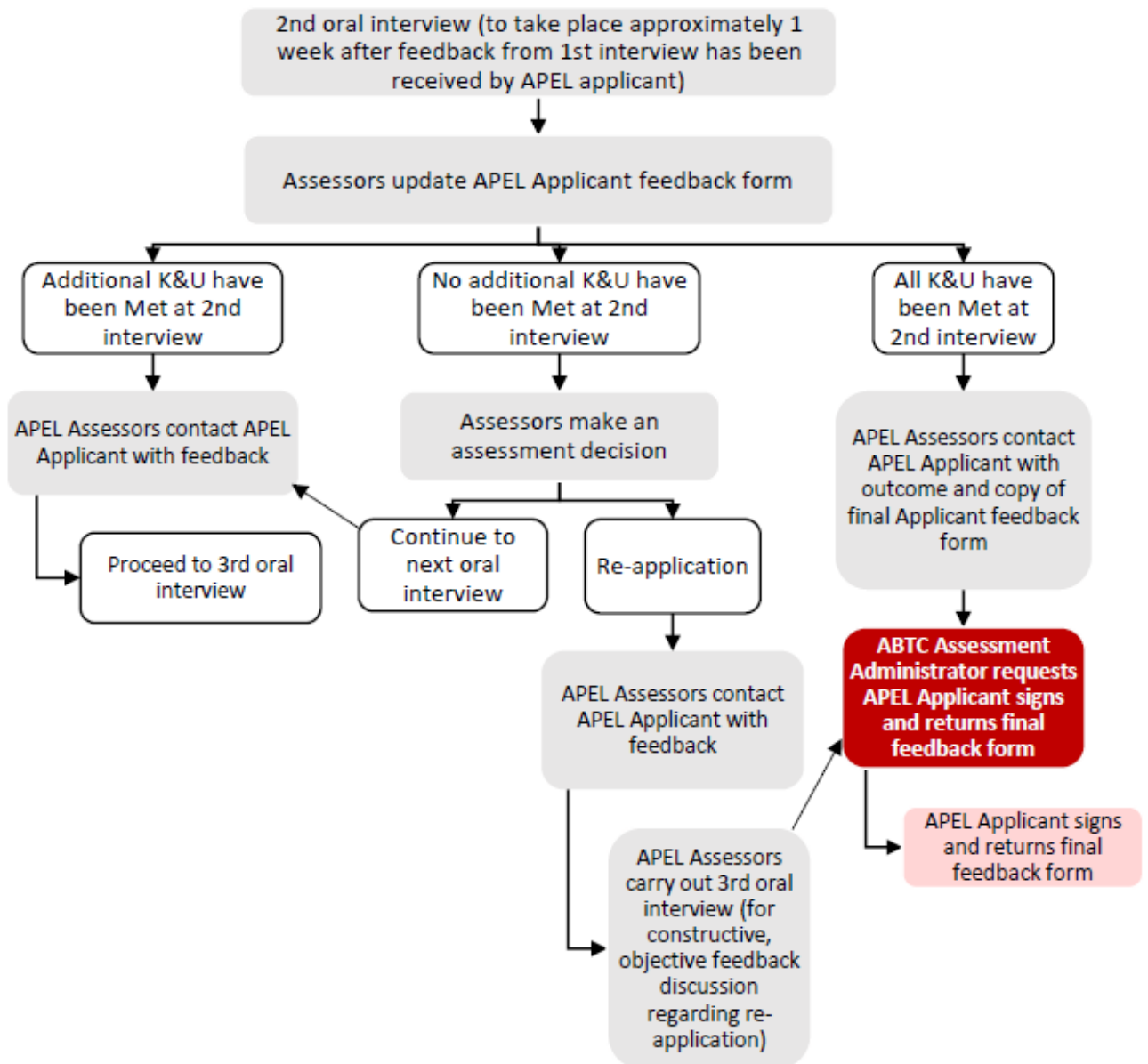
An outline of the process for up to 3 oral interviews is detailed below.

Oral Interview 1

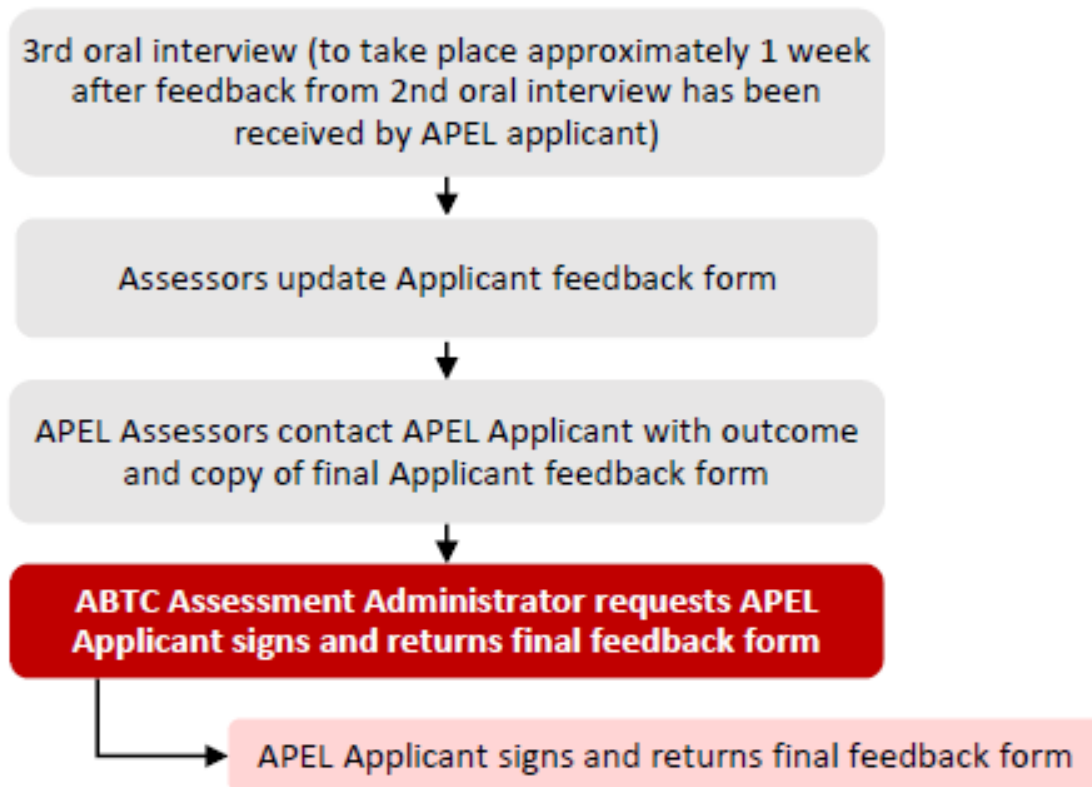




Oral interview 2



### Oral Interview 3



### Step 5: APEL Certification

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Once all Knowledge and Understanding has been demonstrated as Met, the APEL process is complete.

Successful APEL applicants are then encouraged to join an ABTC Practitioner Organisation as a provisional (or similar) member to support their continued journey towards registration as an ABTC practitioner.

## What if I am unsuccessful?

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Feedback (both written and in the oral interview) will be supportive, objective, fair, transparent, timely (SOFTT) and of sufficient detail to enable the applicant to fully understand the decision.

Where an applicant has not succeeded, they will be provided with clear information of potential next steps regarding:

- a. How they may acquire further learning opportunities to facilitate them meeting the K&U requirements for the role,
- b. How to re-apply,
- c. Appeals procedure.

## Completing the Documentation

### Completing the Mapping document

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When an applicant completes their APEL paperwork, a good place to start is the Academic Mapping document. This lists all the necessary K&U statements required for the role. Next to each statement, the applicant should list any learning activities they have undertaken which have provided the knowledge and understanding necessary to meet that specific statement.

If an applicant has attended an **ABTC recognised course** but did not complete it, they may list any completed modules on the mapping document next to the relevant statement. Provided these modules have been assessed by the academic institution, and evidenced on the transcript, the associated criteria will be classed as 'Fully Met' and a reflective account is not necessary.

If an applicant has not completed an ABTC recognised course, the evidence they may use to show they have acquired the knowledge and understanding for each statement may come in several forms. These may vary from assessed courses to life experience. The various ways in which applicants may have gained information can be separated into groups or 'types of evidence'. This gives both applicants and assessors a way of seeing where the knowledge and understanding has come from. This may also help applicants identify any gaps they may want to fill before submitting an application.

There are four types of evidence, 'A, B, C or D,' and it is likely applicants will be submitting evidence from more than one category as necessary to meet the K&U statements. Types A and B are based on courses, training, and workshops they may have attended that were either formally assessed (A) or non-assessed (B). Types C and D are more experience based. This can be life experience in other jobs, family life, volunteering etc (C) or experience working in the industry in the role the applicant is applying for (D).

The types of evidence accepted are:

- A. Formal Assessed Learning** - Here applicants can list any courses or completed modules where they have undergone a formal assessment.

The evidence applicants can provide can be module descriptors as well as related certificates showing they have completed relevant formal **assessed** learning. This might include completed modules from an ABTC recognised course, even if the applicant is still in the process of completing the whole course. Likewise, evidence may be from non-ABTC recognised courses, be that relevant modules or the whole course.

- B. Non-assessed courses or events** - Here applicants can list relevant activities where a formal assessment was not carried out.

## Applicant Guidelines for APEL

The evidence applicants can provide may be module descriptors and related certificates showing they have attended non-assessed courses or events. These may include, but are not limited to, workplace-based training, informal courses, webinars etc.

**Please Note** - Where evidence is from categories A and B applicants will **need to provide** the name of the course provider, if known, and any grading document, breakdown of results and tutor feedback where possible.

### **C. Self-directed learning** - Here applicants can highlight any learning they have chosen to undertake that was not course based.

The evidence for this may include listing the reading they have done, sharing leaflets or articles they have written, mentioning volunteer activities they have taken part in, self-instruction, family responsibilities, hobbies and any other life experience which has provided them with transferable knowledge relevant to the role. Applicants can then explain how these are relevant by referring to them in their Reflective Accounts.

Applicants should have a think about and list the activities they have done throughout their life and career, and the things they have learned that would be beneficial for the ABTC role they are applying for.

### **D. Evidence of experience of the role**, either through observation or participation in aspects of the role.

The evidence for this will mostly be demonstrated in an applicant's reflective accounts. If they have experience of the role they are applying for, applicants should list the places where they have gained the work experience, be that their own business or other.

**Please note** - Where evidence is from the categories B, C and D it is important the applicant explains **why and how** they think **this relates to the Knowledge and Understanding** required for the role.

**Please note** - Whilst some applicants may have work experience, this is not a requirement for APEL assessment. Knowledge and Understanding, as described above, can be acquired through various routes.

Completing the mapping document can help applicants reflect on their knowledge and assess whether there are any gaps. If an applicant discovers their knowledge came from primarily one source, they may decide they want to investigate that area in more depth to widen their scope of knowledge. However, they may decide that their level of knowledge and associated understanding is sufficient to meet the standard.

Examples of completed mapping documents can be found in the appendices (*please see Appendices 6 and 7*).

Once the applicant has completed the mapping document and is happy that their knowledge and understanding meets each statement, they can move onto the next part. That is, evidencing their knowledge and understanding in the Reflective Accounts.

## Writing a Reflective Account

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For most applicants the Reflective Accounts are the main documents to be submitted to provide evidence of the knowledge and understanding required for the role they are applying for. These are submitted using a Reflective Account form. These forms provide applicants an opportunity to reflect on their experience and demonstrate to assessors why the learning they have acquired has provided them with the same level of Knowledge and Understanding as an ABTC recognised course.

Here applicants can discuss what they learned, how they might apply it in different situations and really show off how their knowledge and understanding meets the Role Standards K&Us. Remember, for this part of the assessment (APEL), the assessors are only looking at knowledge and understanding, not practical skills. Therefore, applicants can discuss different hypothetical situations and how they may adapt their ideas based on different learning experiences.

Applicants do not need to be seeing training or behaviour cases or to have worked in the role to apply for APEL. The purpose of APEL is to ensure applicants have the knowledge and understanding to see cases within the role they are applying for. However, if an applicant is seeing cases and is coming through the process from industry experience, great! These applicants may find it beneficial to use real examples from their experience and they can discuss what they thought went well and why, and what they may change and why. Indeed, reflection on any changes to practice may have occurred after some learning.

A minimum of one Reflective Account is required for each K&U section. As previously mentioned, the ABT role requires knowledge and understanding to be demonstrated at level 5 for 27 criteria within 5 K&U sections. Therefore, ABT applicants need to submit a minimum of 5 reflective accounts.

The CAB role requires knowledge and understanding to be demonstrated at level 6 for 36 criteria within 7 K&U sections and so CAB applicants need to submit a minimum of 7 reflective accounts.

Applicants do not need to write an account for each individual statement, unless they feel that is the most beneficial way for them. However, many applicants have found it useful to start writing an account for each statement then joining them together to show how they are linked. Through the synthesis of the connections between different aspects of knowledge, applicants can demonstrate their depth of understanding. This may be where applicants find using real or hypothetical cases to be helpful.

When reflecting on the K&U it is important to remember the level of the role being applied for and applicants should ensure they explain how they meet the statements at either level 5 or level 6. **How** they have acquired their Knowledge & Understanding is not being assessed. It is **The Level** of Knowledge & Understanding which is assessed here through APEL.

When discussing statements try to keep the discussion relevant. This makes it easier for the assessors to track. However, if applicants do discuss something in an example that touches on another statement (relevant to another Reflective Account form), the assessors will make note of it. Where applicants are using hypothetical/real cases, these can be provided as additional documents and relevant parts referred to in different Reflective Accounts.

## Applicant Guidelines for APEL

When an applicant provides evidence, they should think about why they feel what they are writing is relevant to the K&Us. Providing definitions and examples can be useful to demonstrate the knowledge for some statements, but they do not demonstrate understanding. However, explaining a situation or giving examples about why an applicant would or would not do something, based on their understanding and experience can help to evidence that understanding.

The Reflective Accounts forms are split into 4 different sections to help guide the applicant on the areas the assessors need information on. The top section identifies the applicant and the K&U statements they are evidencing in the form. This will link to the academic mapping document which will label which Reflective Account form to find evidence in. Please ensure this section is completed.

For individuals with learning differences such as dyslexia, we suggest the use of writing tools such as the Dictate and Read Aloud functions on Word may be helpful. For all applicants, we suggest using spelling and grammar checking functions to assist editing before submission.

<b>Name:</b> Jane Doe <b>Date:</b> 01/01/2024 <b>Knowledge section/ Knowledge &amp; Understanding number(s):</b> K&U numbers x, y, z
<b>What was the nature of the learning?</b>
This section asks the applicant to highlight what type of evidence 'A, B, C, D' they are evidencing. This section may be similar for multiple Reflective Accounts forms but not exact as the statements are different.
<b>Why did you choose to undertake this learning?</b>
For this section the assessors want to understand why the applicant chose to do a specific course, workshop, or volunteering. Was it compulsory at the time or something they chose to do out of interest or recommendation? Was it to address an identified gap in their knowledge?
<b>How is your learning relevant to the Knowledge &amp; Understanding?</b>
In this section the applicant can highlight how they feel their learning is relevant to the role. The assessors want the applicant to explain what they know about the statements.
<b>Briefly provide specific examples of how this learning demonstrates your Knowledge &amp; Understanding</b>
For this the assessors really need the applicant to show, not just their knowledge of an area e.g. "I'm really good at reading body language and can tell that an animal is scared because they do

X.....". Rather, in this section the assessors want the applicant to show their understanding, by explaining **how** their knowledge helps in situations.

For example: "Having great knowledge in dog body language means I was able to X/ having good understanding of the ways dogs signal and communicate their emotions is essential to stay safe when working with fearful animals" (applicants may wish to think of other reasons why it is essential when working with such animals).

The applicant can show their understanding by providing examples of what they may or may not do in different situations and why, based on the learning they have gained as evidenced in their mapping document.

**How did this Knowledge & Understanding change or improve your practice?** Please ensure you provide examples/detail to support your answers.

For this section the assessors are looking for reflection. How did the learning impact or influence the way the applicant practises or is going to practise? What processes might they change or not change based on their learning and why?

Some different examples of completed Reflective Accounts forms can be found in the appendices (*please see Appendices 8, 9 and 10*).

It is worth getting into the habit of keeping a reflective account (CPD log) of any learning and experience related to the role anyway, as this is part and parcel of professional practice in relation to meeting Continuing Professional Development (CPD) requirements.

## Completing the Index of supporting documents

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What needs to be submitted will vary with each applicant as much as their individual experience will vary. Many applicants may need to submit several supporting documents/certificates etc., as well as their Reflective Accounts. It may be that several documents relate to the same Reflective Account; or that one document relates to more than one K&U section. If so, clear labelling and an Index are essential parts of the submission. All documents should have a clear identification name.

### Naming document files

1. Application Form for APEL Assessment by ABTC File name: **APPLICANT NAME\_APEL Application**
2. Mapping document File name: **APPLICANT NAME\_Mapping**
3. Reflective Account Forms File name: **RA\_APPLICANT NAME\_01 / RA\_APPLICANT NAME\_02.....**



All other file names should use the following convention:

1. Evidence Type: A, B, C or D (see table below)
2. APPLICANT NAME
3. Evidence/document number of that evidence type: XX

*For example: A\_APPLICANT NAME\_01*

This additional evidence may come in several forms. As discussed earlier, there are four types of evidence, and an applicant may submit a combination of these.

- |   |
|---|
| <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>A. Module descriptors and related certificates showing you have completed relevant formal assessed learning.</li><li>B. Descriptors and related certificates showing you have attended non-assessed courses or events. For example, these may be workplace-based training, informal courses, webinars.</li><li>C. Self-directed learning, which may include reading you have done, leaflets or articles you have written, volunteer activities, life experiences, self-instruction, family responsibilities and hobbies.</li><li>D. Evidence of experience of the role, either through observation or participation in aspects of the role.</li></ol> |
|---|

Where clarity of labelling and location of evidence is not provided, the applicant may be asked to do this and resubmit the evidence before any review is undertaken by the assessors.

An example of a completed APEL Index of supporting documents (including appropriate naming of files) can be found in the appendices (*please see Appendix 11*).

### Additional support

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For any APEL applicants who feel they would benefit from extra guidance whilst completing their documentation, additional support is provided by the following ABTC Practitioner Organisations.

The Canine Behaviour and Training Society (TCBTS) offer support for Student members who are also APEL applicants by way of Zoom sessions and a Facebook support group.

For further information please visit: <https://www.tcbts.co.uk/student-membership>

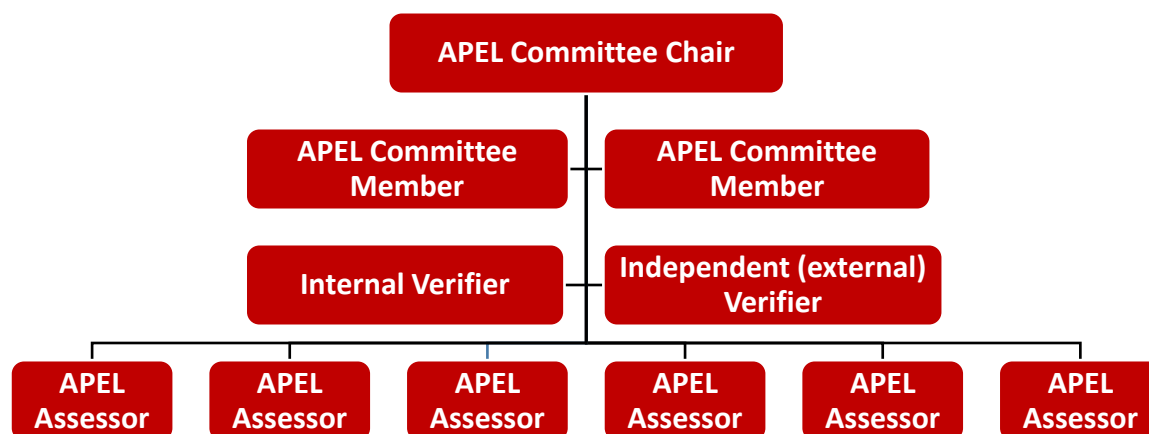
The Association of Pet Behaviour Counsellors (APBC) also offer both group and 1-2-1 support for APEL applicants via their APEL Support Kit (A.S.K.) programme. For further information please visit: <https://www.apbc.org.uk/ask/>

## ABTC APEL assessment policies and procedures

### The APEL Assessment Team

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The ABTC APEL Committee oversees the assessment process for prospective ATs, ATIs, ABTs and CABs that have not completed an ABTC recognised course, to gain recognition for their Knowledge and Understanding for the respective roles.



All APEL Applicants are assessed by two APEL Assessors from the APEL assessment team. Applicants have the right to choose not to be assessed by someone they know due to conflict of interest.

APEL Assessors are mostly members of ABTC Practitioner Organisations. However, the APEL process is an assessment of Knowledge and Understanding, not of Performance Criteria. Therefore, an APEL Assessor, with relevant knowledge, could be recruited from outside the ABTC, for example from educational practice.

Any person assessing an ABTC Standard will be acting on behalf of the ABTC regardless of their personal membership to any other Organisation. No assessor may assess any person with whom they have a personal relationship and will sign such a declaration prior to commencing work. All assessors are required to carry out their role with impartiality.

All assessors are trained and competent. Their work is subject to verification processes as part of Quality Assurance.

## Quality Assurance (QA) of the APEL process

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The ABTC is very aware of the need for clarity and transparency in the APEL process. It adheres to the overall ethical stance that assessments should be supportive, objective, fair, transparent, timely and confidential.

The assessments are only undertaken by persons that have appropriate training and expertise to assess K&U and have undertaken ABTC specific training in the application of that expertise to the ABTC requirements.

This includes training and agreement of all assessors to work to an ABTC agreed set of standards, and to maintain clear and sufficient records of their assessments, including using agreed recording processes and documents.

All assessments of an application are carried out by two assessors who are impartial to the applicant.

Applicants are informed of who these assessors are and given the opportunity to indicate if they are concerned about any potential conflict of interest. Such concerns should be respected, and new assessor(s) allocated if that is the applicant's wish.

Should there have to be a later change to the assessment panel, e.g. due to assessor illness, then the applicant must be informed of the new proposed assessor and have the same right to request an alternative or delay until their application can be assessed by the originally agreed parties.

Applicants will receive timely written feedback which has been agreed by the assessors. Should there be a discrepancy between the two assessors, a third person who has declared no personal knowledge of the applicant will be allocated to further review the application.

The ABTC will regulate the standard of assessment through annual review of randomly selected applications across all roles and assessors. It may also choose to appoint a third assessor to observe and peer review assessment processes as they are conducted. In this way quality assurance of the process is ensured.

Assessment decisions are subject to the ABTC verification process by an independent verifier.

## Appeals

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### Grounds for appeal

Appeals can be made on the following grounds only:

1. The assessment process has been unfair or not been properly followed in some way.
2. There is clear evidence to dispute the assessment outcome.

You will not be disadvantaged by submitting an appeal in good faith. Appeals which are judged to be vexatious, malicious, or frivolous will not be considered.

### How to appeal

All information submitted in relation to appeals will be dealt with confidentially and will only be disclosed to those persons involved in decision making, or as necessary to progress the appeal.

Appeals should be submitted to the ABTC in writing within six weeks of receiving notification of the assessment outcome.

The applicant has six weeks from the aforementioned date to produce the evidence underpinning their appeal. This will include:

1. Clear written evidence to show where the assessment process was not followed and/or
2. Clear written evidence to show that disputed assessment criteria have been met

The applicant is asked to ensure all submitted information is clearly labelled, easy to access and navigate.

The appeal documents will be considered by the original assessors and two further ABTC assessors who have declared no conflict of interest.

Applicants will be informed of the identity of the further assessors and will be given the opportunity to indicate if they are concerned about any potential conflict of interest. Such concerns will be respected, and new assessor(s) allocated should the applicant wish.

It may be felt necessary for the parties involved in the appeals process to meet. This would be best achieved by video conferencing. The meeting would be recorded with the undertaking that no recordings may be shared by any party outside of the immediate appeals process. The applicant may have a chosen individual to represent, advocate for, or support them at the meeting.

The applicant will be sent written notification of the outcome of the appeal within eight weeks of all relevant documentation having been provided to the ABTC and after any conference with the applicant.

## Commonly used acronyms

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AAB	Accredited Animal Behaviourist
ABT	Animal Behaviour Technician
ABTC	Animal Behaviour and Training Council
AO	Assessing Organisation
APBC	Association of Pet Behaviour Counsellors
APEL	Accreditation of Prior Experience and/or Learning
AT	Animal Trainer
ATI	Animal Training Instructor
CAB	Clinical Animal Behaviourist
CPD	Continuing Professional Development
K&U	Knowledge and Understanding
PC	Performance Criteria
PO	Practitioner Organisation
QA	Quality Assurance
TCBTS	The Canine Behaviour and Training Society
VB	Veterinary Behaviourist

## Appendices

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Appendix 1	<a href="#">APEL ABT Mapping Document blank</a>
Appendix 2	<a href="#">APEL CAB Mapping Document blank</a>
Appendix 3	<a href="#">APEL Reflective Account Form blank</a>
Appendix 4	<a href="#">APEL Index of Supporting Documentation blank</a>
Appendix 5	<a href="#">APEL Application Form blank</a> <a href="https://abtc.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2024/10/Appendix-5_APEL-Application-Form-October-2024.docx">https://abtc.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2024/10/Appendix-5_APEL-Application-Form-October-2024.docx</a>
Appendix 6	<a href="#">Mapping document exemplar A</a>
Appendix 7	<a href="#">Mapping document exemplar C</a>
Appendix 8	<a href="#">Reflective Account exemplar A</a>
Appendix 9	<a href="#">Reflective Account exemplar B</a>
Appendix 10	<a href="#">Reflective Account exemplar C</a>
Appendix 11	<a href="#">Index of supporting documents exemplar</a>
Appendix 12	<a href="#">Candidate A - Full Application</a>
Appendix 13	<a href="#">Candidate B - Full Application</a>
Appendix 14	<a href="#">Candidate C - Full Application</a>
Appendix 15	<a href="#">Candidate E - Full Application</a>