

LANAnC49

Observe, assess and understand the behaviour of animals



Overview

This standard covers observing, assessing and understanding the behaviour of animals.

The standard involves understanding the normal behaviour of the species that you are working with and assessing how other factors, including your own interaction with the animal, may affect its behaviour.

You may be assessing the animal's behaviour for training purposes, research or academic studies or when caring for the animal.

All activities should be carried out in accordance with relevant legislation.

Users of the standard will need to be appropriately trained and ensure that their practice applies scientifically robust information, human standards and policies, and that they work within the limits of their authority, expertise, training, competence and experience.

This standard is suitable for those with responsibility for the observation, assessment and understanding of animal behaviour.

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Performance criteria

You must be able to:

- P1 maintain your own professional conduct and ethics and work within the limits of your own authority, expertise, training, competence, experience and relevant legislation
- P2 comply with relevant animal health and welfare and other animal-related legislation and associated codes of practice at all times
- P3 assess how the welfare needs of the animals you engage with may be provided for
- P4 carry out all work in accordance with relevant environmental and health and safety legislation, risk assessment requirements, codes of practice and business policies
- P5 systematically observe and record the behaviour of the animal
- P6 recognise, assess, evaluate and take into account the effect of a range of **factors** on the behaviour of the animal
- P7 interact with the animal in a humane manner that avoids creating behaviour giving rise to welfare concern and allows observation and assessment to be carried out safely
- P8 promote the animal's welfare at all times and adapt your own behaviour, and that of others, if necessary, to avoid creating undesirable behaviour
- P9 identify and record changes in the health and behaviour of the animal, which may indicate welfare or other problems and make recommendations where necessary
- P10 communicate effectively with others, seek professional advice when necessary and refer cases on when appropriate
- P11 keep accurate and up-to-date records as required
- P12 plan, record, evaluate and reflect upon your Continuing Professional Development (CPD) and work within the requirements of the relevant professional organisation

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Knowledge and understanding

You need to know and understand:

- K1 your professional and ethical responsibilities and the limits of your own authority, expertise, training, competence, experience and relevant legislation
- K2 your responsibilities under relevant animal health and welfare, and other animal-related legislation and codes of practice, and the legal limitations of the Veterinary Surgeons Act (1966)
- K3 how the needs of the animals you engage with may be assessed and addressed
- K4 how to systematically observe and record animal behaviour and the importance of doing so
- K5 the importance of evolutionary history, changes associated with domestication, species-typical behaviour, breed, parentage, temperament and internal states of influence (physiological and pathological) on the behaviour of individual animals
- K6 how previous experiences influence animals' behaviour
- K7 behavioural, emotional and physical development stages of the animal and the importance of sensitive periods for learning and their relationship with social development
- K8 natural behavioural patterns of the animal, including communication methods and patterns, motivational needs and social organisation and behaviour
- K9 the effects of reproductive status and sexual stimuli on animal behaviour
- K10 the differences in perception between animals and humans caused by differences in the senses of sight, smell, hearing, taste and touch
- K11 how to recognise behavioural and emotional states of animals including fear, frustration, aggression, appeasement, anxiety, play and relaxation
- K12 the early signs of change in behaviour associated with ill health, and indicators of injury or pain, discomfort, disease and distress
- K13 patterns of abnormal behaviour e.g. stereotypical, repetitive behaviour
- K14 how your actions, or those of others, may affect the behaviour and welfare of the animal
- K15 the difference in natural survival behaviour between predator and prey animals and the relevance of this to animal behaviour patterns
- K16 where behavioural patterns may be influenced by changes in an animal's immediate environment e.g. weather conditions, behaviour of a bystander, husbandry, nearby animal or enclosure, and understand how

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to take account of such factors

- K17 the importance of habituation to environmental stimuli or an animal's ability or limitations for coping with the features of a captive environment
- K18 when an animal should be referred to a veterinary surgeon or other professional
- K19 appropriate records to be kept and the importance of confidentiality and the requirements of the Data Protection Act (1998)
- K20 your professional responsibilities and the importance of Continuing Professional Development (CPD) to maintain professional competence
- K21 where to obtain professional advice and guidance and the role of professional bodies and associations
- K22 the importance of appropriate insurance cover including professional indemnity

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Scope/range

Factors that may affect the behaviour of the animal:

- 1 evolution and domestication history
- 2 species-typical behaviour
- 3 breed traits, including hybrids
- 4 parentage
- 5 temperament
- 6 development stage (including old age)
- 7 reproductive status
- 8 hormonal status
- 9 motivational needs (including hunger, thirst, threat avoidance, and need for social contact)
- 10 communication patterns
- 11 emotional and mental states
- 12 perceptual abilities
- 13 social organisation and social behaviour
- 14 previous experiences of the animal and responses learnt from them
- 15 fear, frustration, aggression, stress, pain
- 16 ill health, injury, discomfort, disease and distress
- 17 environment and external stimuli experienced
- 18 human interaction
- 19 husbandry and management patterns

Glossary

Veterinary Surgeons Act (1966):

All forms of complementary therapy that involve acts or the practise of veterinary surgery must be undertaken by a veterinary surgeon, subject to any exemption in the Act. At the same time, it is incumbent on veterinary surgeons offering any complementary therapy to ensure that they are adequately trained in its application.

Behavioural treatment of animals is not restricted under the Veterinary Surgeons Act (1966) unless it constitutes the practice of veterinary surgery.

There is no specific exemption order for animal behaviourism and therefore there is no formal jurisdiction to insist upon the involvement of a veterinary surgeon before animal behaviour work is carried out. In many cases, however, animal behaviourists will work on referrals from veterinary surgeons to ensure they are not accused of making a diagnosis of disease or injury (which is restricted to veterinary surgeon).

Current animal welfare legislation:

- England and Wales, Animal Welfare Act 2006
- Scotland, Animal Health and Welfare Act 2006
- Northern Ireland, Welfare of Animals Act (Northern Ireland) 2011

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