



Australian Government

Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations

ACMGAS306A Assist with conditioning animals

Revision Number: 1

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Modification History

Not applicable.

Unit Descriptor

Unit descriptor	<p>This unit of competency covers the process of conditioning animals in order to modify their behaviour through assisting with formulating and demonstrating a conditioning plan based on operant conditioning techniques.</p> <p>No licensing, legislative, regulatory or certification requirements apply to this unit at the time of publication.</p>
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Application of the Unit

Application of the unit	<p>This unit is applicable to animal keepers and carers who are expected to perform tasks under supervision.</p> <p>In addition to legal and ethical responsibilities, all units of competency in the ACM10 Animal Care and Management Training Package have the requirement for animals to be handled gently and calmly. The individual is required to exhibit appropriate care for animals so that stress and discomfort is minimised.</p>
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Licensing/Regulatory Information

Not applicable.

Pre-Requisites

Prerequisite units		

Employability Skills Information

Employability skills	This unit contains employability skills.
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Elements and Performance Criteria Pre-Content

Elements describe the essential outcomes of a unit of competency.	Performance criteria describe the performance needed to demonstrate achievement of the element. Where bold italicised text is used, further information is detailed in the required skills and knowledge section and the range statement. Assessment of performance is to be consistent with the evidence guide.
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Elements and Performance Criteria

ELEMENT	PERFORMANCE CRITERIA
1. Develop a conditioning plan	<p>1.1. Range of <i>desirable and undesirable behaviours</i> is identified for specific animals.</p> <p>1.2. Behaviour to be trained is identified in consultation with supervisor.</p> <p>1.3. Appropriate <i>positive reinforcement</i> to be used for conditioning is identified.</p> <p>1.4. A <i>conditioned reinforcer</i> is identified in consultation with the supervisor.</p> <p>1.5. <i>Conditioning plan</i> is compiled in consultation with the supervisor and presented in accordance with <i>occupational health and safety (OHS)</i>, animal welfare and organisation policies and procedures.</p>
2. Condition a behaviour	<p>2.1. A conditioned reinforcer is established with the animal under supervision.</p> <p>2.2. <i>Approximations</i> are demonstrated under supervision, to condition animal.</p> <p>2.3. Behaviour <i>under stimulus control</i> is demonstrated in accordance with animal welfare and ethics requirements.</p> <p>2.4. Documentation of the behaviour being conditioned is <i>recorded</i> in accordance with organisation policies and procedures.</p>
3. Monitor and review a conditioning plan	<p>3.1. Conditioning plan's short and long-term objectives are reviewed regularly in consultation with the supervisor and other relevant personnel.</p> <p>3.2. Plan is regularly updated in accordance with organisation policies and procedures.</p>

Required Skills and Knowledge

REQUIRED SKILLS AND KNOWLEDGE

This section describes the skills and knowledge required for this unit.

Required skills

- complete relevant workplace documentation including conditional plans
- employ safe, humane and environmentally responsible organisational systems and procedures when handling and working with animals
- follow instructions and assist safely with tasks
- implement organisation policies and procedures related to conditioning
- monitor animal health and condition and recognise abnormalities
- literacy skills to read and follow organisation policies and procedures, including OHS; follow sequenced written instructions; record accurately and legibly information collected; and select and apply procedures to a range of defined tasks
- oral communication skills/language to fulfil the job role as specified by the institution, including questioning techniques, active listening, training others and consulting with team members and supervisors
- numeracy skills to estimate, calculate and record routine workplace measures
- interpersonal skills to work with others and relate to people from a range of cultural, social and religious backgrounds and with a range of physical and mental abilities
- problem-solving skills to use available resources and prioritise daily tasks
- use safe manual handling techniques and/or equipment.

Required knowledge

- anatomy and physiology of animals as it relates to conditioning
- behavioural needs, including housing, feeding, enclosure maintenance and breeding
- normal and abnormal animal behaviour and behaviour patterns
- principles of and reasons for animal learning and operant conditioning techniques
- principles of animal ethics and welfare
- principles of behaviour and environmental enrichment
- organisation policies and procedures, including OHS and emergency procedures, hygiene standards and other industry guidelines
- relevant federal and state or territory legislation, regulations and codes of practice including OHS and animal welfare
- safe animal handling techniques and procedures
- safe work practices
- techniques and tools used to condition behaviour
- terminology used in conditioning animals.

Evidence Guide

EVIDENCE GUIDE	
<p>The Evidence Guide provides advice on assessment and must be read in conjunction with the performance criteria, required skills and knowledge, range statement and the Assessment Guidelines for the Training Package.</p>	
Overview of assessment	
Critical aspects for assessment and evidence required to demonstrate competency in this unit	<p>The evidence required to demonstrate competence in this unit must be relevant to workplace operations and satisfy all of the requirements of the performance criteria, required skills and knowledge and the range statement of this unit. Assessors should ensure that candidates can:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • formulating a conditioning plan in consultation with others that complies with OHS and animal welfare requirements • apply principles of learning in relation to operant conditioning techniques • apply positive reinforcement methods and use appropriate techniques and tools to condition behaviour • maintain accurate records. <p>The skills and knowledge required to assist with conditioning animals must be transferable to a range of work environments and contexts and include the ability to deal with unplanned events.</p>
Context of and specific resources for assessment	<p>Assessment of this unit is to be practical in nature and will be most appropriately assessed in an animal care industry sector workplace in which candidates are working or in a situation that reproduces normal work conditions. This can include work with native, exotic or domestic animals in large or small animal care facilities and/or situations.</p> <p>There must be access to a range of animals relevant to the work role as well as relevant information, equipment and/or resources to enable one to demonstrate competence.</p>
Method of assessment	<p>To ensure consistency in one's performance, competency should be demonstrated, to industry defined standards, on more than one occasion over a period of time in order</p>

EVIDENCE GUIDE	
	<p>to cover a variety of circumstances and where possible, over a number of assessment activities.</p> <p>The assessment strategy must include practical skills assessment. Suggested strategies for this unit are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • written and/or oral assessment of candidate's required knowledge • observed, documented and first-hand testimonial evidence of candidate's application of practical tasks • simulation exercises that reproduce normal work conditions • third-party evidence • workplace documentation • portfolio. <p>This unit may be assessed in a holistic way with other units of competency relevant to the industry sector, workplace and job role.</p>
<p>Guidance information for assessment</p>	<p>Assessment methods should reflect workplace demands (e.g. literacy and numeracy demands) and the needs of particular target groups (e.g. people with disabilities, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, women, people with a language background other than English, youth and people from low socioeconomic backgrounds).</p>

Range Statement

RANGE STATEMENT

The range statement relates to the unit of competency as a whole. It allows for different work environments and situations that may affect performance. Bold italicised wording, if used in the performance criteria, is detailed below. Essential operating conditions that may be present with training and assessment (depending on the work situation, needs of the candidate, accessibility of the item, and local industry and regional contexts) may also be included.

<p><i>Desirable and undesirable behaviours</i> may include:</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • desirable behaviour: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • appropriate nocturnal behaviour • normal appetite • normal activity levels • social interaction • visual and vocal interaction • undesirable behaviour: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • biting or kicking • hissing • inappropriate aggression • poor appetite • repetitive or stereotypical behaviour patterns • restlessness • self-mutilation • vocalisation.
<p><i>Positive reinforcement</i> may include:</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • primary reinforcers (e.g. food) • secondary reinforcers: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • play • touch • toys • verbal interaction.
<p><i>Conditioned reinforcers</i> may include:</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • something that the animal does not initially perceive as having reinforcing or rewarding value (e.g. a whistle or clicker) taking on a reinforcing value of its own when paired with a known reinforcer (e.g. food).
<p><i>Conditioning plan</i> may include:</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the animal's profile • the behavioural goal and reasons for it • the number and type of sessions planned • the staff to be used • tools required (e.g. target poles, stations and

RANGE STATEMENT	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • props) • types of reinforcers to be used.
<i>OHS</i> risks when working with animals may include:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • animal bites, envenomation, kicks, scratches and crush injuries • biological hazardous waste and sharps disposal • handling of chemicals and medicines • gas leakage • inhalation of aerosol particles • intraocular contamination • manual handling, including carrying, lifting and shifting • needle pricks and cuts from other sharps • release of infective agents (animal and human) • slippery or uneven work surfaces • zoonoses.
<i>Approximations</i> may include:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the successive steps that a trainer will go through in order to condition a behaviour.
<i>Under stimulus control</i> refers to:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • a behavioural response from a verbal and/or visual cue.
Type of items <i>recorded</i> may include:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • progress • problems encountered • solutions.

Unit Sector(s)

Unit sector	General animal studies
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Competency field

Competency field	
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Co-requisite units

Co-requisite units		