



Australian Government

Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations

ACMSPE312A Provide basic care of rodents and rabbits

Revision Number: 1

ACMSPE312A Provide basic care of rodents and rabbits

Modification History

Not applicable.

Unit Descriptor

Unit descriptor	<p>This unit of competency covers the process of identifying rodents and rabbits and their behavioural and physical needs, providing daily care requirements, assisting with behavioural requirements and basic preventative health measures.</p> <p>Licensing, legislative, regulatory or certification requirements may apply to this unit in relation to keeping rodents and rabbits. Therefore, it will be necessary to check with the relevant state or territory regulators for current licensing, legislative or regulatory requirements before undertaking this unit.</p>
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Application of the Unit

Application of the unit	<p>The unit is applicable to those working in animal care industry sectors where rodents and rabbits are bred, reared, cared for or housed. This may include animal shelters, pet shops, zoos and animal technology facilities or similar workplaces.</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. Identify commonly available rodents and rabbits	<p>1.1. Profile of rodents and rabbits commonly held in facility, including habitat, nutrition, health, physiology and behavioural characteristics, is defined.</p> <p>1.2. External features are described using industry terminology.</p> <p>1.3. Rodents and rabbits are classified using industry specific terminology.</p> <p>1.4. Colours, markings and other identifying features are defined, interpreted and documented.</p>
2. Identify and evaluate behavioural and housing needs	<p>2.1. Indicators of animal comfort and normal behaviour are identified and signs of distressed rodents and rabbits are recognised and reported to supervisor.</p> <p>2.2. Industry standards and guidelines for housing design, environmental factors and appropriate stocking densities are identified.</p> <p>2.3. Enrichment needs are identified and evaluated for specific animal species.</p> <p>2.4. Current animal housing design is assessed in relation to the welfare of animals kept and legislated requirements.</p>
3. Catch, handle and restrain rodents and rabbits	<p>3.1. Occupational health and safety (OHS) risks associated with handling and restraining rodents and rabbits are identified and methods used to minimise risks are demonstrated.</p> <p>3.2. Equipment used to catch, handle and restrain rodents and rabbits is prepared and evaluated.</p> <p>3.3. Rodents and rabbits are approached and caught while minimising risks to animal and others.</p> <p>3.4. Rodents and rabbits are restrained using a range of approved animal welfare management procedures.</p>
4. Assist with health care needs	<p>4.1. Signs of good health in rodents and rabbits are identified and recorded in animal health and treatment records.</p> <p>4.2. Common health issues are identified and signs of disease or other conditions are reported to supervisor.</p> <p>4.3. General health maintenance and preventative treatment procedures are identified and implemented in accordance with level of job responsibility, regulatory requirements and supervisor guidance.</p>

ELEMENT	PERFORMANCE CRITERIA
	4.4.Options for activity and enrichment are identified, evaluated for impact on rodent and rabbit health and implemented as directed by supervisor.
5. Feed rodents and rabbits	<p>5.1.<i>Digestive system features</i> are identified and related to rodent and rabbit specific feeding routines and diets.</p> <p>5.2.Preferred food types are identified and samples are assessed for quality and suitability.</p> <p>5.3.Potential <i>feeding hazards</i> are identified and risk control options defined.</p> <p>5.4.Feed is prepared in accordance with dietary needs.</p> <p>5.5.Feed is distributed and consumption, including abnormalities, is reported in accordance with workplace routines.</p>
6. Maintain records	6.1. <i>Documentation</i> on the care and management of rodents and rabbits is completed in accordance with workplace procedures and legislation requirements.

Required Skills and Knowledge

REQUIRED SKILLS AND KNOWLEDGE

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

Required skills

- complete relevant work-related documents and maintain accurate animal records
- comply with OHS, animal care, ethics and industry codes of conduct, codes of practice, regulations and legislations
- employ safe and environmentally responsible organisational systems and procedures when working with, restraining and handling rodents and rabbits
- maintain the highest standards of personal and workplace hygiene and infection control at all times to reduce the risk of infection and cross-infection
- measure, interpret and record rodent and rabbit weight, length, behaviour and other relevant objective indicators of change in physiological status
- monitor rodent and rabbit health, condition and behaviour and recognise normal and abnormal signs
- prepare doses for treatments as directed and verified by supervisor
- provide basic first aid to rodents and rabbits as required under supervision
- use equipment and materials correctly and in accordance with manufacturers' specifications
- literacy skills to read and follow organisational policies and procedures, including OHS and animal welfare; follow sequenced written instructions; and record information accurately and legibly
- oral communication skills/language to fulfil the job role as specified by the organisation, including questioning, active listening, asking for clarification and seeking advice from supervisor
- 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 assess appropriate practices and prioritise daily tasks
- use safe manual handling techniques and/or equipment
- use safe waste handling and disposal procedures.

Required knowledge

- anatomical and physiological terminology and glossary of terms
- anatomical structures and physiological features related to basic care requirements for rodents and rabbits
- assembly, disassembly, use and maintenance of rodent and rabbit caging
- awareness of natural rodent and rabbit behaviour relating to the characteristics of the species, age, health status, reproductive status, behavioural and social needs and the signs of distress, illness and undesirable behaviours

REQUIRED SKILLS AND KNOWLEDGE

- basic rodent and rabbit care and hygiene principles
- basic rodent and rabbit first aid techniques
- basic rodent and rabbit treatment processes
- housing, social and activity needs of rodents and rabbits and environmental impacts on health and wellbeing
- methods of transmission of disease and infection
- organisational policies and procedures regarding the care and health maintenance of rodents and rabbits
- personal protective clothing and equipment and when and how it should be used
- physical conditions and vital signs of rodents and rabbits
- relevant legislation, regulations and codes of practice, including OHS, animal welfare and ethics
- safe rodent and rabbit handling techniques and procedures, potential hazards and control measures
- terminology and language variations used by workplace staff and the public to describe rodents and rabbits, their behaviour, status, health and treatments
- terminology used to describe and document health and behavioural signs, including desirable and undesirable features
- types of food and food supplements and their role in rodent and rabbit diets
- types of information that has to be reported and recorded in animal care workplaces
- workplace hygiene standards, disinfectants, cleaning agents, cleaning techniques and cleaning equipment and materials.

Evidence Guide

EVIDENCE GUIDE

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.

Overview of assessment

Critical aspects for assessment and evidence required to demonstrate competency in this unit

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:

- identify the specific characteristics and needs of rodents and rabbits and apply these to the best practice industry standard of housing, socialising, feeding and health management
- classify and identify rodents and rabbits by age, sex, condition, colours, reproductive status, markings and other identifying features using industry terminology
- safely and humanely catch, handle and restrain rodents and rabbits
- report and document treatments, behaviours and other information on individual rodents and rabbits in accordance with animal welfare legislation and regulations, industry standards and workplace protocols and procedures.

The skills and knowledge required to provide basic care of rodents and rabbits must be transferable to a range of work environments and contexts and include the ability to deal with unplanned events.

Context of and specific resources for assessment

Assessment of this unit is to be practical in nature and will most appropriately be assessed against the types of processes required in the industry sector in which candidates are working or in a situation that reproduces normal work conditions. Workplaces can include animal shelters, pet shops, zoos and animal technology facilities, veterinary practices or similar workplaces.

There must be access in to a range of animals as well as relevant information, equipment and/or resources to enable one to demonstrate competence. Assessment must

EVIDENCE GUIDE	
	cover a minimum of three commonly available rodent and/or rabbit species.
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 to cover a variety of circumstances and 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>
Guidance information for assessment	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).

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.

Commonly available <i>rodents and rabbits</i> may include:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • companion animal pets: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • guinea pigs • mice • rats • strains and breeds of animals used in research facilities: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • guinea pigs • mice • rats • transgenic mice, rats and rabbits.
<i>Behavioural characteristics</i> may include:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • behaviour characteristics can vary according to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • environmental conditions due to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • lighting • noise • people • relative humidity • temperature • the breeding season • the species, breed, age and sex of the animals • the time of day or night • behaviour characteristics associated with different species: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • activity levels at certain times of day or night • feeding and foraging • fight or flight • social interaction • feeding behaviours • enurination/spraying • defensive behaviour: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • barbering • biting

RANGE STATEMENT	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> defending territory, other animals or food hair on topline being raised posture lordosis reproductive behaviour stereotypical behaviour: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> repetitive patterns self-mutilation restlessness submissive gestures: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> lowering body rolling onto back tail between legs turning away from handler or other animals.
<i>Colours, markings and other identifying features</i> may include:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> age, sex and size coat or skin colours and texture eye colour markings, patterns and permanent scars toe nail colour microchip, ear tags, tattoos and markings and leg bands.
<i>Signs of distressed rodents and rabbits</i> may include:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> aggressive behaviour barbering excessive grooming ill-thrift inappetance posture 'starry coat' (hair on end and in disarray) subdued behaviour trembling vocalisation.
<i>Housing design and environmental factors</i> may include:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> environmental: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> biological control of waste cleaning routines and methods detergent and disinfectant types drainage and weather protection general animal housing security housing furniture local council requirements related to:

RANGE STATEMENT	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • limits to numbers and types of animals allowed • pest control • restricting access to animals • waste management • ventilation, heating and cooling requirements • housing design: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • housing options: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • barrier maintained • caged • fully enclosed • individually ventilated cages • indoor • metabolism cages • naturalistic • outdoor • housing requirements: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • bedding and nesting materials • compatibility of species housed together • food and water distribution • security considerations • longevity and sturdiness of materials • suitability for specific species • species specific options for animals to hide or rest • designs that allow for enrichment activities or species specific feeding or socialising • social options: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • solitary • pairs • single sexed groups • polyandrous/polygamous groups • mixed species • temporary pairs • neutered companion pairing.
<i>Enrichment needs</i> may include:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • food or food-related enrichment: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • giving animals opportunities to forage for food by hiding it in substrates • giving the animal food that requires

RANGE STATEMENT	
	<p>processing (e.g. peeling or shelling fruit or seeds)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • physical enrichment items: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • gnawing manipulada • hide boxes, tunnels and ladders • nest building or bedding material: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • shredded paper • straw • substrate or wood shavings • non-edible items that can be easily added or removed from the environment, such as toys (e.g. balls, bells, puzzles, mirrors and keyrings) • perches, roosting shelves and nest boxes • social enrichment: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • levels of contact with other animals of the same species or breed • social interactions between the animal and the carer may also be appropriate.
<i>Welfare of animals</i> requirements may include:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • adequate housing, nutrition and stock levels • compliance to appropriate state or territory legislation and regulations, including the Australian Code of Practice for the Care and Use of Animals for Scientific Purposes • disease prevention, control and treatment • enrichment opportunities • the absence of pests and vermin • the compatibility of species and breeds.
<i>OHS risks</i> when working with animals may include:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • animal bites, 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) • scalds and burns from sterilising and cleaning equipment

RANGE STATEMENT	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • slippery or uneven work surfaces • zoonoses.
<i>Equipment used to catch, handle and restrain</i> rodents and rabbits may include:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • cages, bags and towels • collars and leads • treats and toys.
<i>Methods used to approach and catch</i> rodents and rabbits may include:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • calling animal by name • encouraging animal to approach by offering a treat • gently conditioning by repeated positive capture and release programs • quietly approaching animal and gently catching and holder with hands • quietly and gently running animal into a smaller enclosure or bag.
<i>Common health issues</i> may include:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • behavioural disorders • environmental hazards: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • exposure to the elements • extreme ventilation rates • humidity extremes • inadequate exercise • temperature extremes • infectious diseases caused by: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • bacteria, virus, fungus, mould and protozoa • internal and external parasites • non-infection diseases: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • nutritional imbalances and disruptions • genetic disorders • metabolic • neoplastic • physical traumas • post operative infections • chemical toxicities and allergies • zoonotic diseases.
<i>General health maintenance and preventative treatment</i> may include:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • daily observation and record keeping • routine health check-up • control of parasites and protozoa • grooming • immunisation/vaccinations, as required • insect control

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • prophylactic health programs • quarantine and isolation • routine observation of waste elimination and faecal examination.
<i>Digestive system features</i> may include:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • anatomical features: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • mouth and teeth structures • salivary glands • digestive chemicals and bacteria • alimentary canal, stomach, liver and pancreas • intestines, rectum and anus • physiological features: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • eating processes • nutrient requirements, absorption and storage methods • waste elimination • feeding patterns • potential digestive system malfunctions or problems • water needs.
<i>Feeding hazards</i> to animals and humans in food preparation and distribution may include:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • animal movement and handling • shelf life of foodstuffs • manual handling and general food preparation, storage and distribution equipment • contamination of foodstuffs from vermin, bacteria, fungus, virus and other sources • organic and other dusts • excessive noise • possibility of zoonotic infection.
<i>Documentation</i> on the care and management of rodents and rabbits may include:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • accident and incident records • Animal Ethics Committee protocols • animal feeding, health and treatment records • animal identification and history • animal production records • animal sale and disposition records • chemical and veterinary supplies register • diary, rosters and task completion and timeframe records • equipment use, damage and repair register • OHS safe work method statements, material safety data sheets (MSDS) and other records

RANGE STATEMENT

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> provisions records of current stock and items used and items required stock control records: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> animal stock supplies and equipment stock.
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Unit Sector(s)

Unit sector	Species specific
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Competency field

Competency field	
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Co-requisite units

Co-requisite units		