



Australian Government

Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations

ACMCAS404A Develop enrichment strategies for companion animals

Revision Number: 1

ACMCAS404A Develop enrichment strategies for companion animals

Modification History

Not applicable.

Unit Descriptor

Unit descriptor	This unit of competency covers the process of developing, implementing, monitoring and reviewing enrichment strategies for companion animals and communicating the strategies to staff members. No licensing, legislative, regulatory or certification requirements apply to this unit at the time of publication.
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Application of the Unit

Application of the unit	This unit is applicable to those working in the animal care industry where it may be necessary to develop and provide enrichment activities for animals in various companion animal sectors, including but not restricted to, pet shops, boarding kennels and catteries, and dog and cat breeding establishments. 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.
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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 <i>enrichment strategies</i>	1.1. Research and consultation are conducted to determine appropriate strategies for particular animals and breeds. 1.2. Enrichment strategies are developed against known animal behaviour and traits. 1.3. Animal welfare and occupational health and safety (OHS) requirements are incorporated into strategies as appropriate. 1.4. Organisational procedures for enrichment are developed in accordance with the profile of animals in the workplace. 1.5. Behavioural management budget allocation is aligned to short and longer-term strategies.
2. Implement enrichment programs	2.1. Enrichment strategies and procedures are communicated to staff and training is provided as necessary. 2.2. Animal husbandry regimes are adjusted to incorporate enrichment strategies. 2.3. Assistance is provided to staff in implementing physical, social and food-related enrichment programs appropriate to the target species. 2.4. Staff members providing enrichment to animals are supervised in accordance with organisational policies and procedures. 2.5. Short-term management of animals exhibiting undesirable behaviour is assessed and implemented.
3. Monitor and review enrichment strategies	3.1. Responses to implementation of enrichment strategy are monitored to determine their effects on animals and documented. 3.2. Adverse consequences to an enrichment strategy are investigated and evaluated. 3.3. Enrichment program modification suggestions are gathered in consultation with staff and implemented where appropriate. 3.4. Short and longer-term enrichment strategies are updated in line with review findings and documented. 3.5. Organisation behavioural management budget allocation is aligned to reviewed and updated strategies.

Required Skills and Knowledge

REQUIRED SKILLS AND KNOWLEDGE

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

Required skills

- develop and implement short and longer-term enrichment strategies including behaviour enrichment activities, materials and equipment suitable for animal species and stage of development
- employ safe and environmentally responsible organisational systems and procedures when handling and working with animals
- identify common indicators of the presence of disease, injury, compromised health or distress in animals
- identify the signs, behaviour and objective measures of development in young animals
- maintain records and write workplace documents
- maintain the highest standards of hygiene and infection control at all times to reduce the risk of infection and cross-infection
- modify behaviour enrichment programs to improve animal comfort and learning opportunities
- observe animals, document and report behaviour and feeding patterns
- 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 consulting with staff
- numeracy skills to estimate, calculate and record routine and more complex workplace measures and data
- 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 strategies and prioritise daily tasks
- use safe manual handling techniques and/or equipment.

Required knowledge

- anatomical and physiological structures and functions related to the care and wellbeing of commonly held animals
- companion animal husbandry regimes
- communication procedures and systems, and technology relevant to the organisation and the individual's work responsibilities
- housing, exercise, social and activity needs of animals
- indicators of stress and wellbeing in animals
- methods of rectifying and modifying animal behaviour patterns

REQUIRED SKILLS AND KNOWLEDGE

- natural animal behaviour relating to the characteristics of the species, age, health status and social needs
- normal and abnormal behaviour patterns and traits of commonly held animals
- organisational policies and procedures, including OHS and emergency procedures and animal welfare requirements
- physical, social and food-related enrichment activities
- principles of animal welfare and ethics
- relevant OHS and animal welfare legislative requirements and codes of practice
- safe animal handling techniques
- safe work practices
- species compatibility
- terminology used to describe and document health and behavioural signs and patterns, including desirable and undesirable features
- 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 competency 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:

- develop and implement appropriate enrichment strategies for common species or breeds, including appropriate physical, social and food-related enrichment
- comply with animal welfare and OHS requirements and organisational policies and procedures
- communicate enrichment strategies to staff, provide training as necessary and supervise implementation
- monitor responses to implementation and review strategies in consultation with others
- monitor organisation budget allocation and maintain accurate records.

The skills and knowledge required to develop enrichment strategies for companion animals 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 be most appropriately assessed in a companion animal workplace or in a situation that reproduces normal work conditions. Workplaces may include pet shops, boarding kennels and catteries, companion animal training, grooming and/or breeding establishments and mobile animal facilities.

There must be access to a range of companion animal breeds and species and the relevant information, materials and documentation.

EVIDENCE GUIDE	
Method of assessment	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, cases and responsibilities, and over a number of assessment activities. The assessment strategies must include practical skills assessment. Suggested strategies for this unit are: • 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. This unit may be assessed in a holistic way with other units of competency relevant to the industry sector, workplace and job role.
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.

Enrichment strategies may include:

- physical:
 - climbing poles and scratching posts
 - gnawing manipulada
 - hide boxes, tunnels and ladders
 - nest building or bedding material:
 - shredded paper
 - straw
 - substrate or wood shavings
 - toys (e.g. balls, bells, toys, puzzles and mirrors)
 - perches, roosting shelves and nest boxes
- food or food-related:
 - giving animals opportunities to forage for food by hiding it in substrates
 - giving the animal food that requires processing (e.g. peeling or shelling fruit or seeds)
- social enrichment:
 - levels of contact with other animals of the same species or breed
 - social interactions between the animal and the carer may also be appropriate.

Research may involve:

- reviewing:
 - breeders associations
 - internet sites
 - technical papers and texts
- discussions with:
 - hobbyists
 - private consultants
 - registered breeders
 - specialist breeders
 - wholesalers.

RANGE STATEMENT	
<i>Animals</i> may include:	• birds • dogs and cats • small animals (e.g. rabbits, rodents, ferrets and guinea pigs) • reptiles and amphibians.
<i>Animal welfare requirements</i> may include:	• adequate housing, nutrition and stock levels • compliance to appropriate state or territory legislation and regulations • enrichment opportunities • the absence of pests and vermin • the compatibility of species and breeds.
<i>OHS requirements</i> may include:	• following safe work method statements in the conduct of work tasks • hazard identification and risk minimisation procedures for the handling of animals • hazard identification and risk minimisation procedures for the handling, use, storage, transport and disposal of chemicals • manual handling strategies • procedures for the handling and disposal of biological wastes • use of personal protective clothing and equipment relevant to the task: • safety goggles and glasses • protective masks • animal handling gauntlets.
<i>Adverse consequences</i> may include:	• destruction of habitat • fighting between animals over access to enrichment items or activities leading to potential for injuries • impact on security of animals, staff and public of enrichment activity • life of enrichment item or activity compared to cost • over-stimulation of animal • refusal of animal to utilise enrichment items • self-mutilation or other signs of stress.

Unit Sector(s)

Unit sector	Companion animal services
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Competency field

Competency field	
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Co-requisite units

Co-requisite units		