



Australian Government

Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations

ACMEQD404A Conduct equine oral inspection and assessment and plan equine dental treatment

Release: 1

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Modification History

Not applicable.

Unit Descriptor

This Unit of Competency covers the process of inspecting the equine mouth to identify and assess oral health status in order to plan for any required routine dental correction or oral care procedures or initiate referral procedures where corrective equine dental treatment may be required. Whilst the skills described in this Unit may be attempted without sedation of the horse, sedation may be necessary for a thorough and complete examination of the oral cavity. Sedation may also be required for OHS reasons and for the animal's welfare, safety and comfort. If this medication is required it must be obtained and administered in accordance with the relevant State or Territory legislation.

Application of the Unit

This Unit applies to equine dental service providers who can identify a range of common equine dental conditions in order to plan routine dental treatment. This Unit is aimed at planning treatment only and candidates are expected to refer owners or carers to veterinarians or other appropriate service providers if the case is beyond the provider's current professional and personal scope or ethical responsibility. 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.

Licensing/Regulatory Information

Licensing, legislative, regulatory or certification requirements may apply to this Unit. 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

Pre-Requisites

There are no pre-requisite Units in this competency standard.

Employability Skills Information

This Unit contains employability skills.

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.

Elements and Performance Criteria

ELEMENT	PERFORMANCE CRITERIA
1 Conduct pre-examination procedures	1.1 Horse health, injury and use history is obtained 1.2 Reasons for equine dental appointment are clarified and more appropriate options outlined to the owner or carer if necessary 1.3 Basic assessment of condition, muscle tone and balance is conducted and documented 1.4 Features of head and neck anatomy are identified and general function is assessed 1.5 The behaviour of the horse and response to general handling is assessed, evaluated and documented
2 Conduct oral and dental examination	2.1 Safety considerations for the performance of oral inspection of the horse are identified and safety protocols applied 2.2 The horse's head is inspected for symmetry, swellings or other abnormalities 2.3 Rostro-caudal and lateral excursion range of motion of the mandible are assessed (under sedation if required) and the need for referral assessed 2.4 Incisors are inspected and assessed for evidence of pathology which may impact on speculum use and may require referral 2.5 Molars and incisors are inspected for level of occlusion and the need for referral assessed 2.6 The oral cavity is rinsed with water and speculum is fitted in accordance with required industry standards 2.7 Oral structures are examined by palpation and then visually inspected with the aid of a focal light source and mirror 2.8 All teeth are assessed for normal and abnormal features related to position, alignment, wear, and angulations and the need for referral 2.9 Mouth and teeth are inspected for conditions which fit within the parameters of routine dental correction and oral procedures 2.10 Speculum is removed and mouth is rinsed
3 Provide post-inspection assessment and advice	3.1 Results of inspection are documented using established terminology and charts 3.2 Inspection results are assessed and impact of findings are explained to the owner or carer 3.3 Where referral is required, permission is obtained from the owner or carer and referral procedures are initiated
4 Prioritise dental issues	4.1 Dental examination findings are considered in conjunction with the profile and history of the horse 4.2 Dental conditions found during examination are ranked based on health impact and horse comfort

- 4.3 Dental conditions found during examination are prioritised based on time required to perform treatment
- 5 Select dental treatment strategy
 - 5.1 Owner or carer requested or proposed treatments are discussed in the context of ethical considerations, optimal comfort and dental care for the horse
 - 5.2 **Treatment options** are ranked based on optimal outcomes for the horse and **other relevant considerations**
 - 5.3 Treatment strategy is prepared based on examination findings
 - 5.4 Stages and timing of treatment are planned and documented
 - 5.5 Treatment strategy is put in place based on provider's professional and personal scope and the need for referral to veterinarians or other appropriate service providers
- 6 Discuss dental treatment strategy
 - 6.1 Treatment strategies are evaluated with qualified equine dental service providers, veterinarians or other appropriate service providers as required
 - 6.2 **Significance of dental conditions** found during examination is explained to the owner or carer and treatment strategies are discussed.
 - 6.3 **Post treatment care** and need for monitoring horse is explained to the owner or carer
 - 6.4 Consent to treatment plan is confirmed with the owner or carer

Required Skills and Knowledge

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

Required skills include:

Ability to:

- analyse and solve problems using available information and resources including recording information and prioritising daily tasks
- apply 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
- communicate effectively with others, including questioning, active listening, asking for clarification and consulting with or seeking advice from other appropriate service providers
- comply with animal welfare legislation, animal care guidelines, state and territory veterinary surgeons or practitioners legislation and regulations, relevant equine dental association code of conduct, equine dental service provider accreditation requirements and standards
- employ safe, humane and environmentally responsible organisational systems and procedures when working with and handling horses
- follow industry referral protocols and procedures
- follow sequenced written instructions, record accurately and legibly information collected and select and apply procedures to a range of defined tasks
- identify and rank equine dental conditions and diseases based on provider's professional and personal scope and the need for referral to veterinarian or other appropriate service provider
- in conjunction with veterinarian, monitor horse vital signs for indicators of impact of sedatives during and after treatment of dental conditions, subject to relevant state/territory regulations
- interpret and respond appropriately to horse behaviour
- maintain the highest standards of hygiene and infection control at all times to reduce the risk of infection and cross-infection; considering zoonotic and exotic disease possibilities (biosecurity)
- numeracy skills to estimate, calculate and record routine workplace elements
- obtain evidence of periodontal disease, occlusal surface malocclusions, significant protruding teeth and any other pathology which may require referral
- plan dental treatment with consideration to the horse and providing comfort, based on provider's professional and personal scope and the need for referral to veterinarian or other appropriate service provider
- prepare and maintain equine dental records using appropriate terminology
- read and follow required policies and procedures, including OHS, infection control and waste management
- recognise equine oral conditions that may impact on speculum use and require referral
- recognise any equine oral conditions that require referral, and action referral

- relate instruments and processes used in equine dentistry to dental conditions
- use safe manual handling techniques and/or equipment
- use safe, hygienic and environmentally friendly waste handling and disposal procedures.

Required knowledge includes:

Knowledge of:

- anatomy and physiology of the equine head and oral structures including features and functions of the equine mouth and teeth including normal and abnormal functions
- appropriate industry and state/territory equine dental codes of conduct and standards of practice
- appropriate terminology used to describe:
 - dental conditions, treatment and oral features
 - findings in images and pathology tests
- charting systems used to record equine dental information
- clinical signs and effects of the categories of sedative drugs used in the horse
- common equine dental conditions and diseases
- contagious disease symptoms, prophylaxis and biosecurity protocols
- diagnostic tools used to investigate horse health and dental conditions
- features of correctly formed, healthy and well-maintained equine dental and oral structures
- horse ailments and injuries that may impact on dental health
- horse behaviour and other symptoms that may indicate dental problems
- indicators of horse distress, illness and disease
- parameters of treatment which may require referral to veterinarian or other appropriate service provider
- post-dental treatment monitoring and care
- principles of animal welfare
- protocols, legal and ethical considerations when consulting with veterinarians and other appropriate service providers
- relevant legislation, regulations and codes of practice, including OHS, animal welfare and ethics, veterinary practice, restricted dental practices and waste disposal
- relevant state or territory legislation covering the supply, possession and use of restricted and controlled substances
- techniques and instruments used to provide equine dental care
- techniques used to restrain the horse for dental treatment
- safe work practices
- workplace hygiene standards (biosecurity) including: disinfectants, cleaning agents and techniques, cleaning and appropriate disinfection or sterilisation of equipment, materials and personal protective equipment (PPE).

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:

- obtain horse history, evaluate and document current general condition and behaviour of horse
- inspect incisors for evidence of major malocclusions which may impact on speculum use and require referral
- comply with infection control and hygiene protocols and monitor for update alerts
- fit a speculum and inspect the mouth and teeth for signs of healthy dental and oral status
- identify and rank less complex dental conditions consistent with those which can be addressed by routine dental and oral procedures using industry recognised charts and records
- discuss options for treatment with mentors, veterinarian or other appropriate service providers
- document findings using established record keeping and appropriate terminology
- report inspection results and impact of findings to owner or carer.
- refer owner or carer to a veterinarian or other appropriate service provider if the case is beyond current professional and personal scope, legal restriction or ethical responsibility of the dental service provider
- document treatment plans, including appropriate treatment procedures and equipment
- explain treatment plan and post treatment care and monitoring requirements to the owner or carer.

The skills and knowledge required to conduct equine oral inspection and assessment and plan equine dental treatment 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 for this Unit is to be practical in nature and will be most appropriately assessed in a workplace where equine dentistry is provided or in a situation that reproduces normal work conditions. There must be access to a range of horses and anatomical models and the appropriate equipment and resources to enable one to demonstrate competence.
Method of assessment	To ensure consistency in performance, competency should be demonstrated, to established standards, on more than four occasions over a period of time in order to cover a variety of individual cases, circumstances and disciplines and over a number of assessment activities. The assessment strategy must include assessment of competency in a work environment. Suggested strategies for this Unit are: • written and 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 • case studies • 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 socio-economic backgrounds).

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.

Horse <i>history</i> information may include:	• age, breed and sex • behavioural issues in relation to: • handling • head position and movement • past dental treatment • rider or driver control • diet • exercise routine • horse use • vital signs • observations and/or injuries • known allergies • known dental and health problems • previous dental treatments • reason for consultation or inquiry • vaccination status • competition status • current veterinary or complementary treatment.
<i>Features of head and neck anatomy</i> may include:	• symmetry of head: • ears • eye orbits • facial crests • nasal bones • nostrils • rami • temporomandibular joints (TMJ) • symmetry and tone of head and neck muscles: • head muscles: masseter and temporalis • facial muscles including: levator nasolabialis, facial cutaneous muscle • neck muscles including: semispinalis capitus, caudal oblique, longus capitus, omohyoid sternohyoid muscles • other neck muscles including:

	brachiocephalic, rhomboid, splenius and trapezius muscles.
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<i>The behaviour of the horse</i> may include:	• nervous or defensive behaviours: • striking • kicking • biting • holding body in tension • laying ears back • shaking • pawing • pushing or barging • sweating • attempting to run away • behavioural problems: • weaving • attempting to sit down or lean on operator • refusing to allow head to be handled • behaviour may be a reflection of: • eating disorders • environmental conditions • herd behaviour • inability to maintain concentration • resistance to working in a collected frame • level of exercise • pain, discomfort or fear • temperament.
<i>Safety considerations</i> when working with horses include:	• being prepared to say no to handling an uneducated, stressed or difficult horse • identifying a safe working environment • following safe work method statements for: • completing dental tasks • infection control (biosecurity) precautions • horse catching, handling, controlling and restraining methods using safe manual handling procedures • using personal protective equipment (PPE) • clothing of a protective nature including disposables • eye and ear protection • masks for the protection of the respiratory system • gloves

	• items for sun and other protection • safety footwear and leg protection • recognising possible symptoms of and risks of zoonotic diseases such as Hendra virus and required reporting procedures.
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Conditions within the parameters of <i>routine dental correction and oral procedures</i> may include:	• conditions that may be recognised include: • impacted feed above the gum line • soft tissue lacerations from sharp teeth • conditions that may be treated via routine dental correction include: • supragingival calculus ("tartar") removal • creation of appropriate bit seats taking into consideration the risk of pulp exposure • removal of sharp points consisting of dentine, cementum and enamel on upper and lower buccal and lingual edges under close scrutiny to avoid proximity or exposure of any pulp canals • removal of retained deciduous teeth (caps) ready to be shed and without significant periodontal attachment (able to be moved considerably with a finger) using the hand or an instrument as appropriate • removal of digitally loose permanent teeth without significant periodontal attachment (able to be moved considerably with a finger) using the hand or an instrument as appropriate followed by referral for appropriate investigation as to the cause • addressing causes predisposing to gingivitis • conditions that are recognised where referral must be considered, according to industry protocols, include: • evidence of: • endodontic disease • periodontal disease • Orthodontic problems (malocclusion) • absent teeth • loose teeth with periodontal attachment • supernumerary teeth • displaced teeth • fractured teeth • abnormal deciduous or permanent teeth • conditions which will require referral include: • fractures involving bone • retained deciduous teeth (caps) with significant periodontal attachments • presence of pungent odour or discharge from
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	mouth or nose • incisor reduction of more than the measurement indicated in state/territory legislation and guidelines (however, 1mm reduction is generally considered a safe margin) • check teeth reduction of more than the measurement indicated in state/territory legislation and guidelines (however, 3mm reduction is generally considered a safe margin)
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Referral procedures may include:	• direct contact by phone or in person with relevant specialist or allied equine health provider after gaining owner permission • verbal advice to owner regarding suggested referral requirements • written advice to owner regarding suggested referral procedures.
Persons to whom referrals may be made include:	• veterinarians and veterinary specialists • appropriately qualified equine dental service provider • equine nutritionists • other appropriate service providers
Treatment options may include:	• assessing the need for sedation based on: • the animal's problems • the investigation and treatment required • the animal's behaviour and/or stress level • the ability to manage the animal by the operator and handlers • the environment and OHS risk assessment • accessing sedation in accordance with relevant State/Territory legislation • routine dental correction including: • supragingival calculus ("tartar") removal • creation of appropriate bit seats • removal of sharp enamel points on upper and lower buccal and lingual edges • removal of sharp points consisting of dentine, cementum and enamel on upper and lower buccal and lingual edges under close scrutiny to avoid proximity or exposure of any pulp canals • removal of retained deciduous teeth (caps) ready to be shed and without significant periodontal attachment (able to be moved considerably with a finger) using the hand or an instrument as appropriate • removal of digitally loose molars without significant periodontal attachment (able to be moved considerably with a finger) using the hand or an instrument as appropriate followed by referral for appropriate investigation as to the cause • addressing causes predisposing to gingivitis

	• referral for: • advanced or staged corrective treatment • periodontal disease • fragments for extraction or further investigation • extractions other than described above • endodontic disease • orthodontic (malocclusion) problems • other health problems.
<i>Other relevant considerations</i> may include:	• appropriate sedation in relation to horse's age, breed, temperament and physical condition • age of the horse • work or activity the horse is engaged in • temperament of the horse • owner or carer wishes.
<i>Significance of dental conditions</i> may include:	• behavioural problems • discomfort or pain • impact on digestion and health • impact on performance or reproduction.
<i>Post treatment care</i> may include:	• horse management recommendations to the owner or carer including: • change of feed or husbandry recommendations • modification of work and bit use • exercise or training modifications or considerations • mouth rinses • nil by mouth post sedation • re-education of the horse • referral to veterinarian or other appropriate service provider.

Unit Sector(s)

Equine Dentistry