HM Government

T-LEVELS

T Level Technical Qualification in Animal Care and Management

Occupational Specialism in Animal Management and Behaviour

Synoptic Assignment Guide Standard Exemplification Material Distinction

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City & Guilds

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Introduction

The sample evidence within this document refers to the Occupational Specialism in Animal Management and Behaviour synoptic assignment. The aim of these materials is to provide centres with examples of knowledge, skills and understanding that attest to a distinction grade. In this document all exemplar evidence attests as examples of performance at the distinction grade boundary. The evidence presented here has been developed to reflect a distinction grade within each task but is not necessarily intended to reflect the work of a single candidate. It is important to note that in live assessments a candidate's performance is very likely to exhibit a spikey profile and the standard of performance will vary across tasks. The Guide Standard Exemplification Material (GSEM) illustrates linear performance across all pieces of evidence at the grade. A distinction grade will be based on a synoptic mark across all tasks.

The evidence in this GSEM is separated into the sections as described below. Evidence is presented against tasks from the synoptic assignment. Assessors using the GSEM may find it helpful to review this document along with the sample assessment materials (SAMs).

Task

This section details the evidence to be submitted for marking and any additional evidence required including any photo/video evidence. Also referenced in this section are the performance outcomes and the evidence will be marked against these when completing the tasks within it. In addition, evidence that has been included or not been included in this GSEM has been identified within this section.

In this GSEM there is evidence from:

- Task 1
- Task 2
- Task 3
- Task 4
- Task 5
- Task 6

Evidence

This section includes exemplars of evidence, photo/video recordings of the evidence in production (or completed) and assessor observation records of the assessment completed by centre assessors. This will be exemplar evidence that was captured as part of the assessment and then internally marked by the centre assessor.

Word counts

Typical word counts/page lengths, as indicated in the SAMs, are used as approximates for guidance to support the production of sufficient evidence. The marking will relate to the quality of the evidence produced and not whether the word count/page length has been met and candidates may be under or over the word count without affecting their grade.

Commentary

This section includes detailed comments to demonstrate how the evidence attests to the standard of distinction.

It is important to note that the commentary section is not part of the evidence or assessment but are evaluative statements on how and why that piece of evidence meets a particular standard.

Grade descriptors

To achieve a distinction, a candidate will typically be able to:

Demonstrate an excellent level of performance that consistently meets the industry requirements to be able to enter the animal management and behaviour industry to begin work in the occupational area.

Demonstrate highly effective technical skills and techniques to consistently optimise animal health and welfare. Safely carry out routine health assessments and husbandry activities to an excellent quality standard within time constraints.

Demonstrate an excellent understanding of human-animal interaction, consistently applying safe and welfare orientated techniques when handling, restraining and moving animals, adapting them when necessary.

Accurately interpret technical information to be able to plan and prepare equipment and work areas, assess risk and follow safe working methods appropriately when applying practical skills to an excellent standard and within relevant legislation and regulations.

Produce comprehensive plans for the care and monitoring of animals including detailed documentation such as health assessment records, husbandry plans and behavioural observation records.

Demonstrate excellent understanding of the factors that contribute to animals' natural environment, applying excellent technical skills to optimise the animals' environment and health and welfare needs.

Demonstrate excellent understanding of animals' natural behaviour and positive reinforcers, applying excellent technical skills when carrying out behavioural observations and training activities.

Carry out comprehensive planning and research to promote animal welfare in conservation, including thoroughly assessing sources of information for validity and reliability.

Carry out comprehensive analysis and evaluation of research to enable effective presentation of results to targeted audiences.

Consistently use technical terminology accurately in plans, reports and documentation.

Task 1 Health assessment

Task 1a) Risk assessment

Evidence contributes to the following:

Performance outcome
PO1: Optimise health and welfare of animals

Task	Evidence	Candidate producing	Assessor producing	Included in this GSEM
a) Risk assessment	One risk assessment form (Figure 1)	√		√
b) Health assessment	2x Assessor observation form **2x Photographic evidence** **2x Video evidence**		√	√
c) Health check forms	Health assessment form for mammal (Figure 2) Health assessment form for animal (Figure 2).	√		√
d) Written report (evaluation and findings from health assessment)	Written report (typically 1000 words)	√		√

Candidate evidence – Risk assessment

Candidate's name	**Sample Candidate**	**Enrolment number**	**CG12345**
Task/Activity	Task 1: Health assessment mammal and animal (ferret and Bearded Dragon)	Location	Centre training area
Assessor's name	Sample Assessor	Date	28/05/2024

Item no.	What are the hazards?	Who might be harmed and how?	What control measures are already in place?	Risk rating (High/ Medium/ Low)	What further action is necessary?	Action by who and when?	Residual risk rating (High/ Medium/ Low)
1	The ferret behaviour	The handler. Bites and scratches.	Visual observation of the ferret within their enclosure prior to entering the enclosure. Use of Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) (overalls, gauntlet gloves). Approach to the ferret - ensure not to frighten or startle. Using the appropriate handling and restraint method for the ferret.	Medium	Provision of additional handling and restraint equipment e.g. towel or blanket Work in a calm and quiet manner - knowledge of ferret's natural circadian rhythm and natural behaviours. Appropriate ferret handling and restraint training.	The handler supported by the keeper/ student/ manager of animal collection.	Low

2	The Bearded Dragon behaviour	The handler. Scratches.	Visual observation of the Bearded Dragon within their enclosure prior to opening the vivarium door. Use of PPE (overalls, disposable gloves). Approach to the Bearded Dragon - ensure not to frighten or startle. Using the appropriate handling and restraint method for the Bearded Dragon.	Medium	Provision of additional handling and restraint equipment e.g. towel Work in a calm and quiet manner - knowledge of Bearded Dragon natural circadian rhythm and natural behaviours. Appropriate Bearded Dragon handling and restraint training.	The handler supported by the keeper/ student/ manager of animal collection.	
3	The ferret	The handler. Zoonotic diseases.	Use of PPE (overalls, gloves, appropriate footwear, face masks, goggles). Hygiene measures (clean PPE, hand washing, equipment cleaning, environment cleaning).	Medium	Knowledge of zoonotic disease transmission (e.g. risk of salmonella, fleas, ringworm). Visual examination of ferret for any bald patches (may indicate ringworm/ flea infestation).	The handler supported by the keeper/ student/ manager of animal collection.	Low
4	The Bearded Dragon	The handler. Zoonotic diseases.	Use of PPE (overalls, gloves, appropriate footwear, face masks, goggles). Hygiene measures (clean PPE, hand washing, equipment	Medium	Knowledge of zoonotic disease transmission (e.g. risk of salmonella. Bearded Dragon can be carriers of salmonella but show no signs of carrying the disease).	The handler supported by the keeper/ student/ manager of animal collection.	Low

			cleaning, environment cleaning).				
5	The animal enclosure.	The handler. Injury from entry or exit from the enclosure. - Design of the enclosure (e.g. trip, slips, falls, wound from damaged area of enclosure).	Observation of enclosure prior to entry and exit (identify any damaged areas, location of animals. Appropriate PPE (footwear) - important if enclosure floor is uneven or on several levels.	Medium	Logical and careful approach not to frighten the animals within the enclosure. Any damaged areas noted and reported to the manager immediately to arrange repair. May need to relocate animals.	The handler supported by the keeper/ student/ manager of animal collection.	Low
6	The environment. (surrounding area)	The handler. Trips, slips and falls.	PPE (appropriate footwear). Observation of the practical room: removal of any clutter /appropriate equipment storage. Appropriate floor cleaning method: Yellow hazard sign if floor is wet/spillage.	Medium	Safe working practice If the floor is wet: notify manager, use appropriate method to dry (squidgy, paper towels). Appropriate waste disposal (do not let bins overflow or leave black bags around).	Everyone using the practical rooms.	Low
7	The environment. Location of equipment	The handler. Back injury/ muscle strain.	Stool to enable access to higher shelves. Larger equipment stored at lower levels.	Low	Training in accessing equipment/ animal carriers from higher levels (ladder training).	The handler supported by the keeper/ student/ manager of	Low

	(manual handling).				Health and Safety at Work Act training for manual handling.	animal collection.	
8	The ferrets escaping from their environment.	The handler. Others in the surrounding area. Injury in ‘’running after and capturing animal’’.	Ensure all doors to the practical room are 100% secure before opening ferret enclosure doors. Ensure all enclosure doors are secure after returning ferret.	Low	Report any damaged locks/door handles to the manager as soon as noticed. Relocate any ferret in the unsecure enclosure to one that is secure as soon the damage/problem is noticed.	The handler supported by the keeper/ student/ manager of animal collection.	Low
9	The Bearded Dragon’s escaping from their environment.	The handler. Others in the surrounding area. Slips, trips and falls.	Ensure all doors to the practical room are 100% secure before opening Bearded Dragons’ enclosure doors. Ensure all enclosure doors are secure after returning Bearded Dragons.	Low	Report any damaged locks/door handles to the manager as soon as noticed. Relocate any Bearded Dragons in the unsecure enclosure to one that is secure as soon the damage/problem is noticed.	The handler supported by the keeper/ student/ manager of animal collection.	Low
10	Moving ferret from enclosure to assessment area and returning animal to its original enclosure.	The handler. Ferret placed in temporary carry box or basket. Injury on lifting	Correct size of temporary carry box/ basket for ferret Weight and size consideration of ferret	Low	Plan route from enclosure to the health assessment area. Short distance from ferret enclosure to the examination table/ assessment area.	The handler supported by the keeper/ student	Low

		slips, trips, falls.	and the temporary carrier.		Health and Safety at Work Act training: Safe manual handling and lifting. Ensure working area is tidy: no clutter, all equipment placed in a safe area, anything not needed is stored correctly.		
11	Moving Bearded Dragon from enclosure to assessment area and returning Bearded Dragon to its original enclosure.	The handler. Bearded Dragon placed in temporary carry box. Injury on lifting slips, trips, falls.	Correct size of temporary carry box for Bearded Dragon. Weight and size consideration of Bearded Dragon and the temporary carrier.	Low	Plan route from enclosure to the health assessment area. Short distance from Bearded Dragon enclosure to the examination table/ assessment area. Health and Safety at Work Act training: Safe manual handling and lifting. Ensure working area is tidy: no clutter, all equipment placed in a safe area, anything not needed is stored correctly.	The handler supported by the keeper/ student	Low
12	Allergies.	The handler. To the mammal's fur, bedding, animal substrate.	Appropriate PPE (face mask, goggles, gloves, arm length overalls/scrub tops).	Medium	Handler/student to carry antihistamines. Assessor/manager to complete additional First	The handler supported by the assessor/ manager of	Low

			Informing the manager/ assessor.		Aid training (use of adrenaline).	animal collection.	
13	Equipment damage.	The handler. Injury - wound, gash, bruising.	Examine equipment on collection to identify any damage.	Medium	Notify assessor/manager if any equipment that is damaged has been identified or if any equipment becomes damaged when used during the assessment period. Do no return damaged equipment to storage cupboard - place in location for manager to arrange repair or disposal.	The handler supported by the student/ assessor/ manager of animal collection.	Low

Date of assessment: 28/05/2024	Risk assessment carried out by: Sample Candidate

Commentary

The candidate has comprehensively assessed risk by completing an accurate risk assessment, showing an excellent understanding of the requirements of hazards, risks and control measures that may occur as part of a health assessment within relevant legislation and regulations. The candidate identified a comprehensive range of potential hazards, a wide range of control measures and demonstrated an excellent understanding of the risks that might occur. For example, referring to safe working practice, manual handling training and types of PPE. The candidate considered the full process for the animal's handling, restraint, movement and physical health assessment.

The risk assessment was completed with an excellent understanding of the difference between hazards, risks, and control measures, providing a range of detailed precautions to minimise risk to themselves and others. The candidate has made clear links between the risks and suitable

precautions. For example, ensuring the room was clear of any clutter, unused equipment and waste material. The candidate correctly categorised risk ratings and included additional control measures to reduce the risk ratings. For example, equipment damage being a hazard, the candidate identified that this could be a low risk and the control measures would be to examine the equipment and to not return damaged equipment to storage.

Task 1b) Health assessment (mammal and animal)

Candidate evidence - Assessor Observation Form

Task	**Qualification number**
Task 1b) Health assessment mammal: ferret	8717-407
Candidate name	**Candidate number**
Sample candidate	CG12345
Centre name	
Sample centre	

Complete the table below referring to the relevant marking grid, found in the assessment pack. Do not allocate marks at this stage.

Assessor observation	**Notes –** *detailed, accurate and differentiating notes which identify areas of strength and weakness are necessary to distinguish between different qualities of performance and to facilitate accurate allocation of marks once all evidence has been submitted.*
Preparation for the health assessment	The candidate: • secured the room by closing all internal doors. • wore appropriate PPE (uniform and boots) • washed their hands before starting the task
Identify a mammal using techniques such as: • identification charts • collars and tags • markings.	The candidate identified their allocated ferret by examining the charts/information sheet located on the enclosure.
Carry out a visual health assessment.	The candidate completed a 2-minute visual check of the enclosure and ferret colony within.
Handle, restrain and move the mammal to a suitable area for a health assessment using appropriate handling and restraining equipment. (PPE and species-specific equipment e.g. carry cage, crate, collar, lead, basket, harness) and techniques (welfare friendly, positioning of handler, appropriate method to the mammal/species, consistent and welfare friendly handling	The candidate: • collected a suitably sized carry container from the storage room • opened the enclosure door showing consideration of the ferret's location • moved slowly around the enclosure and was careful to observe the location of the ferrets and avoid any interaction • placed the carry container with the door open, on the enclosure floor to enable the allocated ferret (an albino ferret) to enter • closed and secured the carry container door once the ferret was inside • observed the ferret within the carry container for 20 seconds

Assessor observation	**Notes –** *detailed, accurate and differentiating notes which identify areas of strength and weakness are necessary to distinguish between different qualities of performance and to facilitate accurate allocation of marks once all evidence has been submitted.*
and restraint).	• safely lifted, using manual handling methods, the carry container and transported it with the ferret secured inside to the examination table • placed the carry container on the examination table, opened the carry container door and retrieved the ferret from the carry container securely. The candidate: • consistently used one hand on the ferret's thorax and the other around its hind end to prevent movement and support weight (photos 1 and 2) • used the table to secure the ferret and used a v-grip to handle and restrain before starting the health assessment (photo 3).
Carry out a physical health assessment of the mammal.	The candidate: • started the health assessment at the head and worked their way to the tail of the ferret • commenced the physical health check with examining the nose, whiskers, eyes and ears • progressed to examining the coat/skin condition before examining the ferret's mobility, gait, limbs and feet • altered their handling method at this point to enable a better position and visual assessment of the ferret's reproductive organs. The ferret appeared comfortable as the candidate altered their restraining and handling method • completed the health check by examining the anus and tail • identified each physical parameter they examined and gave a brief assessment • demonstrated an adjustment of their handling techniques because the ferret was active. This included supporting the weight of the ferret by using the table and adapting their handling approach of the ferret to secure the ferret around the chest while performing the physical health assessment • constantly considered animal welfare and safety be checking on the ferret's response the handling and adapting when necessary • returned the ferret to the carry container. The container door was closed and secured • transported the ferret within the carry container back to its original enclosure. Once in the enclosure, the carry container door was opened allowing the ferret to exit • removed the carry container and exited the ferret's enclosure and closed the enclosure door for security • observed the ferret for 30 seconds after returning to the enclosure.

Assessor signature	Date
Sample assessor	28/05/2024

Candidate evidence - Photographic/video evidence

Photo evidence
Photographic evidence: showing the restraint of the mammal from the front and from the side.

Photo 1 Handling and restraint

Photo 2 Handling and restraint

Photo 3 Handling and restraint (V grip)

Video evidence Video evidence: a video of the health assessment of the head of the mammal Task1_ Health Assessment of the Ferret Distinction.mp4

Candidate evidence - Assessor Observation Form

Task	**Qualification number**
Task 1b) Health assessment animal: Bearded Dragon	8717-407
Candidate name	**Candidate number**
Sample Candidate	CG1234
Centre name	
Sample centre	

Complete the table below referring to the relevant marking grid, found in the assessment pack. Do not allocate marks at this stage.

Assessor observation	**Notes –** *detailed, accurate and differentiating notes which identify areas of strength and weakness are necessary to distinguish between different qualities of performance and to facilitate accurate allocation of marks once all evidence has been submitted.*
Preparation for the practical assessment.	Before beginning the activity, the candidate secured the room by closing all internal doors. Candidate collected equipment for the health assessment including weighing scale, animal records
Identify an animal using techniques such as: • identification charts • collars and tags • markings.	The candidate identified their allocated animal, namely the Bearded Dragon by examining the animal records.
Carry out a visual health assessment.	The candidate observed the Bearded Dragon for 30 seconds to assess its behaviour and examine the enclosure.
Handle, restrain and move the animal to a suitable area for a health assessment using appropriate handling and restraining equipment. (PPE and species-specific equipment e.g. carry cage, crate, collar, lead, basket,	The candidate: • wore PPE (uniform, boots, gloves) • ensured all interior doors to the practical room were closed and washed their hands • approached the enclosures and identified and retrieved a suitably sized carry container with a lid located above the enclosures

Assessor observation	**Notes –** *detailed, accurate and differentiating notes which identify areas of strength and weakness are necessary to distinguish between different qualities of performance and to facilitate accurate allocation of marks once all evidence has been submitted.*
harness) and techniques (welfare friendly, positioning of handler, appropriate method to the animal/species, consistent and welfare friendly handling and restraint).	• placed the carry container on the floor outside of the enclosure • opened the enclosure door, entered the enclosure and placed some substrate (sand) into the carry container. • safely secured of the Bearded Dragon using both hands, one hand supporting the weight underneath and one hand top of the body • carefully placed the Bearded Dragon into the carry container and secured the lid • closed and checked the enclosure door was secure after exiting it. • observed the Bearded Dragon for 20 seconds • safely lifted and moved the carry container, using appropriate manual handling methods with the Bearded Dragon secured inside to the examination table The candidate: • used one hand to securely handle and restrain the thorax and front end of the Bearded Dragon and the other hand to secure the abdomen and preventing the tail from movement (photos 1, 2, 3 and 4)
Carry out a physical health assessment of the animal.	The candidate: • removed the lid from the carry container • removed the Bearded Dragon from the carry container • touched their face with the back of their hand at the start of the health assessment. • commenced the physical health check starting at the rostrum and ending at the tail. The checks included the rostrum, pineal eye, eyes, ear orifice, gular fringe (beard), body, lateral fringe (spikes), limbs, toes, underside, shed, tail, vent. • identified the correct weight and safely measured the Bearded Dragon's body condition • ensured the Bearded Dragon was monitored throughout the weight check procedure • carefully returned the Bearded Dragon to its original enclosure using the carry container to transport it safely from the examination table to its enclosure • monitored the animal for 30 seconds, examining the animal's response to the handling and restraint experienced • completed the task by cleaning the carry container and the examination table with a diluted disinfectant spray.

Assessor signature	**Date**
Sample assessor	28/05/2024

Candidate evidence - Photographic/video evidence

Photo evidence
Photographic evidence: photos show the restraint of the animal

Photo 1 handling

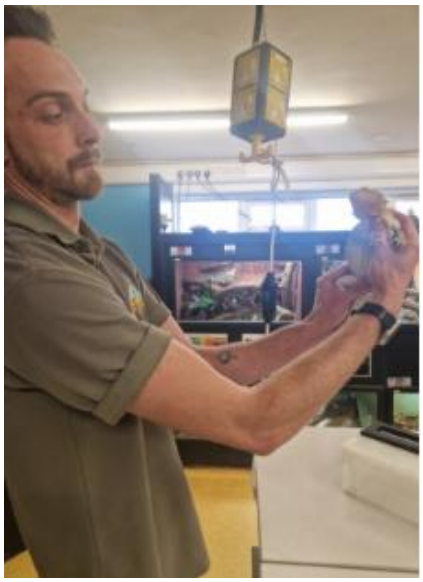
Photo 2 handling and restraint

Photo 3 handling and restraint to contain limbs

Photo 4 handling and restraint to contain limbs

Video evidence
Video evidence: a video of the health assessment of the head of the animal

Task1_ Health Assessment Bearded Dragon Distinction.mp4

Commentary – mammal and animal

The candidate demonstrated an excellent level of performance when preparing for and carrying out their health assessment on both the Bearded Dragon and the ferret to meet the health and welfare needs of the animals.

The candidate showed excellent consideration to health, safety and hygiene prior to starting the health assessment activities. For example, the candidate ensured the area was secure, wore appropriate PPE, selected and used the relevant equipment, and followed suitable hand washing techniques.

During the health assessment, the candidate briefly touched their face with the back of their hand and then returned to handling the Bearded Dragon. Although this presents some biosecurity risk, because the back of the hand was used and not the same part of the hand that was touching the Bearded Dragon, this risk is lessened but ideally the candidate should re-wash or wear nitrile gloves to prevent any cross-contamination.

The candidate demonstrated highly effective technical skills and techniques when handling and restraining, with excellent human-animal interaction throughout the physical health assessment for both the Bearded Dragon and ferret. The candidate ensured high welfare standards were maintained whilst working within time constraints ensuring the animals were always secured, using appropriate and dextrous handling and restraint techniques and equipment. For example, ensuring the carry containers were prepared using suitable substrate appropriate to the animal and securely closed. The candidate consistently observed and monitored the animals during handling, restraint and movement and after returning them to their respective enclosures to ensure there were no injuries or concerns following the health assessment. Additionally, the candidate moved their positioning/handling to enable a more thorough observation of the animal's body.

The candidate demonstrated excellent understanding of the Bearded Dragon and the ferret's health and welfare to undertake a detailed health assessment using effective technical skill. The health assessment included both visual and physical checks to thoroughly assess the health status of both animals. For example, the candidate closely checked the ferrets' eyes for any discharge assessed correctly that the eyes were healthy.

Task 1c) Health check form - animal (ferret)

Candidate evidence - Health Check Form Figure 2

Candidate's name	**Sample candidate**	**Candidate number**	**CG12345**
Task/Activity	Health Assessment: ferret	Location	Small mammal Practical room
Assessor's name	Sample assessor	Date	28/05/2024

Linnaean Classification of animal: *Mustela putorius furo*

Mammal/Animal ID: ferret		
Health Check:	**Checks Completed (Tick):**	**Comment:**
Nose and nostrils	✓	No discharge from the nostril. No swelling around the nasal area. The nose is not wet. This is normal. Discharge from the nostril could suggest that the ferret may have a respiratory tract infection. A disease that ferrets can get is distemper and one of the symptoms is discharge from the nose.
Whiskers	✓	Ferrets' whiskers are all intact - No frayed or damaged edges. The whiskers move while being examined which is a normal natural behaviour and shows there to be no problems in this area. Whiskers are important as a sensory organ for ferrets.
Eyes	✓	The eyes are clear with no discharge on examination. The ferret's eyes are red/pink in colour which is normal as she is an albino. The eyes are open, not closed. All these are signs that the eyes are healthy/ normal. Closed eyes can mean an infection or a painful eye. Cloudiness in the eye can be a sign of cataracts.
Ears	✓	Checking for any discharge from the ear canal or any brown wax. Excessive brown ear wax can mean the ferret has ear mites. Ear mites are ectoparasites and can spread quickly amongst all the ferrets that are in close contact. The ferret has no discharge or wax from the ears and so her ears are healthy.
Coat	✓	Looking for any ectoparasites like ticks and fleas. The coat condition was normal with no signs of hair loss or areas where the ferret may have been scratching excessively. There was no evidence of flea dirt on the coat. No ticks to see. Coat nice and shiny, no bald patches which is normal. All good.

Skin	✓	No scratches, wounds or lumps to find on examination. Skin colour is normal, not red or inflamed. If there were scratches, it could mean there had been some fighting with one of the other ferrets in the enclosure. Lumps could mean the ferret has an abscess if the lump was painful and this could be from fighting or could be a growth/ tumour. If I'd noticed a lump then I would tell the assessor, who would need to organise a vet examination.
Gait / mobility	✓	Looking at how the ferret moves around to see if there is any limping or stiffness. All good the ferret is moving around normally using all four limbs and putting weight on all. No lameness noticed. This is normal.
Legs	✓	No swelling, wounds or scratches on the limbs. No sign of pain.
Toes / Feet	✓	Check the claws - are they too long? If they are long, they can easily be cut. Long claws can mean a ferret can get injured by getting them caught in the enrichment. Long claws also can cause problems with the ferrets' mobility. Checking the foot pads are pink and no scratches or wounds. Wounds or scratches on the foot pads may mean a problem with the substrate used in the enclosure.
Tail	✓	The ferret's tail is nice and straight, which is normal. No signs of swelling or injury. If the ferret had a tail injury she would show signs of pain during the examination - she may try to bite or wriggle away while being handled.
Reproductive area	✓	Nice and clear, no swelling or discharge from the vulva. No wounds or scratches which could have been done through interaction with the other ferrets in the enclosure.
Anus	✓	No signs of swelling, redness around the anus, no faecal matter stuck around this area. Nice and clean - normal. If ferrets have faeces stuck around their anus it can cause them to be distressed and uncomfortable. If there were any signs of abnormal faeces e.g. diarrhoea on her anus/tail area, she would need to see a vet. Ferrets can become dehydrated really quickly.
Body weight		Not checked.
Body condition	✓	Can feel the ferret's spine and it has a good cover of fat. The pelvis is not sticking out and also has some fat covering it. This means the ferret has a good body condition.
Behaviour	✓	Ferrets are active at dusk and dawn and have a very inquisitive nature. The behaviour should be checked while the ferret is in the enclosure to check they are moving around and interacting with the enrichment, eating and drinking normally and interacting with the other ferrets. This would be normal behaviour.

Task 1c) Health check form – mammal (Bearded Dragon)

Candidate evidence - Health Check Form Figure 2

Candidate's name	Sample candidate	**Enrolment number**	CG12345
Task/Activity	Health assessment: Bearded Dragon	Location	Exotic animal practical room
Assessor's name	Sample assessor	Date	28/05/2024

Linnaean Classification of animal: *Pogona vitticeps*

Mammal/animal ID: Bearded Dragon		
Health Check:	**Checks Completed (Tick):**	**Comment:**
Nasal/rostrum area	✓	Rostrum area is clear, no scratches or marks present. Wounds here could suggest rostrum damage which the Beardie may get from banging into the transparent/clear barrier of the vivarium.
Eyes	✓	Both eyes are clear, bright and alert in this Beardie. There is no discharge or cloudiness suggesting an infection or irritation from the environment. If the eyes were sunken, this could mean the Beardie is dehydrated and may need to be taken to the vet.
General body profile and body condition	✓	Body shape is well formed, spine structure is normal to see and feel. The jaw is normal. There are no dips or abnormalities to see in the length of its spine. The legs are not deformed or in abnormal positions, there is no swelling visible on the legs. The tail is in a normal position. Bones do not feel soft. Soft bones, abnormal spine and deformed and swollen limbs can be signs of a nutritional deficiency called Metabolic Bone Disease (MBD). MBD is a vitamin D deficiency and can be prevented with the right husbandry, UVB light and appropriate diet.
Limbs and toes	✓	When the Beardie is put on the table, he is able to hold his body weight which is normal and suggests there is no bone or muscle weakness. Toes are not discoloured or blackened, and all are present. Beardies have discoloured toes or can lose their toes if skin restricts around them during shedding. A Beardie can shed parts of their skin at any time, making sure their environment is the right humidity is really important. The wrong humidity or a dehydrated Beardie can affect shedding and skin can become stuck around the toes, cutting off circulation and the toes eventually die and fall off.
Body condition score BCS	✓	Feeling around the tail head and pelvis of the Beardie will determine how good its body condition score is. The pelvis bones are not prominent or sticking out with a good layer of fat covering them. The tail-head also has a nice soft layer of fat.

Vent	✓	The vent is clear of any discharge. There is no swelling or redness. No build-up of defecation, which could mean the animal is constipated or dehydrated. If there was any discharge of loose defecation around the vent this can also mean internal parasites or an intestine infection.
Tail	✓	Clear, no swelling or scratches or marking along the tail. The tail has a couple of indentations which may be from old injuries that have healed. There was no infection or discolouration.
Body weight	✓	The Beardie weighed 382g. Adult Beardies weigh between 280 - 500g, so this is a good healthy weight for a young Beardie.
Behaviour	✓	The Beardie was basking when I observed it at the beginning of the task. As it is a diurnal animal, this is normal behaviour. The Beardie uses the environment to control its body temperature and to absorb vitamin D. It gets the vitamin D from the UVB light in the enclosure. Vitamin D is really important for calcium absorption and to prevent MBD.

Commentary

The candidate completed the health check form with detailed and relevant information relating to the signs of health and ill health for both the ferret and the Bearded Dragon showing excellent understanding of the animals' health and welfare factors. For example, the candidate listed all the physical checks completed and provided a high level of detail within their comments. For example, the candidate identified that they had completed a check on the Bearded Dragon's behaviour and commented on this display of a normal behaviour and how the Bearded Dragon uses the environment to control its body temperature and to absorb vitamin D.

The candidate applied an excellent level of knowledge and understanding to complete both health check forms with relevant and accurate information from the health assessment undertaken. For example, the candidate accurately recorded the weight of the Bearded Dragon and commented on it being a healthy weight. For some parameters the candidate expands their commentary with conclusions of the signs of health and ill-health in the animal's assessed, for example they have concluded the ferret has a good body condition because the spine and pelvis are covered with a good layer of fat.

Technical terminology was used accurately and consistently throughout the health check form. For example, the candidate used the term rostrum rather than nose and Metabolic Bone Disease rather than soft bones showing deeper understanding.

Task 1d) Written report

Candidate evidence – Written Report

Introduction

Self-evaluation reports are carried out by a person to evaluate their own work. These self-evaluation reports allow a person to identify areas where they are strongest, areas of weakness and areas for improvement.

In this report I will be evaluating my work from both task 1b (practical handling and physical health check skills) and task 1c (findings from the health check forms).

Evaluation of practical skills

Overall, I feel that I approached both practical tasks confidently, wearing the correct PPE, adhering to security measures, health and safety measures and biosecurity (clean PPE, hand washing) measures. On entering the practical rooms, I checked to ensure there were no hazards. It is important to make sure there are no hazards, such as cleaning equipment left around as this can be a hazard and should be cleared away before starting the practical.

I considered both animals health and welfare by collecting all the equipment required for the task, specifically a container (ventilated plastic box with secure lid for the Bearded Dragon and a plastic cat carry basket with door for the ferret) to safely move the animal from their enclosure to the examination table.

Ferret handling, restraining and health check practical

In our facility the ferrets are allowed to exit their enclosure, for additional enrichment and to explore the small mammal room. Therefore, I ensured the room was totally secure by closing all interior doors. Next time, to improve security, I could add an additional measure such as putting a sign on the outside of the doors to inform anyone entering the room that the ferrets are ‘out’ to prevent the ferrets escaping.

I approached the ferret enclosure and identified my allocated ferret from looking at the information on the outside of the enclosure. My ferret was an albino, which was easy to identify because the other ferrets in the group had various markings and colour patterns. The information stated the albino ferret was female and young, this is important to know as an older ferret may have gait problems due to arthritis and therefore, I may need to be more careful with my handling method to cause her no pain.

I spotted the ferret in her enclosure, she was showing normal behaviours such as having positive interactions with another ferret and she seemed alert.

Prior to carrying out the handling and restraint, I should have explained why a visual check of the enclosure and ferret was important before entering the enclosure. A visual observation is important to check on the ferret’s behaviour - is it normal? Is she moving ok? Is she showing abnormal behaviour or fighting? Are there any signs of blood, diarrhoea in the enclosure? Does the ferret have any signs of eye/nose discharge, how is she breathing - is it fast? Are there lots of enrichment available? These are important questions to answer before entering as it will tell us a little about how the animal is feeling (in pain, stressed) and how she may respond to a person going into the enclosure. If there were any signs of

abnormalities, I would have adapted my approach and handling of the ferret by using additional PPE such as gloves and reported any concerns to my manager.

I feel I handled and moved the ferret safely from the enclosure to the examination table. I encouraged her to enter the cat carry basket rather than handle and put her in as I wanted her to have a positive experience as we will probably want her to go into the basket again in the future especially if she needs to go to the vet.

I feel my handling and restraint method was good and effective. The ferret was comfortable and not stressed during the health check even though she was wriggling, she did not attempt to bite or try to get away. I adapted my restraint method using the 'v' grip to ensure she was secure while health assessing her reproductive area.

I started the health check at the head as this is more hygienic and there is no risk of introducing infection. This would not be the case if I started at her anus. Ferrets can carry zoonotic diseases, for example ringworm, so for biosecurity reasons I should have worn gloves during the health check. I did not weigh the ferret, and this should have been done as it is important to monitor their weight regularly. I did say a few things about her body condition but could have stated her body condition score and if it was normal.

I think overall my practical skills were good as I was able to examine all aspects of the ferret and give an opinion.

Bearded Dragon handling, restraining and health check practical

On approaching the Bearded Dragon's enclosure, I did a quick visual examination to see where the Beardie was (basking on one of the rocks) and what the enclosure looked like (e.g. Was it clean? Any signs of damage? Was the UV light working? What was the temperature of the enclosure? Humidity level? Any signs of diarrhoea?). Basking is a normal behaviour for Beardies, and they spend a lot of time doing this. The enclosure was clean and I checked for any slip or trip hazards.

In my health check, I feel my handling and restraining skills were good as I managed to handle the Beardie without injuring him or myself. If I had caused any pain to the Beardie, he would have tried to get away. Next time, I would consider putting either a towel or rock on the examination table for the Beardie to be positioned on as this will prevent the Beardie from slipping.

I was careful to make sure the Beardie was secure when moving from the enclosure to the examination table and back again at the end of the practical task. When I did a weight measurement, I could have been a little more careful as I did have the Beardie to the right of me on the table. He could have walked off or tried to escape and this could have caused him injury especially if he fell from the table. In reflection, either I could have asked my assessor to restrain the Beardie or I could have put him back into the carry container briefly while setting up the weighing scale or I could have set up the weighing scale at the same time as collecting all the equipment so it was ready on the table when needed.

Expansion of Task 1c Health check form

I feel I included a good amount of detail in my health check forms, but there are parts that I missed. For example, I remembered to weigh the Bearded Dragon, but forgot to do the same with the ferret. It is important to regularly check the body weight of our animals and record this detail so that we can see if there are any patterns or sudden changes. This means we

can adapt the husbandry plan/diet sheet if the animal is losing weight (e.g. are they being bullied or unwell) or putting on weight (e.g. fed too much or not exercising).

In examining the Bearded Dragon's eyes, I decided they were normal and not sunken but could have given examples of what can cause dehydration such as a foreign body impaction of the intestines. This could happen in young Beardies fed in their enclosure especially if they ingest the substrate along with the food.

I could have expanded on the nasal/rostrum area for both animals. Nasal discharge can occur if the animal has an irritation to the substrate, especially if the substrate is dusty or if it has respiratory disease. Bearded Dragons are more prone to respiratory disease if the humidity or temperature of the enclosure is incorrect.

For Beardies it is important that they have the right environment as the incorrect temperature, humidity and light (UVB) can affect their health and welfare, being the most common reason for them to be unhealthy or ill. Basking is a normal behaviour for the Bearded Dragon and is important as they rely on the environment to control their body temperature as well as obtaining vitamin D which is important for calcium absorption and preventing Metabolic Bone Disease.

Conclusion

Overall, I feel that my preparation and practical demonstration was good for both the ferret and Beardie, although there are areas which I could have improved.

My health check forms contain a good amount of information overall but there are some health parameters that I could have written more information in.

Commentary

The candidate has demonstrated excellent understanding of the animals' health and welfare to produce a detailed report showing a thorough evaluation of the health assessment and associated documents.

The candidate provided a detailed evaluation of their practical skills and the findings of their health check form, demonstrating excellent and developed links between the techniques they used during the health assessment and health and welfare of the animals. For example, the candidate provided a thorough reflection of their handling and restraint method which ensured the animals welfare needs were met. The candidate also discussed how the handling and restraint could be adapted when health assessing different body parts to ensure the animal stays secure and that the welfare of the animal is maintained.

The candidate provided an excellent evaluation of their handling, restraint, and movement of both animals. For example, the candidate identified additional control measures that could be put in place during the health assessment of the ferrets, such as, putting a sign on the outside of the doors to inform anyone entering the room that the ferrets are 'out', therefore preventing escape. Additionally, the candidate showed excellent consideration of the equipment to move the Bearded Dragon, ensuring that a ventilated plastic box with secure lid was used to optimise the welfare of the animal.

As part of the evaluation the candidate expanded on how they managed security during the task, suggesting areas for improvement of their practical skills and the findings of their health check form to optimise the animals' health and welfare needs. For example, when evaluating their handling and restraining skills, the candidate suggested preparing the work area using

a towel or rock to position the Bearded Dragon to prevent it slipping. Additionally, the candidate recognised the impact the age and health issues may have on handling the animal, for example, checking the age of the ferret and how handling may need to be considered and adapted to maintain health and welfare.

Task 2 Husbandry Plan

Evidence contributes to the following:

Performance outcome
PO1: Optimise health and welfare of animals

Task	Evidence	Candidate producing	Assessor producing	Included in this GSEM
b) Husbandry plan	Husbandry plan	√		√

Task 2a Research notes

The research notes provided are one side of A4 exemplar notes of the expected standard to be produced by the candidate but are not marked so no commentary has been provided.

Husbandry - health and preventative care, accommodation, nutrition, breeding, behaviour (social animals), human interaction, enrichment

Plan:

- Daily: enclosure check & cleaning; visual health check; feed & water;
- Weekly: deep cleaning everything in enclosure; full HC, inc BCS and BW;
- Annually: vet visit, vaccination (distemper).
- Female ferret - Breeding. Seasonally polyoestrous - In season from March-August. Produce litter up to 5 offspring. Not mated - continues in season oestrogen suppressed bone marrow production red blood cells - pancytopenia life threatening. Prevention- surgery ovariohysterectomy/neutered (VSA1966); medical treatment delvosteron injections -POM-V (Suppress oestrus) (VSA 1966). Signs of season: enlarged vulva behaviour decreases appetite sleep more.
-

Welfare Needs:

Enrichment: Social and cognitive / nutritional / sensory / physical habitat. Important ferret active, social, inquisitive animals. Encourages natural behaviour. Foraging, climbing, exploring, digging. Communication through smell. Sleep together huddled.

Behaviour: social, inquisitive, climbers, diggers. very clean animals - toilets in the same area - can train to use litter trays. Atypical and stereotypical behaviour. Enrichment in enclosure - tunnels, climbing area, hammocks, toys (ferret chew rubber- cause blockage), ladders, hiding area. Stress - hissing, biting, screaming. Visual observation - record finding. Concerns - notify supervisor. Enrichment - shallow bath - like water play.

Accommodation: size RSPCA- 10m square floor area/ few levels; Toilet area away from play, food areas. Solid floor - prevent digging =escape/ wire mesh = pododermatitis / Substrates - dusty straw - cause respiratory disease (ferret prone). Shredded paper not enough insulation. Washable fleece blankets, carpet on floor - wash 2x weekly Ventilation / temperature 15-24C ferret can't sweat prone to heat stroke/ Position out of direct sunlight off ground (draught). Safe 4 disinfectant - COSHH HASAWA data sheet. Toilet area: Ammonia from urine - irritates nasal mucosa - causes respiratory damage and inc respiratory disease. Need to clean daily. Faeces- bacteria build up. Stagnant water - algae - toxic

Health: Pain - anorexia, hiding, teeth grinding = poor welfare Prone to ferret influenza (catch human flu- anthropomorphic), distemper (catch from dogs) PPE biosecurity to prevent. Ectoparasites - fleas ear mites (prevent - POM-V medication form vet - spot on treatment or wormers if internal parasites). Monthly task - nail trim, Monitor interaction, Weekly/Daily: HC BCS if female signs of season. Record. Daily HC- visual / Weekly full head to tail HC/BCS/Weight.

Signs of illness - zoonotic e.g. ringworm - isolation. PPE / infectious disease - isolation PPE prevent spread to other ferrets/ Veterinary attention for treatment
Legislation _ AWA 2006; Vet Surgeons Act 1966 (Schedule 3- expand VN responsibilities); COSHH (chemicals, data sheet); HASAWA (injuries RIDDOR); PPE
Handling and restraint - method - ferret welfare; prevent injury to ferret or self. PPE (gauntlets)

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Chicken

Task 2b Husbandry plan

Candidate evidence – Husbandry Plan

Husbandry plan for an adult female ferret for 1 month

Monthly Husbandry plan for the jill

Daily (spot clean/ light clean environment and daily health checks):

- visual observation of general demeanour, appetite, thirst, interaction with rest of social group, any discharge, hair loss, gait abnormalities. Record findings
- take out any uneaten fresh food. Ferrets often hide food away in corners or inside tunnels so check everywhere for stashes of food
- wash water and food bowls, refill and replace them
- water changed once a day. Food provided three times a day (8am, 12noon, 5pm)
- clean and wash and change any enrichment materials and toys
- clean out any soiled urine area and faeces from the toilet area in the enclosure
- update animals records in line with centres procedure.

Weekly (deep clean environment and health checks):

- health check - visual and head to tail check
- body weight check
- remove the ferrets from their enclosure and place in a temporary enclosure while cleaning
- strip out everything in the enclosure and check for any damage (if damage is found inform your boss so it can be repaired)
- clean enclosure and enrichments with a pet-safe cleaner (correct dilution and contact time), rinse and dry
- wash all bedding and hammocks
- return clean enrichments and hammocks back into the enclosure together with clean bedding. Health check, body weight and body condition score, check nails and ears. If nails are long you will need to clip the nails. If the jill's ears are dirty you will need to clean
- return the ferrets back into their enclosure once everything is completely dry
- update records in line with centres procedure.

Monthly (monthly preventative care):

- apply any parasite prevention spot on treatment as prescribed by the vet
- monitor the ferrets after you return them to make sure there are no problems following treatment such as irritation, scratching or abnormal behaviours
- update records in line with centres procedure.

Routine variations on the monthly plan:

- veterinary visit for vaccination boosters if due
- action to take if there is any illness or an emergency situation
- additional bedding may be required in winter months
- as the ferret gets older less food may be required to prevent weight gain
- hormonal medication to prevent the jill coming into season (if she isn't neutered).

Animal husbandry involves the day to day and on-going care for the animals at Guilds Animal Rescue and ensures their welfare provisions are met. The Animal Welfare Act (AWA)

2006 identifies the five welfare needs namely, providing a suitable environment, a suitable diet, enabling the animal to exhibit natural behaviour, housing the animal in social groups or solitary (depending on the specific animal species) and protecting the animal from pain, injury, suffering and disease which need to be provided for each and every animal. If the welfare needs are not met then Guilds Animal rescue could be faced with prosecution, fines, closure under this legislation and the need for the animal to be rehomed.

Accommodation:
The enclosure needs to be of a good size so there is enough room for the ferrets to be able to get away from each other, eat or store food, play, interact with each other and the enrichments provided, toilet and sleep. The enclosure needs to have a vertical height (on each level) so the ferret can stand fully upright on their back legs without touching the top.

The area of the ferrets housing should be at least 3m long x 2m wide x 2m high for a pair of ferrets. As we have a group of ferrets the area should be 3x this size.
The enclosure needs to be secure to prevent any escape, as ferrets can fit through the smallest holes.

Daily maintenance checks on the security of the enclosure need to be done on the enclosure to make sure there are no escape areas which could cause injuries, like wounds, to the jill or the staff when cleaning out.

To encourage natural behaviour, a range of enrichment should be provided daily for the animal's physical and mental stimulation and prevent atypical behaviours and stereotypical behaviours from developing. Atypical and stereotypical behaviours are linked to poor welfare provision. Enrichments include tunnels, hammocks (of different sizes so they can rest on their own or in company), toys (but need to avoid dog toys as ferrets will eat/chew rubber which can cause blockages), ladders, platforms of different heights, tubes and drainpipes so trying to encourage the ferrets need to burrow or hunt.

Ferrets in social groups develop a hierarchy and so it is important to have enough space, enrichment and resources to avoid any negative interactions, such as fighting.
The floor of the enclosure needs to be solid, non-slip and covered with substrate. Wire mesh floors should not be used as this can result in ferrets getting swollen feet and sores, a condition called pododermatitis which is painful and causes unnecessary suffering and therefore not providing good welfare. Substrates such as dusty straw and hay should be avoided as this can cause respiratory problems in ferrets. Straw and shredded paper should not be used for bedding material as it does not provide enough insulation, but fleece type blankets can be used. Washable carpets can be used for flooring and fleece blankets for bedding which will need to be washed twice weekly.

The enclosure needs to be well ventilated, of low humidity with an environmental temperature between 15-24 degrees Celsius as ferrets are unable to sweat and are prone to heat stroke. It is important not to put the enclosure in direct sunlight so as to avoid extreme temperatures. Keeping the enclosure clean with good hygiene is important to prevent bacterial build up as this can lead to illness and indicates poor welfare so spot cleans are carried out daily and deep cleans once a week. When cleaning the enclosure, we need to make sure the correct disinfectant is used at the correct dilution to adhere to COSHH data sheets and prevent any adverse reaction in us and the ferret.

Feeding:
Ferrets are obligate carnivores and need to be fed a meat-based diet to avoid nutritional disorders or ill health. A ferret's diets should contain a high amount of protein and low

carbohydrate and fibre. If they have an unbalanced or poor diet, it could result in health issues such as urolithiasis or obesity.
They tend to stash and hide food which is an important aspect of their behaviour. Food hidden can become spoiled or mouldy, which could lead to illness like salmonella, poisoning and death.

Wild ferrets and Polecats would eat rabbits or other small mammals, so in captivity can be fed raw or cooked chicken or rabbit meat, which is high in protein, but this may not be suitable in the warmer months as raw meat can spoil quickly. Commercially fed ferret pellets can be fed, this needs to be weighed out accurately as per manufacturer's instructions, which would be written on the pet food label. Ferrets should be offered food several times a day as they have a quick transit time through the intestinal tract. Feeding three times daily is also important for the animal's mental stimulation and to prevent atypical behaviours.

For mental stimulation and enrichment, food can be placed within the tunnels to encourage their hunting behaviours. Clean fresh water should be provided continuously for hydration, especially when the ferrets are active and can be presented in ceramic bowls (as these are heavy and less likely to tip) or in water bottles. Water should be provided fresh daily. Ferrets can be a little messy around the food and water provision areas, so this section of the enclosure would need to be cleaned daily to prevent spoiling of food or the jill eating contaminated food which will result in illness.

Medical/health/preventative care:
Ferrets are also prone to a number of diseases caused by viruses such as, human flu, canine distemper and parasites such as fleas, mange and ear mites. Ferrets can catch distemper from Dogs and human flu from humans, so hygiene, PPE and biosecurity are important. To prevent canine distemper the ferret will need to have an annual vaccination. The vaccination needs to be administered by a veterinary surgeon in line with the Veterinary Surgeons Act (VSA) 1966. Distemper is a fatal disease and signs include eye discharge, nasal discharge, lethargy and coughing.

Ferrets are prone to fleas and ear mite infestations, which can be irritating causing pruritus and may affect her general demeanour. The ferrets have a visual health check each day, and then a physical check each week with findings recorded on the record card. It is important during the weekly physical health check to examine her coat and ears for evidence of these ectoparasites especially as fleas are vectors of some diseases and parasites. Adult fleas and flea dirt can be seen on the coat, while ear mites result in the production of an odorous brown wax/discharge from the ears. To prevent the jill from parasites infestations, she will need to be wormed and given a monthly spot-on topical treatment prescribed by the veterinary surgeon, to do this we need to check the record cards to identify the correct ferret and make sure the dates of the treatments are recorded. The jill, will need to have her nails trimmed regularly, possibly monthly, depending on how quickly they grow so this will need to be observed and monitored during the routine weekly health checks. If the nails are not trimmed, they could get caught or grow into her foot causing pain and discomfort.

Behaviour:
A female ferret, also called a jill, is thought to have descended from European polecats of the family *Mustelidae*. The majority of ferrets in the UK are kept in a domesticated setting. They are extremely playful and inquisitive animals with a distinctive musky smell (especially if they are entire and during the breeding season) and although crepuscular, they can sleep for between 17 and 20 hours a day. These behavioural characteristics mean the ferret is suitable for a solitary (providing they have interaction with humans) or a group housed environment (where they can interact and play with other members of the group). If housed in a group, we need to be careful if all the adults are entire and a mixed group of sexes. If

breeding, a female can produce litters of up to six offspring. The male ferret can become aggressive during the breeding season and this can result in health and safety concerns, such as handlers can be scratched or bitten when handling and interacting with the group. Our ferret is a jill and is a seasonally polyoestrous animal, meaning she will come into season from March to August. If jills are not mated, they continue being in season until the Autumn which can be a serious health worry. As we are a rescue centre and want to prevent breeding, the jill should be neutered at the veterinary practice (this procedure can only be undertaken by a veterinary surgeon as only a vet can perform this type of surgery under the Veterinary Surgeons act 1966). This will stop her coming into season, having litters and more animals to rehome, and prevent her from developing a life-threatening condition called pancytopenia (Keeble and Meredith, 2009). A jill in season will have a slight change in smell and her fur may become oily, she will have an enlarged vulva, change of behaviour (become more irritable, decreased appetite and sleep more - these are signs which we at the rescue centre would need to watch for and record if she was entire.

Ferrets are inquisitive animals, communicating with each other through smell. They use their sense of smell to hunt which is important when thinking about enrichment provision. They are social and play within their social group. When sleeping, they can sleep in small groups closely together. A portion of their awake hours will be spent cleaning themselves. Ferrets will toilet in the same area of the enclosure as they are clean animals (and can be trained to use litter trays) - so this area of the enclosure will need to be spot cleaned daily to prevent build-up of faeces and urine. If not cleaned daily ammonia from the urea can cause respiratory issues and a build-up of faeces will encourage bacteria and can result in illness.

Ferrets enjoy playing in water, so a shallow bath would be a positive enrichment, but it is important that we make sure it's not too deep and they can get out. The water will also need changing daily, so there is no stagnant water that could result in illness in our ferret. Ferrets particularly like the water in the warmer weather where they can use it to cool down. Observing the ferrets' behaviour and interaction within the group from a distance is important to identify if they are stressed or in pain as this may mean the environment is not suitable with not enough enrichment or they are unwell. Signs of stress include hissing, biting, screaming and hiding, whilst signs of pain include not wanting to move, weight loss, anorexia (not eating), teeth grinding and trembling, and these would suggest poor welfare.

The jill should have human interaction and be regularly handled to prevent her becoming stressed when she needs to be taken to the vets for vaccination, have her nails trimmed, weighed or health checked. As some diseases are zoonotic (spread between the ferret and humans), Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) needs to be worn in line with health and safety at work legislation. It is important that she is observed after handling and when returned to her enclosure in case of any injuries from the handling method.

The jill should be observed and monitored daily for any behavioural or health changes. She would be observed for her behaviour or interaction with the others in the enclosure, her appetite, thirst (but this may be difficult in a social group), urine output and faecal output, general demeanour, any signs of eye, nose discharge, abnormalities in gait and movement and signs of coming into season. All this detail would be recorded on their information chart so everyone at the rescue centre would know all the information.

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https://www.pdsa.org.uk/pet-help-and-advice/looking-after-your-pet/small-pets/your-ferret-s-diet

Commentary

The candidate has produced a comprehensive one-month husbandry plan for a female ferret, demonstrating excellent knowledge and understanding of the care and monitoring of animals.

The husbandry plan is highly functional with excellent structure, detailing responsibilities or aspects of the husbandry requirements to split into daily, weekly and monthly undertaking, having previously justified each aspect in detail, to optimise the animal's health and welfare. For example, the candidate accurately discussed the importance of weekly visual and physical health checks and checking the recording card to prevent the animals' catching fleas and parasites.

The candidate demonstrated excellent understanding of the different components of a husbandry plan, accurately linking to the animals' welfare needs. For example, when considering the ferret's behaviour, the candidate identified their natural behaviour as inquisitive, linking this natural behaviour to the type of enrichment suitable for the ferret.

The candidate makes excellent justifications of the consequences to the ferrets' health and welfare if the husbandry plan was not followed accurately or is unsuitable. For example, if unsuitable substrate such as straw or hay was used within the enclosure the candidate has described the impact of dust on the ferret's respiratory tract and health.

Task 3 Husbandry Activities

Evidence contributes to the following:

Performance outcome
PO1: Optimise health and welfare of animals

Task	Evidence	Candidate producing	Assessor producing	Included in this GSEM
Husbandry activities (mammal and animal)	2x Assessor observation form 2x Photographic evidence of the routine husbandry tasks 2x Video evidence of completion of routine husbandry tasks.		√	√

Candidate evidence – Assessor Observation Form - animal

Task	Qualification number
Task 3) Routine husbandry tasks for allocated animal (Bearded Dragon)	8717-407
Candidate name	**Candidate number**
Sample candidate	CG12345
Centre name	
Sample centre	

Complete the table below referring to the relevant marking grid, found in the assessment pack.
Do not allocate marks at this stage.

Assessor observation	**Notes –** *detailed, accurate and differentiating notes which identify areas of strength and weakness are necessary to distinguish between different qualities of performance and to facilitate accurate allocation of marks once all evidence has been submitted.*
Carry out routine husbandry tasks for allocated animal to include: • prepare feed and present the food and/or water • clean enclosure appropriately • provide suitable preventative care.	The candidate: • secured the room and closed all internal doors giving the Bearded Dragon free access to a safe environment for routine cleaning and feeding to take place • wore PPE (uniform, boots) for the task • washed hands before the task • visually checked the enclosure to ascertain what kind of clean was required • gathered all equipment (including disinfectant) required for carrying out a general spot clean • safely entered the Bearded Dragon enclosure and identified where the Bearded Dragon was located • securely closed and locked the enclosure door • removed all old food from the enclosure • used a scrubbing brush and disinfectant, with the correct dilution and safely and thoroughly cleaned any soiled areas • used a sieve on the substrate to remove any vegetation and faeces • removed the food and water bowls • removed any debris from underneath bowls and thoroughly cleaned them with a scrubbing brush • placed the bowls on to the preparation table • dried the bowls before reviewing the diet sheet for their allocated animal • used the equipment to weigh the specified amounts of food items required for their allocated animal, frequently checking the records to ensure accuracy

Assessor observation	**Notes –** *detailed, accurate and differentiating notes which identify areas of strength and weakness are necessary to distinguish between different qualities of performance and to facilitate accurate allocation of marks once all evidence has been submitted.*
	• filled the water bowl with fresh water and carefully placed both bowls back into the enclosure • identified the location for the food and water bowl away from heat lamps and ensured they were accessible • checked all locks were secure and monitored the animals for 30 seconds • disinfected and put away all equipment, disinfecting work surfaces and disposing of the waste in the waste container. The candidate selected preventative care equipment to measure the UV and temperature of the accommodation and carried out the activity. The candidate took the readings in multiple locations and recorded the measurements of UV and temperature. The candidate took accurate measurements and logged them in the Bearded Dragon's record book.

Assessor signature	Date
Sample assessor	28/05/2024

Candidate evidence – Photographic/video evidence

Photo evidence: completion of routine husbandry tasks

Photo 1 – cleaning enclosure

Photo 2 - removing waste

Photo 3 – preparing feed

Photo 4 – cleaning equipment

Candidate evidence – Photographic/video evidence

Photo evidence: completion of routine husbandry tasks

Photo 5 – cleaning surfaces

Photo 6 - preventative care using a Measure

Photo 7 - preventative care using an infrared thermometer

Video evidence: completion of routine husbandry tasks

Task 3 Completed husbandry Bearded Dragon Distinction.mp4

Candidate evidence – Assessor Observation Form - mammal

Task	Qualification number
Task 3) Routine husbandry tasks for allocated mammal - ferret	8717-407
Candidate name	**Candidate number**
Sample candidate	CG12345
Centre name	
Sample centre	

Complete the table below referring to the relevant marking grid, found in the assessment pack.
Do not allocate marks at this stage.

Assessor observation	**Notes –** *detailed, accurate and differentiating notes which identify areas of strength and weakness are necessary to distinguish between different qualities of performance and to facilitate accurate allocation of marks once all evidence has been submitted.*
Carry out routine husbandry tasks for allocated mammal to include: • prepare feed and present the food and/or water • clean enclosure appropriately • provide suitable preventative care.	The candidate: • secured the room and closed all internal doors giving the ferrets free access to a safe environment for routine cleaning and feeding to take place • visually checked the enclosure to ascertain what kind of clean was required • gathered all equipment (including disinfectant) required for carrying out a general spot clean • wore PPE (uniform, boots) • washed their hands before completing the husbandry activities • carried out a visual check which identified where the ferrets were located before entering the accommodation • removed all soiled areas of faeces and urine as well as old food from the enclosure • used a litter scoop and suitably sized waste container • replaced areas which had been cleaned with fresh shavings, whilst also carrying out monitoring of the mammals. • removed the food and water bowls • scrubbed the food and water bowls clean with a scrubbing brush and disinfectant spray • brought the food and water bowls to the preparation table. • filled one bowl with fresh water and used the equipment to correctly scoop out the required amounts of food for their allocated mammal • placed both bowls back into the enclosure

Assessor observation	**Notes –** *detailed, accurate and differentiating notes which identify areas of strength and weakness are necessary to distinguish between different qualities of performance and to facilitate accurate allocation of marks once all evidence has been submitted.*
	• identified the location for the food and water bowl away from the toilet area and easily accessible. Once completed, the candidate returned the mammal back to their enclosure and safely secured it. They monitored the mammal for 1 minute to make sure there were no concerns. They then tidied their working area and disposed of all waste in the waste disposal container.

Assessor signature	**Date**
Sample assessor	28/05/2024

Candidate evidence – Photographic/video evidence

Photo evidence: completion of routine husbandry tasks

Photo 1 – removing waste

Photo 2 – removing waste

Photo 3 – preparing feed and water

Photo 4 – cleaning feed and water bowl

Video evidence: completion of routine husbandry tasks

Task 3 Completed husbandry ferret Distinction.mp4

Commentary- mammal and animal

The candidate demonstrated highly effective technical skills and techniques whilst carrying out the husbandry activities, with excellent consideration for the health and welfare needs of the Bearded Dragon and ferret.

The candidate prepared the equipment and work areas to an excellent standard before carrying out husbandry activities which included a visual check of the enclosure, and the relevant PPE and hygiene measures were applied. This preparation mitigated potential risks of escape and contamination to the Bearded Dragon and ferret. To improve the preparation further, the candidate could have worn nitrile gloves to carry out the clean to mitigate any potential risk of contamination to the mammal and animal.

The candidate demonstrated highly effective use of tools and equipment to carry out the husbandry activities with safe working methods. For example, using a litter scoop and suitable sized waste container when cleaning.

The candidate demonstrated excellent understanding of the health and welfare needs of both the Bearded Dragon and ferret during the thorough completion of husbandry tasks. For example, the candidate checked the positioning and location of the Bearded Dragon and ferret within their enclosure before entering, during cleaning and after the husbandry activities were completed. The candidate checked and followed the diet sheet, which demonstrated a comprehensive understanding of the importance of accuracy to meet the dietary needs of the species.

The candidate carried out effective preventative care for the Bearded Dragon which was highly appropriate to the species, demonstrating excellent understanding of additional husbandry activities to maximise the health and welfare of the animal. For example, the candidate safely used the UV and temperature measurement equipment to ensure the Bearded Dragon’s enclosure settings were accurate and meeting its health and welfare needs.

The candidate demonstrated an excellent understanding of animal health and welfare upon returning the animals to their enclosures. After completion of the husbandry activities, the candidate ensured all doors were securely closed and locked and monitored the enclosures of both the Bearded Dragon and ferret for one minute, showing excellent understanding of health, safety and security.

Task 4 Animal Environments

Evidence contributes to the following:

Performance outcome
PO2: Optimise animal environments to meet their needs**.**

Task	Evidence	Candidate producing	Assessor producing	Included in this GSEM
Environments	b) Schematic digital design with annotations	√		√
	c) Prepare a permanent enclosure		√	√

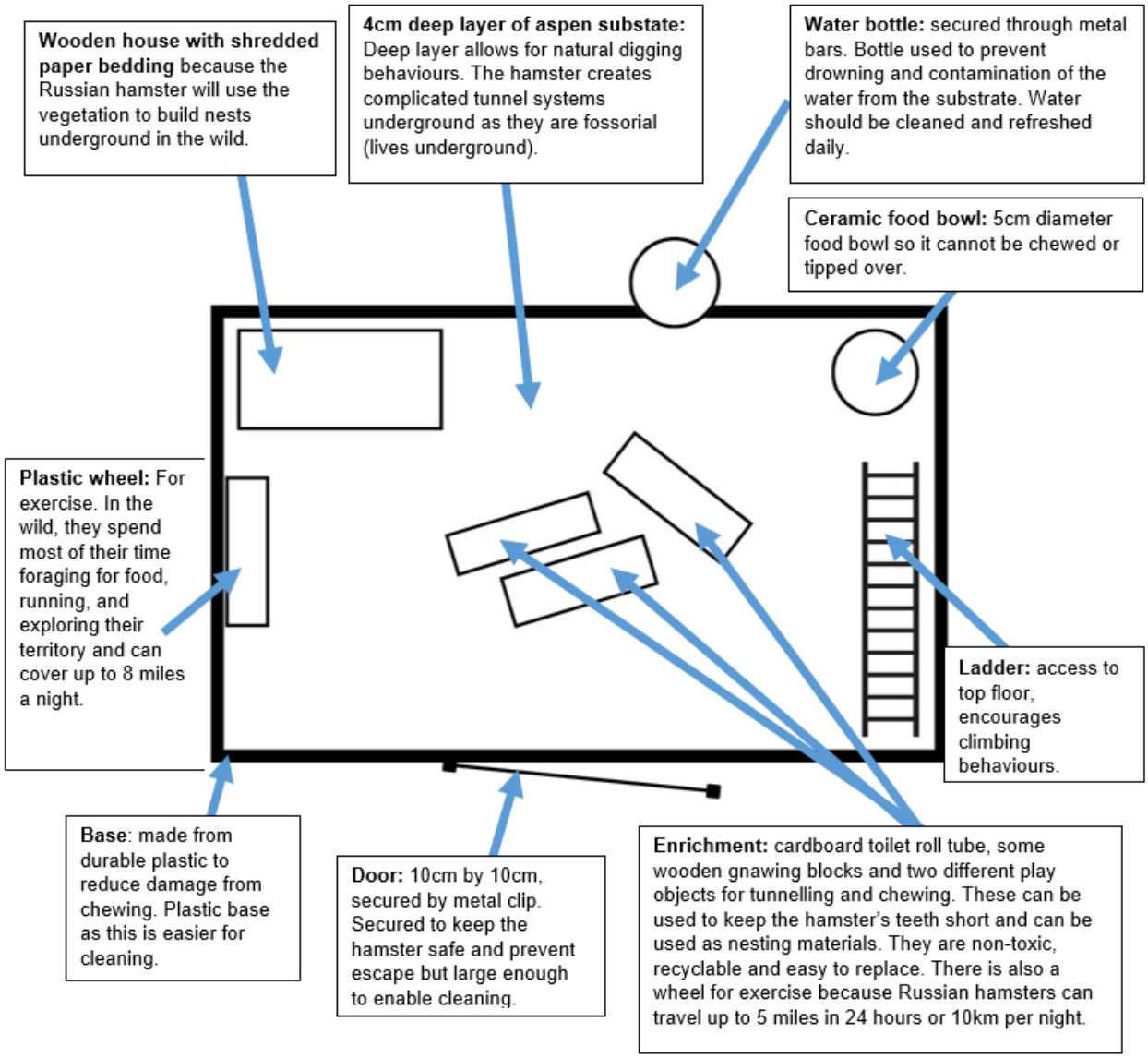
Task 4b) Digital Design

Candidate evidence – Digital Design

Russian Hamsters are active, nocturnal animals, in line with the Animal Welfare Needs, the enclosure will need to provide enough space and opportunity for exercise in their enclosure allowing them to engage in these natural behaviours.

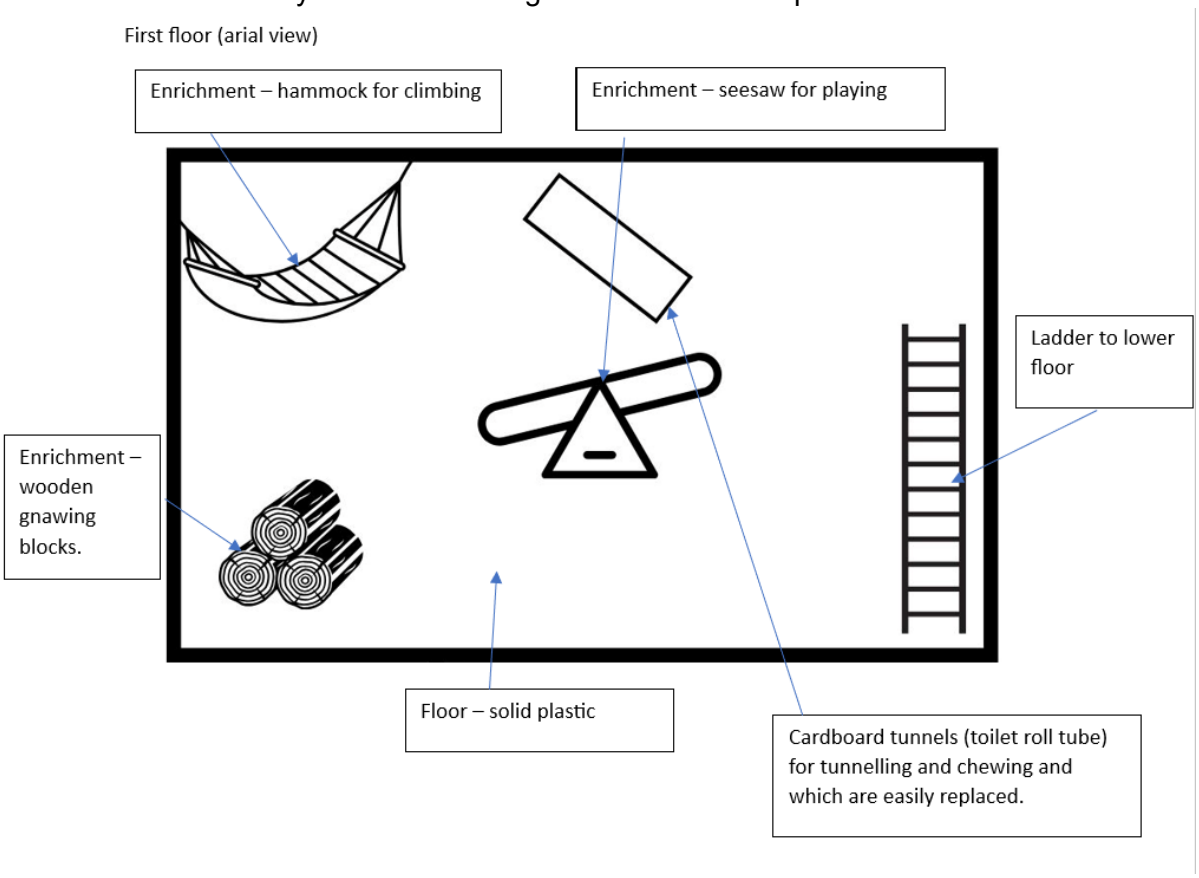
The natural environment consists of grass land, vegetation, varying temperatures and dry weather. The Russian Hamster will use the vegetation to build nests and complicated tunnel systems underground as they are fossorial (lives underground).

Ground floor (aerial view)

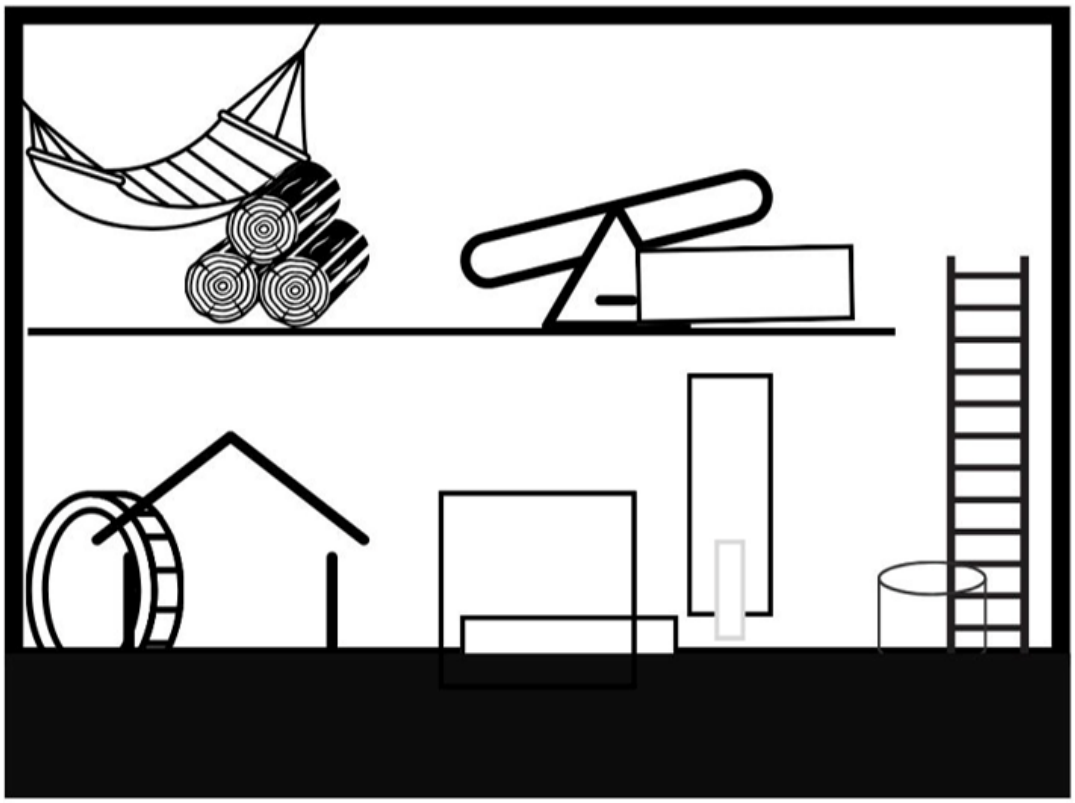


Metal cage: The minimum recommendations for the Russian Hamster's enclosure size, according to the Hamster Welfare website is 100cm x 50cm x 50cm (L x W x H). To ensure their welfare needs are fully met, the bigger the enclosure the better, so this accommodation is 100cm x 75cm x 50cm. The cage has bars 1cm apart to prevent escape and enable

ventilation. The ideal temperature range for Russian Hamsters is between 18°C to 24°C, however, hamsters can cope with room temperature very well. The enclosure should be kept in a draft-free area away from direct sunlight and extreme temperatures.



Side view.



Commentary

The candidate has demonstrated excellent understanding of the factors that contribute to animals' natural environment, producing excellent schematic digital designs for a Russian Hamsters permanent enclosure.

The candidate has included detailed key features relating to the Animal Welfare Needs within their design, which include food and water source, enrichment, substrate and housing, as well as considered the location of the enclosure and characteristics of a hamster's natural habitat demonstrating excellent understanding of the requirements when designing an enclosure to optimise the animals' environment. For example, the wooden house provides the hamster with a safe space and opportunity for the hamster to gnaw, linking back to the hamsters' environmental needs. The candidate has demonstrated excellent understanding of the hamster's natural behaviours and habitat by linking these to the design choices. For example, the candidate had included a running wheel and multiple levels within the enclosure to encourage natural behaviours of running and climbing.

The candidate has developed an excellent schematic design with detailed annotations and including aerial and side views of the enclosure. The design also includes accurate measurements for the overall size and dimensions, which ensures that the environment/enclosure meets the size/space requirements to optimise the health and welfare of the animal.

To improve the schematic design further, the candidate could have included the scale of the design and shown the metal bars of the cage within their design.

Task 4c) Preparation of enclosure

Candidate evidence – Assessor Observation Form

Task	**Qualification number**
Task 4c: Preparation of enclosure	8717-407
Candidate name	**Candidate number**
Sample candidate	CG12345
Centre name	
Sample centre	

Complete the table below referring to the relevant marking grid, found in the assessment pack. Do not allocate marks at this stage.

Assessor observation	**Notes** – *detailed, accurate and differentiating notes which identify areas of strength and weakness are necessary to distinguish between different qualities of performance and to facilitate accurate allocation of marks once all evidence has been submitted.*
Prepare a permanent enclosure to meet the needs of your allocated mammal.	The candidate: • wore appropriate PPE (uniform, footwear) • washed their hands prior to the start of the task • cleared space within the room prior to preparing the enclosure • collected tools, equipment and materials ready to start the preparation of the enclosure. Equipment and materials included cleaning equipment, enrichment, feed and water bowls, furnishings and substrate • selected a large tank with a ventilated roof to use to create the permanent enclosure • checked for any damage to the enclosure • checked the doors opened and closed securely • used disinfectant to wipe down the sides and base of the enclosure, this was then dried with paper towels • applied a layer of newspaper and then wood chip to the base of the enclosure • applied paper bedding at each side of the enclosure • installed a range of enrichment including a wheel, tunnels cardboard boxes • checked the wheel spun easily and was secured • installed a small house for the hamster • installed a water bottle which hung from the side of the enclosure • scatter fed the food across enclosure.

	Creation of enrichment: The candidate used scissors safely to cut cardboard boxes which were then attached together using sticky tape to create a mini maze. Small chunks of carrot were placed at the end of the maze. All materials and equipment were returned correctly, and the worktop wiped down with disinfectant. The candidate then washed their hands before removing their PPE.

Assessor signature	**Date**
Sample assessor	28/05/2024

Candidate evidence – Photographic/video evidence

Photographic evidence: Enclosure

Photo 1 – permanent enclosure for hamster

Photo 2 – permanent enclosure for hamster

Photographic evidence: Enrichment

Photo 3 – creation of enrichment for a hamster

Commentary

The candidate demonstrated excellent understanding of the factors that contribute to the allocated animal's natural environment, applying excellent technical skills to prepare a permanent enclosure designed to optimise the animal's environment and health and welfare. For example, the candidate considered the hamster's health and welfare by providing suitable substrate and additional shredded paper to enable the hamster to burrow and display natural behaviours.

The candidate has considered the health and welfare requirements of the hamster and it's natural behaviours when preparing the substrate and fixtures and fittings within the enclosure. For example, the candidate used different types (lengths and sizes) of tunnels and scatter fed therefore allowing the hamster to burrow, forage, dig and tunnel, which encourages natural behaviour under the five welfare needs. The candidate created a carboard maze which enables the hamster to chew and utilise cognitive stimulation to find the reward.

The candidate demonstrated excellent safe working methods, for example, by selecting and collecting highly appropriate tools and equipment prior to starting to prepare the enclosure. For example, the candidate washed their hands and cleaned the enclosure thoroughly before installing fixtures and fittings, which mitigates hazards to both them and the animal. They checked the enclosure for any damage and security to ensure the safety and welfare of the hamster and positioned the enclosure at an appropriate height, demonstrating excellent consideration and mitigation of manual handling risks.

Task 5 Behaviour Observation

Evidence contributes to the following:

Performance outcome
PO3: Apply techniques to influence positive animal behaviour

Task	Evidence	Candidate producing	Assessor producing	Included in this GSEM
5 Behaviour observation	a) Create ethogram and recording table	√		√
	b) 30 min behavioural observation	√		√
	c) Discuss and evaluate findings	√		√

Task 5a) Ethogram and recording tables

Candidate evidence – Ethogram and recording tables

Mammal – Ferret Ethogram

Type of behaviour	Behaviour	Description	Behaviour Code
Social	Play fighting	Ferrets engage in mock combat, chasing each other, hopping around, and occasionally tumbling over each other.	SPF
	Social grooming	One ferret licks or nibbles gently at another ferret's fur, particularly around the neck or ears. The recipient of grooming would remain still or reciprocate the behaviour.	SSG
	Playing	A ferret would arch its back, puff up its tail, and emit playful vocalisations and exhibit relaxed body postures, with ears and whiskers forward. The ferret would also hop or bounce around.	SP
	Defence	A threatened ferret arches its back, fluffs up its fur to appear larger, and stands on tiptoes. It would back away from the perceived threat with flattened ears.	SD
	Fighting	In extreme cases, a ferret would bare its teeth, hiss loudly, and lunge forward to deliver a quick bite or scratch.	SF
	Courtship	A male ferret would perform a dance-like behaviour, hopping around a receptive female while emitting soft vocalisations. Also engaging in gentle nipping or licking of the female.	SC
Exploratory	Sniffing	The ferret lowers its head close to the ground, inhaling deeply through its nose. Its whiskers can twitch as it sniffs various objects or surfaces.	ES
	Pawing	The ferret extends its front paws towards an object or surface, gently patting or tapping it. This behaviour can be accompanied by tilting the head.	EP
	Nosing	The ferret nudges or pushes objects or explores small crevices using its nose. It can move its head back-and-forth as it investigates.	EN
	Hunting	Ferrets can stalk toys or small objects, creeping low to the ground with eyes focused and body tense. When "capturing" the object, they can pounce with front paws extended.	EH
	Scent marking	Ferrets will drag their bottom across an area to mark their territory. They can also rub their body or chins on the area.	ESM

Maintenance	Grooming	Ferrets will twist their body around to reach areas of fur and use their tongue to lick themselves clean.	MG
	Eating	Ferrets can grasp food items with their front paws, tearing them apart or dragging them to a more comfortable spot for consumption.	ME
	Drinking	Ferrets will use their tongue to intake water.	MD
	Urinating/ defecating	Ferrets prefer to go to the toilet in the same area (latrine). They stand still with an arched back whilst eliminating.	MUD
Resting	Sleeping	A sleeping ferret curls up into a tight ball, often tucking its nose under its tail. It will occasionally twitch its whiskers or paws during deep sleep.	RS
	Basking	A relaxed ferret will stretch out on its side or belly in a sunny spot, eyes half-closed or closed entirely. It will appear completely at ease, with muscles relaxed.	RB
Locomotion	Running	A playful ferret moves smoothly, darting in zigzag patterns, bounding with all four legs off the ground.	LR
	Walking	A ferret moves more slowly when it is exploring or moving to a different area of the accommodation. This includes walking along the floor but also up and over enrichment objects.	LW
	Burrowing	When burrowing, a ferret digs its front paws into the substrate, kicking up loose material behind it. It will tunnel with determination, disappearing into the bedding or substrate.	LB
Vocalisation (can occur alongside behaviours)	Whimpering	A distressed ferret emits a soft whimper, indicating discomfort or anxiety. It can huddle in a corner or seek comfort from its owner.	VW
	Hissing/ growling	A threatened or agitated ferret exhales sharply through its mouth, producing a hissing sound.	VHG
	Dooking	A content ferret can make a series of soft, chuckling sounds, known as dooking.	VD
Abnormal	Self-mutilation	Ferrets can excessively scratch or groom themselves. This can lead to hair loss, redness, or lesions on the skin.	ASM
	Stereotypies	Ferrets can show repetitive behaviours such as pacing, circling, or over-grooming, in response to stress, boredom, or environmental deprivation.	AS

Mammal - ferret recording table

Sampling method, focal (ferret number 1, white face) at 30 second intervals.

Minute	Behaviour displayed
0.5	
1	
1.5	
2	
2.5	
3	
3.5	
4	
4.5	
5	
5.5	
6	
6.5	
7	
7.5	
8	
8.5	
9	
9.5	
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10.5	
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11.5	
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12.5	
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26.5	
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27.5	
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28.5	
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29.5	
30	

Animal - chicken ethogram

Type of behaviour	Behaviour	Description	Code
Social	Flocking	Chickens naturally prefer to be in groups, and they show flocking behaviours where they move together as a group, often following a dominant individual.	SFL
	Dominance	Chickens establish a social hierarchy within the flock through pecking order. Dominant individuals can peck at subordinate chickens to establish their status.	SDOM
	Fighting	Chickens can engage in pecking fights to establish dominance or resolve disputes. This behaviour involves rapid pecking motions aimed at another chicken's head or body.	SF
	Defence	In aggressive encounters, chickens can flap their wings and puff up their feathers to appear larger and more intimidating.	SD
Foraging	Scratching	Chickens use their feet to scratch at the ground, uncovering insects, seeds, and other edible items.	FS

		They can alternate feet and create shallow scrapes in the soil.	
	Pecking	Chickens peck with their beak at the ground or objects to investigate them or to gather food. Pecking behaviour is often quick, precise and repetitive. Chickens use their beaks to pick up food items, which they then swallow whole or break apart into smaller pieces, this can include chicken food, grasses and insects.	FP
Exploratory	Peering	Chickens can tilt their heads and peer closely at objects or areas of interest, using their keen eyesight to investigate.	EP
	Tasting	Chickens can sample unfamiliar objects or substances by pecking at them. This helps them gather information about their environment.	ET
Locomotor	Walking	Chickens walk with their wings by their side to move from one area of the accommodation to another.	LW
	Flapping	Chickens walk with their wings flapping when they are alarmed.	LF
Nesting	Nest Building	Females engage in nest-building before laying eggs. They gather materials such as straw, feathers, or leaves and arrange them in a nest-like structure in a safe space within the accommodation.	NNB
	Perching	Sitting on nest or perch. They huddle together for warmth and security while roosting.	PN
Maintenance	Dust bathing	Chickens dust bath to clean their feathers. They scratch out a shallow depression in the ground and roll around, covering themselves in dust.	MDB
	Drinking	Chickens put their open beak in the water then bring their head quickly up, pointing it in the air to swallow the water.	MD
	Urinating/ defecating	Chickens produce black and white waste matter, which is a mixture of urine and faeces, they can push this out while walking around the accommodation.	MU
Vocalisation (can occur alongside behaviours)	Clucking	Chickens emit soft clucking sounds to communicate with each other while foraging or resting. The tone and frequency of clucks vary depending on the situation.	VC
	Crowing	Males produce crowing sounds, often in the morning, to establish territory and communicate with other roosters. Crowing can also occur in response to environmental stimuli.	VCR

Abnormal	Feather packing	Chickens excessively peck at the feathers of themselves or other flock members, leading to feather loss and skin damage. In severe cases, feather pecking can escalate to cannibalism, where chickens injure or kill each other.	AF
	Egg eating	Chicken eat their own eggs.	AE
	Stereotypies	Chickens display repetitive behaviours, such as pacing, pecking at shadows, or head bobbing, in response to stress, boredom, or isolation.	AS

Animal - chicken recording table

Sampling method, focal (chicken number 5, Buff Orpington) at 30 second intervals.

Minute	Behaviour displayed
0.5	
1	
1.5	
2	
2.5	
3	
3.5	
4	
4.5	
5	
5.5	
6	
6.5	
7	
7.5	
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8.5	
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22.5	
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23.5	
24	
24.5	
25	
25.5	
26	
26.5	
27	
27.5	
28	
28.5	
29	
29.5	
30	

Commentary

The candidate demonstrated excellent understanding of the animals' natural behaviours by producing a comprehensive ethogram and recording table to monitor and record behavioural observations for both the ferret and the chicken.

The candidate has provided detailed and highly relevant descriptions of the ferret and chicken's behaviours within the ethograms, demonstrating an excellent understanding of observable behaviours and how to identify them. This shows excellent consideration of the types of behaviours, including normal and abnormal behaviours that could be seen during

the behavioural observation. For example, the candidate given different behaviour types such as social, exploratory and abnormal, additionally the candidate gave a detailed description of each of the behaviours found within each type, such as the detailed description given for social grooming and observable characteristics of the behaviour.

The candidate has selected a suitable sampling method and designed a highly relevant recording table to capture the behavioural observation data, including all identified behaviours from the ethogram which will be recorded at 30 second intervals. The candidate is observing one animal out of a group, so the focal sampling method is most appropriate. The ferret and chicken are active species and likely to display a range of behaviours in a short time, therefore the 30 second intervals are most suitable to capture a range of behaviours accurately.

Task 5b) Behaviour observation

Candidate evidence – Behaviour observation

Completed recording table following 30-minute behavioural observation of the ferret:

Minute	Behaviour displayed
0.5	ES
1	SPF
1.5	SPF
2	SPF
2.5	LW
3	LW
3.5	SPF
4	SPF
4.5	LW
5	RB
5.5	RB
6	RB
6.5	RB
7	RB
7.5	RB
8	RB
8.5	RB
9	RB
9.5	RB
10	RB
10.5	RB
11	RB
11.5	LW
12	LW
12.5	MD
13	LW
13.5	SPF
14	SPF
14.5	SPF
15	LW
15.5	RB
16	RB
16.5	RB
17	RB
17.5	RB
18	RB
18.5	RB

19	RB
19.5	RB
20	RB
20.5	RB
21	RS
21.5	RS
22	RS
22.5	RS
23	RS
23.5	RS
24	RS
24.5	RS
25	RS
25.5	RS
26	RS
26.5	RS
27	RS
27.5	RS
28	RS
28.5	RS
29	RS
29.5	RS
30	RS

Completed recording table following 30-minute behavioural observation of the chicken:

Minute	Behaviour displayed
0.5	FP
1	FP
1.5	FS
2	FP
2.5	FP
3	FP
3.5	FS
4	FP
4.5	LW
5	FS
5.5	SFL / LF /VC
6	EP
6.5	LF
7	LW
7.5	FS
8	FP

8.5	FP
9	LW
9.5	MDB
10	MDB
10.5	MDB
11	MDB
11.5	MDB
12	MDB
12.5	MDB
13	MDB
13.5	MDB
14	MDB
14.5	MDB
15	MDB
15.5	MDB
16	MDB
16.5	MDB
17	MDB
17.5	MDB
18	MDB
18.5	MDB
19	MDB
19.5	LW
20	LW / MUD
20.5	Out of sight
21	Out of sight
21.5	LW
22	FP
22.5	FP
23	FP
23.5	FP
24	FP
24.5	FP
25	FP
25.5	LW
26	MD
26.5	MD
27	LW
27.5	MDB
28	MDB
28.5	MDB
29	MDB

29.5	MDB
30	MDB

Commentary

The candidate completed the recording forms from Task 5a to capture the observed behaviours at their selected timed intervals. The candidate demonstrated excellent detail when recording codes to capture the animals' behaviours and type of behaviour during the observation. The candidate was able to record a behaviour for each timed interval with some intervals recording multiple behaviours, demonstrating excellent accuracy of recording the animals' behaviours.

Task 5c) Written report

Candidate evidence – Written Report

I created ethograms and recording tables for the behaviour observation to be carried out on a ferret and a chicken. The ethogram included detailed descriptions of the range of behaviours the animals could display during the behavioural observation. The recording table has timed intervals (30 seconds) which enabled me to accurately track and log each behaviour as they occurred.

When initially creating the ethogram and recording table for the purpose of a behavioural observation of the ferret and chicken, I considered the scan and focal sampling techniques and decided that the focal sampling technique would be most suitable because it enabled me to capture different types of behaviours at timed intervals for one animal at a time.

Suitability of the ethograms
The ethogram enabled me to capture and describe the different behaviours to enable consistency during the behavioural observation. Because of the detail included in the descriptions the ethograms could have been used to carry out a behavioural observation by someone who was inexperienced with the ferret or the chicken. By providing the behavioural codes this has enabled me to save time during the observation as I didn't need to write out the full behaviour.

Having completed the observation, I realise that I could have broken down the behaviours into further subcategories, for example, the ferrets spent a lot of time interacting with each other and I was not able to accurately record all of the behaviours within the code SPF (social, play fighting) as I only had one code. It was also difficult to tell if the chicken was dust bathing or sleeping. I didn't have sleeping code as an option this could only be recorded as dust bathing.

Next time I create an ethogram, I will break these down further to include descriptions of chasing, being chased, jumping, rolling and sleeping, as these were seen but could not be recorded in detail.

Suitability of the recording tables
The recording tables were set at 30 second intervals as this is a common method of sampling when observing animals. The 30 second intervals allow for a reasonable timeframe to observe and record the different behaviours displayed.

Next time I create a recording table I would include space to capture the environmental conditions as the behavioural observations for the animals took place on hot days. This impacted the results, for example the chicken spent more time in the dust bath as it was cooler and in a shady area. If the weather was cold or wet the chicken would have spent its time differently. I think the 30 second intervals were just right, both animals changed behaviour regularly and there were only a couple of occasion where multiple behaviours were seen at the same time. If the gaps had been any longer, I might have missed important behaviours.

I carried out focal sampling of one individual animal in each group. Both the animals I observed showed normal behaviours, but this does not mean all the individuals within the group are the same. It is possible that, especially with the chickens, if I had carried out a

scan sampling method, I would have observed one individual being picked on within the group. However, because I wasn't looking at the whole group, I didn't see any problems.

During the observation there were times when I could not actually see the chicken as it had moved behind the coop and I didn't want to move in case it caused a change in behaviour. Therefore, next time I carry out an observation I would consider my position and add an additional code for OOS (out of sight) to my recording table.

The behavioural codes I created did cause me some confusion during the observation as I had to double check I was using the correct one – next time I may write the behaviour as listed in the ethogram. It could also be useful to include a table where I could record the totals of each of the behaviours observed to make it easier to evaluate my findings.

Observation findings

During my observation I found that the animals showed normal behaviours, for example, the chicken spent a lot of its time eating or looking for food, this is expected for a chicken as they are birds which have high metabolisms and therefore need to eat constantly. On the other hand, I did not see the ferret eat but as predatory carnivores they tend to eat a large meal in one go and then not feed for several hours, so this was perfectly normal. If I wanted to observe the ferret eating then I could check their record sheet to find out what time of the day they are fed.

The chicken's normal behaviour was interrupted at 5 minutes and 30 seconds, it appears that something startled the chicken as it went from scratching and pecking to suddenly moving away and flapping, although it quickly settled again. As prey animals, chickens are highly responsive to their surroundings and if one chicken shows a stress related behaviour, it is likely to cause behaviour changes such as flapping and loud clucking within the rest of the flock. This one occasion was the only time within the observation I saw the chicken behave socially. The chicken is already part of an established flock so already has a set pecking order. The chicken I was observing did not appear to be the dominant one, and did not deliver or receive any dominance behaviours. This can change if a new bird was introduced, or an existing bird removed, as the birds would need to re-establish the hierarchy. This can lead to some fighting, and also lead to death as chickens are attracted to the colour red so if they make another bird bleed, they will keep pecking and pecking, which can cause death and cannibalism in the chickens.

The behavioural observation for the ferret was carried out on warm, sunny day. The ferret spent a large amount of time resting, basking (RB) which would be considered normal behaviours for the ferret. The ferret also spent time socially play fighting (SPF) which is also normal as the ferret is a social species.

My findings show that both animals were relaxed and content therefore showing good health and welfare. They were able to rest in open spaces and did not appear to be in conflict with any other individuals.

Evaluation

I did not see any abnormal behaviours in either of the animals, and there were no obvious signs of injury on either animal so it can be assumed that they are having their welfare needs met. The ferrets displayed lots of playing and exploring so it is important that they continue to be kept in a social group. It is also important that their enrichment is changed regularly to

stop them becoming bored or frustrated as this could lead to abnormal behaviours such as pacing, aggression and being inactive.

The chickens spent a lot of their time scratching and pecking which is normal for them, but this could be improved by giving them pieces of turf grass to peck at or hanging up cabbage or lettuce for them to peck at as a form of enrichment. The chickens were dust bathing in an area that they had made themselves in the corner of the accommodation, when this gets wet and muddy they could be given a deep tray filled with sand so they can still dust bath as they would not want to roll around in the mud. Dust bathing is good for their feathers as well as an important behaviour in chickens.

Commentary

The candidate has demonstrated excellent understanding of animal behaviour to produce a detailed report which discusses and evaluates the findings of the behavioural observation.

The candidate gave excellent justifications of the suitability of the ethogram and recording table when used to capture the findings during a behavioural observation. The candidate provided a comprehensive reflection of their recording tables, which included the reasons why the candidate chose 30 second intervals to capture the animals' behaviour and what the candidate would do differently next time to improve their documentation. For example, including space to include the environmental conditions and the inclusion of additional codes if the animal is out of sight.

The candidate has provided an excellent evaluation of the ethogram and recording table they produced, demonstrating an excellent understanding of the animal's natural behaviour and the impact the environment can have on behaviour. For example, the candidate explained that the ferrets displayed play and exploratory behaviours and that it is important that their enrichment is changed regularly to stop them becoming bored or frustrated as this could lead to abnormal behaviours which could impact their welfare.

The candidate provided an excellent evaluation of the findings of the behavioural observation. This included an accurate and detailed discussion of species-specific behaviours in terms of the animal's health and welfare. For example, the candidate identified and explained why specific natural behaviours were expected during the behavioural observation and what they indicated for each animal.

Task 6 Training

Evidence contributes to the following:

Performance outcome
PO3: Apply techniques to influence positive animal behaviour

Task	Evidence	Candidate producing	Assessor producing	Included in this GSEM
6 Training	a) Create a training programme	√		√
	b) Risk assessment	√		√
	c) 10 minute training session		√	√

Task 6a) Training programme

Candidate evidence – Training plan

Training Plan

Animal: Ferret - Ferrets are confident around people and food motivated so this makes them ideal for training. The ferret used is a young male called Jason who has previous experience of clicker training and has associated the sound of the clicker with a reward allowing the clicker to be used as a bridge between the behaviour and the reward. Jason is friendly, approachable and routinely handled so should not find the experience stressful.

Aim: Positive reinforcement to target train to a blue mat, building up to entering and being secured and moved in a transportation crate. This is so the ferret associates the transport crate with positive experiences and will willingly enter it on cue therefore reducing stress and improving welfare.

Timeline: Training should be carried out before feeding as the ferret will be hungry, therefore more motivated to work for the treat. The training should be 10-minute sessions every day. The training sessions should be kept short to maintain the ferret's interest and focus on the task as ferrets are inquisitive and easily distracted. Continue the training sessions for at least 2 weeks to ensure the behaviour demonstrated becomes reliable.

Materials:

- target (blue mat)
- crate (secure plastic crate of suitable size)
- high value treats (small pieces of meat / paste from the back of a spoon
- spoon
- clicker.

Rewards and reinforcements:

- use high-value treats that the ferret finds irresistible which will motivate the ferret to achieve the desired behaviour. Start with meat paste on the back of a spoon to allow the ferret to easily access. Using the spoon minimises the risk of being bitten when rewarding the ferret. Food placed inside the crate can be small pieces of cooked chicken, freeze-dried meat treats, or ferret-safe commercial treats. It is important the food is small enough to be eaten quickly so the ferret does not start to think about the food rather than the training as this can distract from the training session.
- praise the ferret with a cheerful tone of voice and gentle petting as additional forms of reinforcement.

Training Plan

Step 1: Introducing the target (blue mat):

- place the target in an area where the ferret spends time in the enclosure
- allow the ferret to explore the target at its own pace without any pressure
- whenever the ferret shows interest in or approaches the target, click the clicker, praise and reward with a treat. The click must occur within 2 seconds of the ferret

investigating the target for the ferret to make the correct association between the target and the reward.

- this should be completed every time the ferret moves onto the mat.
- if the ferret stays on the target mat continue to click and reward at short intervals to build up the association.
- once step one is achieved, progress to step 2.

Step 2: Target training to the blue mat:

- when the ferret goes directly to the target every time training starts, begin to introduce the command word ‘crate’. Continue to positively reinforce every interaction the ferret makes with the target as seen is step 1.
- gradually move the target to various areas within the accommodation and click and reward the ferret when it is on the target, repeating the command word ‘crate’. This shows that the ferret understands the reward is for going to the mat, not just being in a particular area of the enclosure.
- once step 2 is reliably achieved, progress to step 3.

Step 3: Introduce the crate:

- place the target mat near to open door of the crate and reward the ferret for being on the target. If the ferret is inquisitive and goes inside the crate, reward again. Additional food can be placed inside the crate to encourage this behaviour
- repeat, moving the target across the door of the crate, rewarding when the ferret enters and stating ‘crate’
- do NOT close the ferret in the cage at this point.
- once step 3 is reliably achieved, progress to step 4.

Step 4: Entry into the crate:

- place the target fully inside the crate. When the ferret enters the crate, click, but wait a few seconds before rewarding as the click now means a reward is coming. When a reward is given, it should be thrown into the crate so the ferret is not rewarded for coming out
- repeat, leaving longer between the click and the reward so the ferret becomes relaxed in the crate
- once the ferret is comfortable entering the crate to touch the target, begin phasing out the target, relying on the verbal cue "crate" and positive reinforcement
- once step 4 is reliably achieved, progress to step 5.

Step 5: Increasing duration and distraction:

- gradually increase the duration the ferret spends inside the crate before giving the reward
- introduce mild distractions outside the crate (e.g. noises, toys) and reinforce the ferret for staying calm and remaining inside the crate
- begin to close the door of the crate for short periods of time, depending on how relaxed the ferret is. The door should only be closed when the ferret is relaxed and not trying to get out.
- once step 5 is reliably achieved, progress to step 6.

Step 6: Practice and generalisation:

- practice the crate training in various locations and environments to generalise the behaviour
- continue positively reinforcing the ferret for voluntarily entering the crate, using treats and praise as rewards.

Step 7: Lifting and moving the crate

- once the ferret reliably enters and is secured in the crate begin to lift and move the crate.
- only lift / move for a few seconds before placing back down and opening the door.
- gradually build up the time and movement of the crate, rewarding the ferret for being calm.

Commentary

The candidate provided a comprehensive and relevant training plan for their chosen animal, the ferret, in line with its natural behaviours. The training plan is consistently accurate and relates to the training needs of the ferret. The logical, achievable steps allow opportunities to reinforce and build the behaviour in a stress free way. For example, the candidate has referenced positively reinforcing each interaction the ferret has with the target therefore increasing the consistency of the ferret's learning.

The candidate has chosen suitable positive reinforcers in their training plan which are highly relevant to the species demonstrating excellent understanding of the species-specific positive reinforcements. The candidate implemented highly appropriate training methods therefore demonstrating excellent understanding of training programmes. For example, the candidate has identified that the treats used in training should be of high value and that the training session should be carried out prior to mealtimes. The combination of these will ensure the ferret has high motivation to achieve the treats and engage in the training.

The candidate shows excellent understanding of the ferret's learning by recognising within their plan when each step has been successful before moving on to the next step.

Task 6b) Risk assessment for implementing a training programme

Candidate evidence – Risk Assessment Figure 3

Candidate's name	**Sample candidate**	**Enrolment number**	**CG12345**
Task/Activity	Task 6b – Risk assessment for implementing a training programme	Location	Sample centre
Assessor's name	Sample assessor	Date	28/05/2024

Item no.	What are the hazards?	Who might be harmed and how?	What control measures are already in place?	Risk rating (high/medium/low)	What further action is necessary?	Action by who and when?	Final risk rating (high/medium/low)
1	Ferret being trained. Being bitten by ferret when handling and rewarding.	Trainer Bites and scratches.	PPE worn at all times. Ferret's temperament assessed prior to training.	medium	Rewards provided on the back of a spoon to prevent being bitten. Use positive reinforcement, not punishment for animal does not get stressed / aggressive).	Trainer - During each training session.	low
2	Disease. Zoonotic disease transferred through bite or through contact with ferret food which can be raw meat.	Trainer Zoonotic disease.	PPE worn at all times. Ferret's temperament assessed prior to training. Wash hands after handling. Following the organisations policies and procedures for biosecurity.	medium	Rewards provided on the back of a spoon to prevent being bitten. Do not use raw meat as rewards.	Trainer – During each training session.	low

3	Manual handling. Injury when lifting or storing the transport crate.	Trainer Injury	Safe manual handling demonstrated. Following the organisations policies and procedures for manual handling.	L=low	Training in accessing equipment/ animal carriers from higher levels (ladder training).	Trainer – During each training session.	low
4	Use of chemicals when cleaning equipment for the training.	Trainer Injury	Appropriate chemicals selected. Appropriate dilution of chemicals. Correct disposal of waste materials. PPE.	low	Access to data sheets to ensure chemicals used and dilutions are correct. Human training to use chemicals safely and correctly.	Trainer – before/after each training session.	low
5	Environmental hazards.	Trainer Tripping/ falling	Area kept neat and tidy. Wet floor signs if necessary. Training to take place indoors.	low	Indoor environment is secure. There is enough room for training to take place. The room is clear from clutter and unused equipment and waste material.	Trainer – During each training session.	low
6	Allergy.	Trainer	Using appropriate PPE.	low	Ensure PPE can be provided to trainer to carry antihistamine.	Trainer	low

Date: 28/05/2024	Risk assessment carried out by: Sample assessor

Commentary

The candidate comprehensively assessed risk by completing a risk assessment for implementing a training programme, showing an excellent understanding of the hazards, risks and control measures. For example, referring to safe working practice, disease and PPE. The candidate considered the full process for implementing a training programme. The candidate identified a comprehensive range of potential hazards and demonstrated an excellent understanding of the hazards that might occur.

The candidate demonstrated excellent understanding of the difference between hazards, risks, and control measures, providing a range of detailed precautions to minimise risk to themselves and others. The candidate has made clear links between the hazards and suitable precautions, e.g. ensuring the room was clear of any clutter, unused equipment and waste material. They correctly categorised risk ratings and included additional control measures to reduce the risk ratings

Task 6c) Training Session

Candidate evidence – Assessor Observation Form

Task	Qualification number
Task 6c) Carry out a training session	8717-407
Candidate name	**Candidate number**
Sample candidate	CG12345
Centre name	
Sample centre	

Complete the table below referring to the relevant marking grid, found in the assessment pack. Do not allocate marks at this stage.

Assessor observation	**Notes –** *detailed, accurate and differentiating notes which identify areas of strength and weakness are necessary to distinguish between different qualities of performance and to facilitate accurate allocation of marks once all evidence has been submitted.*
Assess the mammal or animals' behaviour and create a training programme to include: • suitability for training • potential training needs • method of training • timings of training • type of reinforcement and motivators • achieve a training goal.	Preparation: • the candidate secured the area and carried a 30 second visual check of the environment for any hazards and risks • wore PPE (uniform and boots) • collected the equipment (target, the paste for the reward, spoon, crate, clicker) prior to starting the training activity • candidate cleaned the equipment using scrubbing brush and disinfectant spray. Carrying out the training session: The candidate: • placed the target on the floor • used cues, bridging and positive reinforcement (paste reward on back of spoon) are delivered in a calm, coordinated and timely manner enabling the ferret to make the associations between the behaviour (ferret going onto the target) and the reward • placed the target into different locations and repeats the timely cues, bridging and positive reinforcement successfully • placed the target into the crate and repeated the timely cues, bridging and positive reinforcement. The ferret achieved the training goal by entering the crate • closed the door to the crate and used a new cue (door), rewarded the ferret and monitored the ferret for 30 seconds.

Assessor signature	Date
Sample assessor	28/05/2024

Video evidence: training session

Task 6_Ferret Training D.mp4

Commentary

The candidate showed excellent preparation of the working area by collecting and cleaning the equipment prior to starting the task therefore demonstrating excellent planning, organisation, and mitigation of potential risks. For example, the candidate collected and cleaned the target, spoon and crate and carried out visual check of the area for any hazards and risks. The candidate used the spoon to provide the reward therefore mitigating hazards such as biting and cross contamination.

The candidate applied excellent understanding of training techniques and demonstrated highly effective technical skills by moving the target into different locations to positively reinforce the reliability of the ferret's learning. The candidate carried out the training session to a high standard whilst maintaining the welfare of the ferret by remaining calm, using a gentle and encouraging tone and using precise and controlled movements throughout the training session. For example, the candidate placed the target on the floor to ensure there was no sound which could scare the ferret or distract from the training session. Additionally, the candidate provided the ferret with timely, suitable rewards which ensured successful positive reinforcement of the target training session and ensuring the correct behaviour is being reinforced.

The candidate introduced a new cue (door) once the ferret was inside the crate. This ensured the ferret knew it would be shut in the crate and the candidate provided the reward correctly through gaps in the door.

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