

Fellowship of Animal Behaviour Clinicians



Practising Student Members Policy & FAQ

Usually, Student Members are enrolled in a relevant academic course to a minimum of [FHEQ Level 5](#). They include anyone working towards independent accreditation in clinical animal behaviour who do not yet fulfil one of the criteria listed below. Once they have achieved any of these criteria, then they are eligible for Candidate Membership:

- Residency of one of the [international veterinary behaviour colleges](#) who act as independent accreditors for some of our Certificated Members;
- [CCAB Pre-certification](#);
- Successful completion of an [ASAB validated course](#) or an [ABTC recognised CAB course](#);
- Successful application of the [ABTC APEL assessment](#);
- [CAB registration of the ABTC](#) through an alternative pathway.

Any Student Members who are clinically practising outside of their contracted employment are required by FAB Clinicians and our regulators to undertake all behaviour cases under the direct supervision of a registered Clinical Animal Behaviourist (CAB).

We expect our Student Members to engage with the opportunities provided by FAB Clinicians to support their learning and development. The [general practising guidance for Candidate and Student Members linked here](#) goes into further detail. Below are the answers to common questions regarding our policy stated in bold above.

1. For a supervisor, what counts as a registered CAB?

One of the following:

- FABC Certificated Member
- ABTC CAB or VB
- ASAB CCAB
- RCVS Specialist in Behavioural Medicine
- VB College Diplomate or Fellow (ECAWBM, DACVB, or ANZCVS VB Chapter)

2. What does 'direct supervision' mean?

The supervisor needs to be physically present throughout the duration of the consultation and for any interaction the practising Student Member has with an animal's caregiver. The supervisor would need to be in a position where they are able to intervene immediately if necessary for the safety and welfare of all involved in the case at that time.

3. What if a Student Member needs to clinically practice as part of their job within an organisation?

Student Members may be practising independently as part of their contracted employment, such as in their role within an animal welfare charity that is an Advisory or Supporting Member of ABTC. We abide by the policies set by our regulator, [ABTC](#), who created a policy for practitioners employed by charities in January 2021. The key paragraph is quoted below:

"It is... acceptable that some hands-on staff dealing with training and behaviour issues in charity AM and SM [Advisory/Supporting Member] organisations are not ABTC Registered Practitioners. However, ABTC considers that it is critical to providing good supervision that such staff have access to a supervisor who is either a Registered Practitioner or a person who has acquired the knowledge and understanding necessary to become registered. That supervision may be remote from the site where the training or behaviour modification is taking place but must be real in nature rather than notional. It is therefore expected that the supervisor will either be employed by the ABTC Member or have a written contract with the Member to provide supervision and advice when appropriate. Where the AM or SM is not a registered charity organisation the same parameters do not apply. We therefore consider that any training or behaviour modification undertaken by such organisations must be delivered by a Registered Practitioner."

4. If I am a Practising Student under supervision, is there anything I need to specify on my web site or other marketing material?

All FAB Clinicians members must only practice on veterinary referral or delegation and they must not undertake any cases beyond their level of competence. While members may use the FAB Clinicians logo, they must also make clear what specific type of FAB Clinicians member they are and what this means. So, if a Student Member is advertising their behaviour services in any way (e.g. social media, web site, vet referral form), then they must make clear what their level of competence or scope of practice is to the public and their referring vets. Student Members should also seek written consent from both an animal's caregiver and vet that a supervisor will be involved in their behaviour case.

5. Are Student Members allowed in their own business to do any animal training or provide preventative first aid advice?

If conducting Animal Training Instructor (ATI) or Animal Behaviour Technician (ABT) [related services](#), then we recommend Student Members seek training and support from ATI/ABT practitioner organisations and their registered members, where available for the species they intend to work with. Otherwise, Certificated Members can help to some extent Student and Candidate Members realise the limits of their competence in CAB and ATI/ABT activities. See:

<https://abtc.org.uk/practitioner-organisations/>

At the very least, Student Members must have acquired the necessary FHEQ Level 4 or 5 academic qualifications for ATI or ABT work respectively before starting practice in these areas, as well as have some training in the species they intend to work with. Note Student Members should not start practising in CAB activities unless directly supervised by a registered CAB, or they should wait until they become eligible for Candidate Membership.

6. What counts as a behaviour (CAB) case?

We define CAB practice as 'formally assessing, diagnosing and/or treating behaviour in non-human animals, where there is a potential for risk to the animal, environment or individuals present'. Members should also be aware of the ABTC and ASAB definitions. See below:

<https://abtc.org.uk/owners/types-of-practitioners/>

<https://abtc.org.uk/practitioners-info/>

So currently ABTC states CABs deal with 'all types of undesirable, inappropriate, problematic or dangerous behaviour, including those with a potential link to pathologies that require diagnosis in collaboration with a veterinary surgeon.'

...whereas ATIs *'involve training the animal to undertake specific tasks, or more general training.'*

We recommend also looking at the behaviour case examples for different species provided by ASAB for CCAB application. A Student Member should not be taking on a case that may fall into one of these examples without the direct supervision of a registered CAB. If they are unsure, then they should seek the advice of a Certificated Member.

<https://www.asab.org/ccab-application-and-assessment>

We consider a training case to involve a practitioner showing an animal's caregiver how to use rewards to teach the animal to enjoy doing certain activities on cue that the owner would like to see more of, such as recall, tricks or scentwork. Whereas a behaviourist would be able to identify the emotions and causes for a particular behaviour problem. They show the caregiver how to help their animal by not only teaching them how to behave differently, but primarily by teaching them how to feel differently. Whereas an animal behaviour technician (ABT) case would involve providing preventative advice to stop behaviour problems from developing in the first place, or provide prophylactic short-term management advice before referring the case onto a vet and a CAB.