

Fellowship of Animal Behaviour Clinicians



Practising Student Members Policy & FAQ

Updated March 2024

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 [CCAB validated course](#) or an [ABTC recognised CAB course](#);
- [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:

- FAB Clinicians Certificated Member
- Certificated Clinical Animal Behaviourist (CCAB)
- RCVS Specialist in Behavioural Medicine
- VB College Diplomate or Fellow (ECAWBM, DACVB, Cleve-CVLBAMC, or ANZCVS VB Chapter)
- ABTC registered CAB or Veterinary Behaviourist (VB)

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.

3. What if the Student Member is a vet?

Vets are regulated by the legal authority in their country of practice (e.g. RCVS in UK). They must be able to see any case presented to them and work within their competence, whether they are a FAB Clinicians Student Member or not. We would advise that when our vet Student Members give clinical behaviour advice that they make their clients aware that they are giving advice as a vet and not yet as a registered Clinical Animal Behaviourist. We strongly encourage our Student Members to seek supervision or mentoring support in their behaviour cases from our Certificated Members.

4. 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 (e.g. RSPCA). 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."

5. 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 their scope of practice is to the public and their referring vets. The Student Member must also make clear on their public-facing material that any behaviour cases they undertake will be conducted with a supervisor present. Student Members must also seek written consent from an animal's caregiver and their vet that a supervisor will be involved in their behaviour case.

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 CCAB Certification Ltd and ABTC definitions. See below:

<https://www.ccab.uk/what-is-clinical-animal-behaviour>
<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 are '*training the animal to undertake specific tasks, or more general training.*'

We recommend also looking at the behaviour case examples for different species provided for the 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.ccab.uk/clinical-skills-requirements>

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 scent-work. 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.

7. Are Student Members allowed in their own business to do any animal training instruction?

Student Members who would like to teach animal training to pet owners should become members of Animal Training Instructor (ATI) practitioner organisations:

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

Where there are no ATI organisations for a particular species available, then our Certificated Members can help Student Members through supervision. At the very least, Student Members must have acquired the necessary theoretical knowledge for ATI work before offering these services, as well as have some experience in the species they would like to work with. If you are not sure what this means, then contact office@fabclinicians.org to find out more.

8. Are Student Members allowed in their own business to provide preventative first aid behaviour advice?

If Student Members want to provide preventative first aid behaviour advice (i.e. as part of the [Animal Behaviour Technician or ABT role](#)), they must have attained the academic qualifications required for ABT work and some experience in the species they would like to work with. If you are not sure what these qualifications are, then contact office@fabclinicians.org to find out more.

9. What if a Student Member identifies a serious animal welfare or safety issue?

If Student Members identify any serious animal welfare issues and those associated risks in the course of their work, then they have a duty of care to use their discretion as to how they should act and then to urgently direct an animal onto a qualified practitioner (vet or registered CAB) or authority (e.g. local council, police or RSPCA).