

Level 3 Standard for Poultry Technician

Section 1: Occupational profile for a poultry technician

The agriculture industry offers exciting and varied careers in the UK and abroad providing unique opportunities for young people to work in a technically advanced and innovative environment, producing one of the country's most important products – food. Businesses within the industry range from small family farms through to large integrated organisations working across the food supply chain.

A Poultry Technician is normally responsible for the management and control of a complex poultry farming site or operational agriculture (hatchery) unit, including responsibility for the performance and results of their site, raising animals with optimal welfare and consideration for their needs throughout the different stages of life, compliance at all times with hygiene, safety and bird welfare legislation - and customer standards which go beyond legislative compliance, maintenance of the facility, management of the personnel on site and all other visitors to site.

At level 3 the nature of the process and the need for optimum growth in an exacting time window requires specific expertise and skills in poultry husbandry relevant to their stage in the poultry supply chain - egg production, rearing, breeding, hatching or growing - together with knowledge of the other stages of the process. This requirement is further strengthened by the nature of the work which normally means working without close supervision, meaning they must be entirely proficient and competent in the process.

Section 2: The essential core knowledge, skills and behaviours for a poultry technician

The statements in **a, b and c** below describe the essential core **knowledge, skills and behaviours** that employers would expect an apprentice to demonstrate on completion of their programme.

- a. On completion of the apprenticeship, newly qualified poultry technicians will possess the following CORE knowledge:**
- The relevant species/breed, its anatomy, diseases, feed requirements, and general characteristics.
 - The signals and behaviours to look for that indicate health or welfare issues and the actions required to mitigate them.
 - The safety, hygiene and biosecurity legislation, codes of practice relevant to the operation and how they are applied effectively. How to report and investigate accidents and near misses in a timely manner. The safety procedures and health regulations to be followed at site by all staff and visitors.
 - The relevant welfare codes of practice, including the five freedoms, together with the specific requirements appropriate for the species/point in the growth cycle including environmental conditions, correct processes for culling disposal and despatch, manual handling/ transport procedures and stocking densities
 - The end to end process for the operation, the stages within it and the understanding of how to deliver good performance as well as an awareness of the role of the operation within the wider supply chain
 - The performance requirements for their operation including relevant cost, growth, mortality, waste, hygiene and safety metrics and the techniques and expertise required to influence them to deliver effective performance for their customers.
 - The standard operating procedures, methods of stock control, record keeping and reporting relevant to their operation.
 - How to run their operation in terms of facility management, knowledge of systems, technology, software, machinery and equipment.
 - The necessary knowledge of legislation, ethical code of practice and relevant policy and process, necessary to supervise and manage employees and contract/agency workers in their operation
- b. On completion of the apprenticeship, newly qualified poultry technicians will have the following proven CORE skills:**

Site Upkeep

Co-ordinate the maintenance of the site to ensure legal compliance in line with welfare regulations and all relevant legislation and customer ethical standards

Conduct site audits and maintenance of the information system

Manage the use of utilities, resources and equipment to control waste and optimise efficiency

Health & Safety

Comply and enforce the company health and safety rules; work in a safe manner and maintain a safe working environment

Assess, maintain and evaluate a safe working environment for all personnel following relevant legislation, work place policies and procedures

Biosecurity

Deliver full biosecurity compliance on site in line with industry, company and customer standards for each poultry breed.

Implement corrective actions when required

Hygiene and food safety

Take responsibility for site and personal hygiene procedures

Provide a clean environment in line with agreed standards for the facility

Deliver personal hygiene compliance of self and workers on site

Bird Handling

Prepare facilities for arrival / departure of birds

Coordinate the movement and transport of birds safely, effectively and compassionately without undue stress, ensuring the use of appropriate manual handling techniques

Welfare

Demonstrate the technical skills needed to ensure the health of the birds/hatching eggs is maintained at all times and capable of dealing with potential welfare issues.

Identify and diagnose problems early and ensure appropriate measures are taken.

Environment

Manage relevant environmental controls for specific poultry breed/system/ customer or egg programme

Analyse when adjustments are required and apply as appropriate (as relevant for the species/point in growth cycle)

Operations

Manage, maintain and operate equipment (relevant to age/breed/bird requirement) safely and effectively

Maintain, monitor and utilise technology and systems appropriate to the operation

Coordinate and conduct appropriate checks and maintain/update/keep records as relevant

Monitor and report on site performance and then take appropriate action

Standards

Adhere to and apply welfare codes of practice including the 5 freedoms

Apply and act on business/industry and legislative requirements including industry assurance standards

Implement and maintain compliance of standards applicable to poultry and report and resolve non-compliance

Contribute to assurance standard audits

People

Manage effectively poultry staff onsite or if there are no reports, ensure compliance with all necessary rules and protocols by cleaning, catching and other contractors visiting site.

Co-ordinate the recruitment of new staff, taking full responsibility for training, employee relations and communication

c. During the programme poultry technicians will display the following CORE behaviours:

- Lead by example, through their actions and behaviour, shows a strong work ethic through punctuality, consistent standards, diligence in the quality of their work, a positive attitude and good attention to detail.

- Take appropriate responsibility and ownership of decisions making for good welfare practice, care of animal's integrity/ethics in the process and site standards.
- Challenges themselves and others, embraces new ways of thinking and encourages others to do the same. Displays a positive mind set, through their willingness to learn, proactive approach, ability to act on their own initiative, and willingness to solve problems and acquire new skills.
- Ability to manage and coach others effectively, work well with colleagues and communicate and give feedback effectively, show respect for other people and give them time and support.
- Looks to continuously improve their operation, adapt quickly to changing conditions, technologies, situations and working environments. Able to prioritise effectively and adapt to changing circumstances.
- Maintains quality of work under pressure, demonstrates resilience and determination, shown in their commitment, consistency in results and overall dedication to their work.

Section 3: Additional essential knowledge, and skills for rearing, breeding, hatching, egg production and grow out processes

Poultry technicians generally work in **rearing, breeding, egg production, hatching or bird grow out unit**. Depending on the route they take, poultry technicians will need to supplement their **CORE** standard programme by demonstrating a minimum range of **specialist** knowledge and skills.

	Knowledge	Skills
Rearing	<p>Understand equipment, resources, appropriate conditions and feed and water provision required for brooding birds and the importance of ensuring this is all correct.</p> <p>Understand how birds should be handled and placed in their new environment</p> <p>Understand the growth targets required for organisational purposes and factors that can effect these</p> <p>Understand the condition/physical characteristics of males suitable and unsuitable for breeding and causes of these/factors that can effect this</p> <p>Understand principles of vaccination and the importance of correct administration</p>	<p>Brooding Procedures –prepare, monitor and maintain necessary equipment and appropriate conditions for new birds.</p> <p>Prepare/provide and manage appropriate feed and water</p> <p>Handle birds in the appropriate manner and place in correct area/quantities</p> <p>Rear birds to suitable/target weight and condition for breeding – assess and monitor that the growth of young birds meets production targets in line with organisational requirements</p> <p>Select suitable males for breeding - correctly identify males suitable and unsuitable for breeding. Bring birds into lay</p> <p>Prepare and administer vaccine – follow instructions precisely and correctly when assisting with administering a treatment</p>
Breeding	<p>Understand production targets for the appropriate breed/species and factors which can affect these.</p> <p>Understand the appropriate conditions and resources necessary to bring birds into lay and the importance of ensuring these are maintained correctly</p> <p>Understand the correct dosage and quality of semen used for artificial insemination and frequency required to</p>	<p>Bring birds into lay – accurately and correctly measure the development of the birds using the appropriate method and equipment.</p> <p>Provide the appropriate conditions and resources necessary to bring birds into lay</p> <p>Monitor and maintain the collection, grading and storage of eggs for breeding purposes</p> <p>Handle, grade, mark and store eggs in line with organisational requirements</p>

	<p>maximise fertility where relevant to species</p> <p>Understand how males should be handled during semen collection to maintain good welfare and maximise semen quality</p> <p>Understand the factors effecting bird fertility and semen quality</p>	<p>Monitor and maintain the artificial insemination if relevant to species</p> <p>Prepare hens and monitor their insemination in-line with organisational requirements.</p> <p>Prepare males and monitor the collection of semen in-line with organisational requirements</p>
Hatching	<p>Know the correct storage conditions for eggs and the importance of ensuring these are correct</p> <p>Understand why eggs would be unsuitable for incubation and the factors effecting these</p> <p>Understand the appropriate incubation conditions / times relevant to the species and the importance of ensuring these are closely monitored and maintained.</p> <p>Understand how to recognise infertile eggs</p> <p>Understand conditions of birds unfit for transport, the factors that affect these and the correct despatch method in-line with legislation</p> <p>Understand principles of vaccination and the importance of correct administration</p>	<p>Monitor and maintain the receipt and selection of eggs for hatching</p> <p>Store eggs in suitable environment/conditions.</p> <p>Select eggs for incubation in line with organisation requirements.</p> <p>Monitor and maintain the preparation, loading and incubation of hatching eggs</p> <p>Ensure eggs are prepared for incubation at set times, the incubator is prepared correctly to receive eggs and eggs are loaded into the incubator correctly.</p> <p>Check egg fertility and select eggs for transfer in line with organisational requirements</p> <p>Monitor and maintain the hatch and despatch poultry – monitor the take-off of poultry, ensure of sub-standard products are correctly recognised and disposed in-line with legal and organisational requirements, monitor preparation of birds for transportation</p> <p>Prepare and administer vaccine – follow instructions precisely and correctly when assisting with administering a treatment</p>
Egg Production	<p>Understand production targets for the appropriate breed / species and factors which can effect flock performance</p> <p>Understand the appropriate conditions and resources necessary to bring birds into lay and the reasons why these must be maintained correctly</p> <p>Understand the factors effecting egg quality and actions that can be taken to maximise this.</p>	<p>Monitor and maintain bringing birds into lay– accurately and correctly measure the development of the birds using the appropriate method and equipment.</p> <p>Provide the appropriate conditions and resources necessary to bring birds into lay</p> <p>Monitor and maintain the collection, grading and storage of eggs for human consumption</p> <p>Ensure eggs are handled, graded, marked and stored in line with organisational requirements</p>
Grow Out	<p>Understand equipment, resources, appropriate conditions and feed and water provision required for brooding birds and the importance of ensuring this is all correct.</p> <p>Understand how birds should be handled and placed in their new environment</p> <p>Understand the growth targets required for organisational purposes and factors that can effect these</p> <p>Understand principles of vaccination and</p>	<p>Brooding / growing procedures</p> <p>Prepare, monitor and maintain necessary equipment and appropriate conditions for new birds.</p> <p>Prepare/provide and manage appropriate feed and water</p> <p>Handle birds in the appropriate manner and place in correct area/quantities</p> <p>Rear birds to suitable/target weight and condition for breeding</p>

	the importance of correct administration	<p>Assess and monitor that the growth of young birds meets production targets in line with organisational requirements</p> <p>If appropriate to the species or operation prepare and administer vaccine – follow instructions precisely and correctly when assisting with administering a treatment</p>
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Section 4: Additional information

Duration: 12 to 18 months is the expected average duration for new entrants

Level: This Standard is set at **Level 3**

Qualifications: Recommended link to Level 3 Diploma in Work based Agriculture.
Apprentices without Level 2 English and Maths will need to achieve these prior to taking the end point assessment

Progression: On completion of the Level 3 Poultry Technician standard, suitably able candidates will be able to progress to higher level qualifications within the industry.

Review: 3 years after implementation