Skills Exercises for Birds

Review the Handler’s Questionnaire Form

► You meet the team evaluator and the evaluator’s assistants.
► The evaluator reviews your handler’s questionnaire.
► You share with the evaluator how your bird signals to you that it needs a break or that it’s time to leave.

Accepting a Friendly Stranger

► Your bird is handled as it will be on a visit, carried on your hand or your arm (your choice).
► You and the evaluator greet each other and shake hands.
► The evaluator looks at but doesn’t touch your bird.
► Your bird may change position but remains calm.

Accepting Petting

► Your bird is handled as it will be on a visit, carried on your hand or your arm (your choice).
► The evaluator approaches again and asks to pet your bird.
► You proactively direct the evaluator how best to pet your bird.
► The evaluator walks around behind your team and then returns to his or her starting place.
► Your bird may change position but willingly accepts petting.

Appearance and Grooming

► Your bird is placed on either a table or the evaluator’s lap (your choice).
► The evaluator feels your bird’s feathers and looks at its eyes, beak and feet.
► Your bird may change position but accepts handling.

Walk Through a Crowd ♦

► Your bird is handled as it will be on a visit, carried on your hand, arm or shoulder (your choice).
► The evaluator explains what path to walk along.
► Three assistants will walk through the area that you’re walking through.
► You proactively navigate the crowd. Your bird remains calm and demonstrates balance and stability.
Reaction to Distractions

▶ Your bird is handled as it will be on a visit, carried on your hand, arm or shoulder (your choice).
▶ The evaluator explains what path to walk along.
▶ There will be two distractions, a visual one in front of your team and an auditory one behind your team.
▶ You support your bird as needed. Your bird may express curiosity; if it startles, it recovers promptly.

Step Up and Stay ♦

▶ The evaluator asks to hold your bird.
▶ You proactively direct the evaluator how to invite your bird to step up and what to expect.
▶ Your bird steps up onto the offered hand/arm when directed to do so.
▶ Your bird stays on the offered hand/arm for 30 seconds and then steps back to you.

Passed Between Three Strangers

▶ Assistants are seated in chairs within an arm’s length of each other.
▶ You direct the assistants how to receive your bird.
▶ You pass your bird to the first assistant.
▶ Your bird sits for 5 seconds in the assistant’s hand/arm/lap.
▶ The assistant passes your bird back to you.
▶ The process is repeated with two more assistants.
▶ You guide the interaction and reassure your bird as needed.
▶ Your bird willingly accepts interactions with the assistants.

Reaction to a Neutral Dog ♦

▶ Your bird is handled as it will be on a visit, carried on your hand, arm or shoulder (your choice).
▶ Your team is standing with an evaluation assistant.
▶ A neutral dog team enters the room and makes a short visit with another assistant. You support your bird as needed.
▶ As the neutral dog team leaves their visit, the two teams approach each other and pass approximately an arm’s length apart.
▶ Your team visits with the other evaluation assistant as the neutral dog team leaves.
▶ Your bird remains calm and does not show aggression or excessive fear.
Aptitude Exercises for Birds

Overall Handling ♦

- Your bird is placed on either a table or the evaluator’s lap (your choice).
- The evaluator makes eye contact with your bird and then exposes it to physical handling to assess its reaction to being touched in different areas; for example, the evaluator holds your bird’s tail, touches its ears, looks in its mouth and handles its feet.
- You facilitate the interaction and support your bird as needed. Your bird accepts handling.

Exuberant and Clumsy Petting ♦

- Your bird is handled as it will be on a visit, carried on your hand or your arm (your choice).
- The evaluator simulates petting by someone with limited mobility and poor motor skills.
- The evaluator also uses a high-pitched or squeaky voice and makes strange noises while interacting with your bird.
- You facilitate the interaction and support your bird as needed. Your bird willingly accepts petting.

Staggering and Gesturing Individual

- Your bird is handled as it will be on a visit, carried on your hand or your arm (your choice).
- An assistant wearing a costume and using healthcare equipment staggars, gestures with the hands and moans until he or she is 6 feet from your team.
- The assistant stops, calls your team to approach and pets your bird.
- Your bird is willing to approach and accepts petting.

Angry Yelling

- Your bird is handled as it will be on a visit, carried on your hand or your arm (your choice).
- Two assistants begin yelling at each other approximately 6 feet away from your team. The yelling is not directed at your team.
- The assistants stop yelling and become neutral, and one assistant calls your team to approach.
- Your bird is willing to approach and accepts petting.

Bumped From Behind

- Your bird is handled as it will be on a visit, carried on either your hand or arm (your choice).
- While your bird is otherwise distracted by interactions with the assistants, the evaluator comes up from behind and gently bumps you on the side opposite from where your bird is carried.
- You acknowledge the bump and support your bird as needed.
- If your bird startles, it recovers promptly.
Crowded and Petted by Several People ♦

- Your bird is handled as it will be on a visit, carried on your hand or your arm (your choice).
- Three assistants approach, one at a time, and begin touching your bird, until all three are gathered closely around, attempting to attract your bird’s attention.
- One assistant will be using healthcare equipment to approach your team.
- You proactively manage the crowd, facilitating interactions and supporting your bird as needed.
- Your bird willingly accepts petting.

Leave It: Peck Response ♦

- You hold your bird on your hand or arm, facing the evaluator.
- The evaluator approaches with a shiny object in hand, such as a ring, bracelet or key chain.
- Your bird may show interest but should not peck; you may redirect your bird’s behavior.

Offered a Treat

- Your bird is handled as it will be on a visit, carried on your hand or your arm (your choice).
- The evaluator walks toward your team with a treat in hand, saying, “May I give your bird a treat?”
- You get to decide whether your bird may have the treat. If you choose not to have the treat offered, this also means you will not allow treats to be given while visiting.
- If you allow the treat to be taken, you direct the evaluator how best to offer the treat; your bird takes the treat gently.

♦ Indicates exercises used to determine a Complex team qualification rating