



Certification Council for
Professional Dog Trainers

CPDT-KA Examination Study Objectives

- The Examination Study Objectives are a detailed expansion of the CPDT-KA Examination Domains. Examination candidates should carefully review the domain structure and emphasis within the examination; more weight is given to some of the domains than others. Candidates are encouraged to develop their own plan for personal study and may choose to include study aides beyond the scope of this document.
- Candidates should download the Candidate Handbook from www.ccpdt.org for detailed and complete examination information.
- The CCPDT Candidate Handbook, the examination application form, the examination, nor the CPDT-KA credential constitutes a contract between the candidate or the certificant and the CCPDT. The CCPDT reserves the right to change any of the requirements concerning its CPDT-KA credential, including but not limited to the eligibility requirements, examination content, recertification requirements, fees, use of the mark, name of the mark, and the website. Information published in the current version of the Candidate Handbook on the CCPDT website supersedes all other printed or electronic versions of the Handbook.

Document Links

The following documents can all be found at www.ccpdt.org under Certification, Dog Trainer Certification:

- CCPDT CBCC-KA Handbook for Candidates including the CBCC-KA Examination Domains (“Content Outline”)
- Standards of Practice and Code of Ethics
- Least Intrusive, Minimally Aversive (LIMA) Effective Behavior Intervention

Content Outline

I. Instruction Skills (48%)

1. Interpersonal Skills
 - a. Obtain dog’s history (health, home environment, training, behavior issues) from client
 - b. Ask client about the goals and expectations of training
 - c. Assess client’s ability to implement training recommendations
 - d. Advise client on appropriate breed/puppy selection
 - e. Determine when the work with client is concluded
 - f. Adjust training plan based on individual progress
 - g. Determine an appropriate follow-up schedule
 - h. Design a maintenance and management plan with a client
 - i. Teach a private lesson
 - j. Teach a group class
 - k. Provide feedback to a client
 - l. Demonstrate empathy and compassion when giving feedback
 - m. Motivate client to participate in training
 - n. Determine if client needs special assistance

2. Teaching Skills
 - a. Help client determine how to prioritize training goals
 - b. Observe client training
 - c. Create a lesson plan
 - d. Design a class curriculum
 - e. Develop a training plan
 - f. Set criteria for at-home practice
 - g. Collect data on training progress
 - h. Teach client how to train a behavior
 - i. Teach client how to properly fit and use equipment
 - j. Teach client how to use voice as a training tool
 - k. Teach client how to identify, prevent, and respond to dangerous situations
 - l. Teach client how to prevent rehearsal of problem behavior
 - m. Teach client proper timing and delivery of reinforcers
 - n. Teach client to apply skills/techniques
 - o. Instruct client to maintain a training log
 - p. Explain a dog's body language to a client
 - q. Explain displacement behavior to a client
 - r. Teach client how to keep dog below emotional threshold
 - s. Teach client how to play with dog
 - t. Demonstrate to client how to countercondition and desensitize
 - u. Explain how developmental stages affect behavior
 - v. Explain prevention as a strategy
 - w. Explain management as a strategy
 - x. Teach stimulus discrimination (e.g. cues) and generalization
 - y. Use client-friendly terminology
 - z. Explain the expected training or behavior outcome to a client
 - aa. Write a report for client about training findings
 - bb. Conduct a follow-up session with a client

3. Managing the Training Environment
 - a. Monitor people and dog interactions
 - b. Create a safe training environment
 - c. Manage the physical environment for optimal learning
 - d. Create emergency plans

4. Business Practices and ethics
 - a. Assess personal competency to begin and continue working with client
 - b. Arrive at a consultation/lesson prepared
 - c. Obtain a signed confidentiality release form from a client
 - d. Obtain informed consent from a client
 - e. Consult another animal professional
 - f. Explain client roles, rights and responsibilities
 - g. Explain policies to clients
 - h. Check training plan against humane hierarchy
 - i. Make a referral to another professional (e.g., vet behaviorist, lawyer, insurance agent)
 - j. Take notes regarding each training session
 - k. Securely store client information
 - l. Adhere to state and local dog laws

II. Animal Husbandry (4%)

1. Obtain a copy of a dog's vaccination history
2. Obtain a veterinarian release, as appropriate, prior to a class or session
3. Have knowledge about contagious disease and transmission in canines
4. Have knowledge about general health and wellbeing of canines
5. Identify action patterns/motor programs

III. Ethology (7%)

1. Perform a behavior/temperament evaluation
2. Identify canine species-specific behavior
3. Assess bite level/severity of bite
4. Assess/interpret dog vocal signals
5. Assess/interpret canine body language
6. Observe a training or behavior problem

IV. Learning Theory (36%)

1. Operant Conditioning
 - a. Identify appropriate reinforcers for a dog
 - b. Identify appropriate punishers for a dog
 - c. Lure a behavior
 - d. Shape a behavior
 - e. Chain behaviors
 - f. Use targeting to obtain a behavior
 - g. Use body blocking to obtain a behavior
 - h. Capture a behavior
 - i. Physically mold behavior
 - j. Prompt behavior
 - k. Fade a lure or prompt
 - l. Use positive reinforcement to modify behavior
 - m. Use negative reinforcement to modify behavior
 - n. Use positive punishment to modify behavior
 - o. Use negative punishment to modify behavior
 - p. Use extinction to modify behavior
 - q. Use continuous reinforcement schedule
 - r. Use a fixed ratio reinforcement schedule
 - s. Use an intermittent ratio reinforcement schedule
 - t. Use a fixed reinforcement interval schedule
 - u. Use an intermittent interval reinforcement schedule
 - v. Use a differential reinforcement schedule
 - w. Use deprivation for behavior change
2. Classical Conditioning
 - a. Use flooding to change behavior
 - b. Use counterconditioning and desensitization to modify behavior
3. Training Problems
 - a. Identify antecedents, behavior, consequence sequences
 - b. Evaluate effectiveness of training plan
 - c. Define a behavior as observable, measurable, and reproducible
 - d. Assess predictability, frequency, and intensity of behavior
 - e. Set measurable goals
 - f. Identify an appropriate alternative behavior
4. Environmental Management
 - a. Eliminate antecedents to modify behavior

V. Equipment (5%)

1. Select equipment needed for training
2. Make physical and mental enrichment recommendations
3. Properly fit and use training equipment
4. Select appropriate training and management equipment
5. Use decoy animals (e.g. dogs, cats)