CPDT-KA® Examination Study Objectives

The CPDT-KA 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, as 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 for detailed and complete exam information.

Content of Examination

- The examination for Certified Professional Dog Trainer - Knowledge Assessed (CPDT-KA) is composed of objective multiple-choice items. There are 180 scored items on the exam, plus 20 pre-test items. Only the scored items count towards a candidate's final score. The pre-test items are randomly distributed throughout the exam and do not count towards a candidate's score. The pre-test items are being evaluated to determine if they perform well enough to be introduced as scored items on future examinations.

- The questions for the examination are developed by individuals with expertise in dog training and are reviewed for construction, accuracy, and appropriateness by the CCPDT.

- The CCPDT, with the advice and assistance of PTC, prepares the examination.

- The content for the examination is described in the Content Outline.

- The CPDT-KA exam is weighted in approximately the following manner:

DOMAIN	% of Exam
I. Applied Learning Theory	25%
II. Instructional and Teaching Skills	32%
III. Canine Behavior, Ethology, and Well-being	26%
IV. Professional Skills, Ethics, and Laws & Regulations	17%

Content Outline

The content outline, generated through regular surveying of dog trainers, describes what a professional dog trainer should know and be able to do. This information is sorted into four (4) broad categories called domains. Each domain is organized into two lists: Tasks and Knowledge Areas.

- Knowledge Areas represent what dog trainers KNOW. They reflect the concepts and topics a

professional should understand and be familiar with.

- Tasks represent what surveys in the industry have indicated dog trainers actually DO. They are skills a dog trainer should understand and have the ability to perform if necessary.

NOTE: *CCPDT candidates and certificants must adhere to all CCPDT Standards of Practice and Code of Ethics, Policies, and Position Statements. Not all of the Tasks represent a skill a CCPDT certificant is allowed to engage in as a primary means of training. However, a professional should understand the application of these tasks.* Understanding *the application of a task is not the same as* choosing to apply *the task.*

Domain I. Applied Learning Theory (7 Tasks)

01. Apply learning theory appropriately and humanely to change and/or maintain behavior

02. Create, adjust, and evaluate effectiveness of training plans

03. Identify and appropriately use reinforcers and punishers

04. Select and humanely use appropriate training techniques

05. Identify and implement appropriate reinforcement schedules

06. Collect and/or interpret data

07. Identify, set, and adjust criteria

Knowledge Areas drawn upon to perform tasks in Domain I include:
K01, K02, K03, K04, K05, K06, K07, K08, K09, K10, K17, K18, K19, K20, K35, K43, K44, K51, K52, K54, K58

Domain II. Instructional and Teaching Skills (12 Tasks)

01. Teach and coach clients in private and group settings

02. Create maintenance and management plans for clients

03. Create training plans for clients

04. Teach clients how to apply learning theory to change and/or maintain behavior

05. Teach safety and management skills to clients

06. Manage environment to promote learning

07. Teach clients mechanical training skills

08. Develop, implement, and adapt lesson plans and class curricula

09. Teach clients to use equipment and tools related to canine care and training safely, effectively, and consensually

10. Communicate with clients effectively

11. Identify and apply appropriate teaching and instructional theories to help clients achieve specific training goals

12. Teach clients to recognize and interpret dog body language, vocalizations, behavior, and indicators of health/well-being

Knowledge Areas drawn upon to perform tasks in Domain II include:
K03, K04, K06, K07, K08, K09, K11, K12, K13, K14, K15, K16, K17, K18, K19, K20, K21, K22, K23, K24, K25, K26, K27, K42, K43, K46, K52, K53, K54, K56, K57, K58, K61, K62, K63, K64, K65

Domain III. Canine Behavior, Ethology, and Well-being (8 Tasks)

01. Observe, interpret, evaluate, and monitor interactions involving dogs

02. Observe, interpret, evaluate, and assess dog body language and vocalizations

03. Recognize and respond to basic health and well-being needs and concerns of dogs

04. Review dog's vaccination and other medical records

05. Interpret behavior/training history and training progress

06. Identify and select appropriate physical and mental enrichment

07. Select and properly fit appropriate training and management equipment

08. Create a safe training environment and reduce risks of injury and disease

Knowledge Areas drawn upon to perform tasks in Domain III include:
K07, K15, K27, K28, K29, K30 K31, K32, K33, K34, K35, K36, K37, K38, K39, K40, K41, K42, K43, K44, K45, K46, K48, K49, K50, K51, K52, K53, K54, K55, K56, K57, K58

Domain IV. Professional Skills, Ethics, and Laws and Regulations (7 Tasks)

01. Collect and store dog, client, and business records as appropriate

02. Identify need for, and refer to, veterinarians and other professionals

03. Explain policies and roles/rights/responsibilities to clients

04. Identify and resolve conflicts

05. Use problem-solving and critical thinking skills

06. Create and follow best business and ethical practices

07. Understand and follow laws, regulations, and ethical guidelines

Knowledge Areas drawn upon to perform tasks in Domain IV include:
K10, K13, K14, K15, K16, K19, K21, K22, K46, K47, K50, K59, K60, K61, K62, K63, K64, K65, K66, K67, K68, K69, K70, K71, K72, K73, K74, K75, K76

Knowledge Areas

K01.   Applied behavior analysis

K02.   Antecedent-Behavior-Consequence sequences

K03.   Setting and changing training and behavior criteria

K04.   Stimulus (i.e., cue) discrimination and control, generalization, salience, overshadowing, blocking, context effects, etc.

K05. Learning Theory/Behavior change processes (e.g., reinforcement, punishment, classical conditioning, operant conditioning, extinction, counterconditioning, systematic desensitization, flooding, deprivation, habituation, sensitization)

K06. Training techniques (e.g., shaping, fading, luring, chaining, back-chaining, targeting, capturing, prompting, mimicry, body blocking, molding)

K07. Risks and benefits of different training and behavior change techniques

K08. Reinforcers (primary, secondary/conditioned, etc.), markers, and no-reward markers

K09. Reinforcement schedules (e.g., continuous, fixed ratio, intermittent ratio, fixed interval, intermittent interval, differential, variable ratio, variable interval, jackpots, contrast effects)

K10. Data collection and documentation

K11. Client motivation

K12. Client needs and limits

K13. Client assistance and accommodations

K14. Consultation/lesson preparation

K15. Safety

K16. Emergency plans

K17. Training goals

K18. Measurable goals

K19. Management plans

K20. Training and behavior change plans

K21. Private and group lessons

K22. Lesson plans and class curricula

K23. Teaching, training, coaching, and consulting skills (e.g., motivational interviewing, active listening, mechanical skills, learning modalities)

K24. At-home practice

K25. Maintenance plans

K26. Follow-up schedules

K27. Evaluation of training plan effectiveness

K28. Ethology

K29. Canine species-specific behavior

K30. Dog senses

K31. Dog cognition and perception

K32. Genetic influences

K33. Breed-specific traits

K34. Developmental stages

K35. Behavior as observable, measurable, and reproducible

K36. Action patterns/motor programs

K37. Predictability, frequency, and intensity of behavior

K38. Bite level/severity of bite

K39. Dog-dog interactions

K40. Socialization

K41. People-dog interactions

K42. Dog-client compatibility

K43. Training or behavior problems

K44. Dog attention and engagement

K45. Displacement behavior

K46. Cooperative care

K47. Veterinarian release

K48. Injuries, contagious diseases, and transmission in dogs

K49. General health and well-being of dogs (e.g., body language, vocalizations, behavior, indicators of health/well-being)

K50. Elements of dog's history (e.g., vaccination records, health, previous training and behavioral issues, home environment)

K51. Dog freedom (e.g., agency, choice, consent-seeking, learned helplessness)

K52. Management of environment (e.g., distractions, safety, proofing)

K53. Management equipment (e.g., voice, crates, cones, gates)

K54. Prevention as a strategy

K55. Physical and mental enrichment recommendations

K56. Training equipment and props (e.g., leashes, collars, jumps, hoops)

K57. Demonstration or prop animals (e.g., dogs, cats, plush toys)

K58. Stages of learning (e.g., acquisition, fluency, generalization, adaptation, maintenance of behavior)

K59. Professional competency/case eligibility (working within one's skill set)

K60. Policies: Least Intrusive, Minimally Aversive (LIMA), Humane Hierarchy, CCPDT Joint Standards of Practice and Code of Ethics

K61. Roles, rights, and responsibilities/needs, desires, and limits of trainer, client, and dog

K62. Client-friendly communication and feedback

K63. Conflict resolution

K64. Critical thinking skills

K65. Ending client relationships

K66. Trainer health/well-being/mental health/self-care

K67. Referrals to other professionals (e.g., veterinarian, behavior consultant, lawyer, insurance agent, nutritionist, fitness trainer)

K68. Research methods

K69. Scientific literacy

K70. Professionalism, cultural competency, and business skills

K71. Business practices

K72. Laws and regulations

K73. Definitions of service dog, therapy dog, and emotional support animal

K74. Business and legal recordkeeping (e.g., signed confidentiality release form, informed consent)

K75. Documentation, reports of training sessions, training logs

K76. Storage of client information