Job Task Analysis
for the
Certified Professional Dog Trainer – Knowledge Assessed
(CPDT-KA®)
Certification Program
Executive Summary of Final Report

Presented to:
Certification Council for Professional Dog Trainers
CCPDT
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by Professional Testing Corporation

Job Task Analysis Background, Purpose, and Methodology

A Job Task Analysis study was undertaken by Certification Council for Professional Dog Trainers (CCPDT) with the assistance of Professional Testing Corporation (PTC). A Task Force delineated the tasks and knowledge areas involved in the profession of dog training. A group of Independent Reviewers assessed their work and provided feedback. A survey instrument was designed to validate the tasks and knowledge areas. Demographic questions were included in the survey to determine the backgrounds of the survey respondents. Members of the Task Force also completed a matrix linking the domains with the knowledge areas drawn upon to perform the tasks in each domain.

The survey was prepared and sent electronically to roughly 5,290 CCPDT certificants. Access to the survey also was provided on several social media sites. Respondents were asked to evaluate the frequency and importance of task statements, the importance of knowledge areas, and the importance of and percentage of time devoted to tasks in each domain. The respondents also were asked to review the eligibility and recertification criteria and determine whether the requirements were appropriate.

The results are being used in the evaluation and revision of the content specifications for the Certified Professional Dog Trainer – Knowledge Assessed (CPDT-KA $^®$) Examination. This process contributes to the validity of the examination and the quality of the examination program for the CPDT-KA$^®$ credential.

The Job Task Analysis Study

In the fall of 2022, CCPDT established a Steering Committee for the CPDT-KA$^®$ Job Task Analysis (JTA). The Steering Committee consisted of dog trainers who have been active in CCPDT volunteer activities and represented a variety of areas of expertise, levels of experience, and geographic locations. In October 2022, the Steering Committee appointed a Task Force of seven professional dog trainers to delineate the tasks and knowledge areas involved in the profession of dog training, as well as the demographic questions to be used on a validation survey instrument. The Steering Committee, acting in an advisory capacity, provided general guidance to PTC and the Task Force.

Delineation of Domains, Tasks, and Knowledge Areas
The Task Force began by reviewing the sections/domains, tasks, knowledge areas, and demographic questions that were developed in the previous survey conducted in 2018 and were asked to evaluate them against current, best practice. The Task Force determined that it would be appropriate to restructure the tasks to make them more comprehensive, while expanding the knowledge areas to make them more detailed. The domains also were modified to better reflect the updated tasks. The newly worded task statements and knowledge areas were deemed to accurately represent the current profession.

The Task Force set the scales for the survey. The frequency scale for the task statements was set at Regularly (with >75% of clients), Frequently (with 51%-75% of clients), Occasionally (with 25%-50% of clients), and Infrequently (with <25% of clients). The importance scale was set at Extremely Important, Moderately Important, Slightly Important, and Not Important.

A panel of Independent Reviewers provided feedback on the comprehensiveness, clarity, consistency, and relevance of the proposed domains, tasks, knowledge areas, and demographic questions to the field of dog training. The Task Force took into consideration the comments from the Independent Reviewers and came to a consensus on which changes would be incorporated into the final text of the survey. The Task Force agreed upon 34 task statements (organized into four domains), 76 knowledge areas, and 12 demographic questions that were included in the final survey. Task Force members also used a matrix of domains and knowledge areas to indicate which domains draw upon which knowledge areas.

Validation Survey

To confirm the appropriateness of the domains, tasks, and knowledge areas developed by the Task Force, a validation survey was devised, also incorporating demographic questions to help create a profile of the survey respondents. A link to the survey was sent to 5,290 professional dog trainers. In addition, notices about the survey were posted on several social media sites. Between February 8 and February 21, 2023, over 1830 individuals clicked on a link to the survey, and 944 qualified individuals completed 90% or more of the survey. The responses of the participants who completed the survey were tabulated and cross tabulations of the data according to several of the demographic variables were run. The data collected provided the basis for weighting the domains in the test specifications for the CPDT-KA® certification examination.

In a final session held on April 13, 2023, the Task Force discussed the results of the survey and came to a consensus on which recommendations to make to the Steering Committee concerning the proposed test specifications. The Steering Committee met on May 10, 2023, to review the recommendations made by the Task Force. Both the Task Force and Steering Committee reviewed the demographic data of the survey respondents and agreed that the sample described by the responses appropriately reflects and is representative of the general population of professional dog trainers in the United States.

Eligibility and Recertification Requirements

In addition to providing demographic information about themselves, the survey respondents were asked to review the current eligibility requirements for taking the CPDT-KA® certification examination and the recertification requirements for maintaining the credential. Out of the 944 respondents who provided feedback about the eligibility and recertification requirements, approximately 88% agreed with the current requirements. The Task Force and the Steering Committee reviewed this information and decided to retain these eligibility and recertification requirements without modification.

Test Specifications

The survey respondents rated the task statements for frequency and importance, and the knowledge areas for importance. All of the tasks and knowledge areas were found to be at least slightly important and so are included in the test specifications. The calculations for the domain weightings are based on both the percentage of time spent in each domain and the importance ratings of the domains. The knowledge areas were linked to the domains they support. The Task Force and Steering Committee both agreed that the weightings derived from the calculations were appropriate for the CPDT-KA® certification examination test specifications. The CCPDT Board officially approved the new test specifications as shown below:

The CCPDT CPDT-KA® Certification Examination will consist of 200 multiple-choice items, of which 180 are scored operational items and 20 are unscored items.

Domain	Weighting (%)	Number of Scored Items	Number of Unscored Items	Total
I. Applied Learning Theory	25.2	45	5	50
II. Instructional and Teaching Skills	32.4	59	7	66
III. Canine Behavior, Ethology, and Well-being	25.7	46	5	51
IV. Professional Skills, Ethics, and Laws and Regulations	16.7	30	3	33
Total	100	180	20	200

The full content outline, including domain, tasks, and associated knowledge areas, is shown below:

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