



# **Animal Assisted Placement Programs (AAPP)**

## **Standards, General Competencies, Accreditation Processes and Manual, and Glossary**

The Animal Assisted Intervention International Standards of Practice most recent revision was **February 21, 2021**. This revision includes citations from articles and books, and peer-reviewed journals that identified the need for the outlined standards. The standards, competencies and accreditation procedures have been compiled into specific membership category booklets. The AAIL Board of Directors wishes to extend special thanks to the following people who made contributions to the revisions and spent hours reading and citing the literature, amongst other tedious work. AAIL has ongoing working groups that are currently developing complementary documents and are also listed here.

### **AAIL Standards**

**Chair:** Melissa Winkle (USA) and Peter Gorbing.

**Major Contributors:** Melissa Winkle (USA), Jennifer Rogers (USA), Lucija Katalenić (Croatia), Peter Gorbing & Selina Hope Gibsone (UK), Danny Vancoppennolle & Jan Heremans (Belgium), Elma Burg (NL), Teo Mariscal (Spain), Sven Hultman & Ingeborg Höök (Sweden), Bridget Simpson (USA) & Claire Dickson (Australia).

**General Standards Working Group:** Jennifer Rogers, Melissa Winkle, Ada Tomezzoli, Federica Aste, Debra Buttram.

**Standards for the Administration of Programs:** Peter Gorbing, Danny Vancoppennolle, Melissa Winkle.

**Standards for Participants:** Melissa Winkle, Cynthia Chandler, Ellen Herlache-Pretzer, Daniela Balduzzi, Lea Devčić, Phoebe Yam, Karen Ni.

**Standards of Practice for Dog Handlers and the Support of Dogs in AAILs:** Melissa Winkle, Jennifer Rogers, Jan Heremans, Selina Gibsone.

**Standards of Practice for the Health, Welfare and Well-being of Dogs:** Melissa Winkle, Amy Johnson, Petra Van Benten, Christine Johnson, Risë VanFleet, Karen Ni.

**Standards of Practice for Animal Assisted Activity:** Peter Gorbing, Melissa Winkle, Lucija Katalenić and Graham Ford.

**Standards of Practice for Animal Assisted Education:** Melissa Winkle and Lucija Katalenić.

**Standards of Practice for Animal Assisted Therapy:** Melissa Winkle, Lucija Katalenić, Lea Devčić, and Selina Gibsone.

**Standards of Practice for Animal Assisted Special Programs:** Jennifer Rogers, Peter Gorbing, Melissa Winkle, Helen McCain, Iris Smolković, Petra van Benten, Maria Daniela Balduzzi.

**Standards of Practice for Animal Assisted Placement Programs:** Jennifer Rogers, Peter Gorbing, Melissa Winkle, Helen McCain, Iris Smolkovic, Petra van Benten, and Daniela Maria Balduzzi.

**Standards for Affiliate Members:** Melissa Winkle & Amy Johnson

### **AAIL Competencies**

**Chairs:** Melissa Winkle, Jennifer Rogers & Claire Dickson.

**Working Groups:** Leslie A. Stewart, Melissa Winkle, Claire Dickson, Jennifer Rogers, Cynthia Chandler, Greta Kerulo, Selina Gibsone, Maria Daniela Balduzzi, Petra van Benten, Helen McCain, Iris Smolkovic and Risë VanFleet.

**Original Competencies:** Stewart, L. A. (2014); Stewart, L. A., Chang, C. Y., Parker, L. K., & Grubbs, N. (2016); and Stewart, L. A., Johnson, A., Bruneau, L., & Callahan, M. M. (2016).

### **AAIL Accreditation**

Melissa Winkle, Jennifer Rogers, Peter Gorbing, Bridget Simpson, Jan Heremans, Selina Gibsone, Maria Daniela Balduzzi, Petra van Benten, Helen McCain, Iris Smolkovic.

**Guest Experts:** Prof. Daniel Mills, Greta Kerulo, Leslie Stewart, Helen McCain.

**Additional Concept, Layout and Editing Contributions:** Peter Gorbing, Melissa Winkle, Jennifer Rogers, Macy Porter, Selina Gibsone, Petra Van Benten, Phoebe Yam and Edith Bailey.

# Animal Assisted Placement Programs (AAPP) Standards, General Competencies Accreditation Processes and Manual, and Glossary

## Introduction

This booklet provides a clear outline of Animal Assisted Intervention International's requirements for members working in the field of AAPP. It covers:

|   | Page      |
|---|-----------|
| <b>Standards as laid out in the Accreditation Manual - including Accreditation Guidance Notes</b> | <b>5</b>  |
| <b>Competencies Summary</b>   | <b>23</b> |
| <b>AAll Accreditation Process</b>   | <b>25</b> |
| <b>Documentation required prior to assessment- Accreditation Portfolio Contents</b>               | <b>26</b> |
| <b>Glossary of Terms</b>  | <b>28</b> |
| <b>Appendix 1 - Competencies</b>  | <b>35</b> |

**The Animal Assisted Placement Program Membership Category is defined as follows:**

**Animal Assisted Placement Programs (AAPP)** - An AAPP involves a professional program or individual who provides specially selected and/or trained animals to professionals in AAA, AAE, AAT or AASP. AAPPs instruct animal recipients/handlers about animal advocacy, handling, training, communication, behavior, husbandry, health, welfare and well-being in both living and working situations. Some examples of AAPPs are Assistance Dogs International (ADI) (or similar) dog training organizations or similar that raise, train and place "facility dogs" or train dogs for placement with healthcare, human service, education, crisis response, clinics. AAPPs also includes individuals or organizations that offer owner-self-training classes for healthcare, education, or human service providers, etc. AAPP promotes positive, safe relationships between the handler and the animal.

### **Animal Assisted Placement Program Membership Criteria**

Membership in the field of **Animal Assisted Placement Programs** is open to organizations and individuals that are active in the field of professional selection and/or specialized training of animals to be placed with professionals who work in animal assisted intervention programs.

- **Full Membership Criteria**

- Organization or individual should have advanced to expert knowledge and experience in the field of selecting and/or training animals and the specific discipline practice, environments, populations and activities of their professional human partners who work in professional animal assisted intervention areas, and the collaboration for these programs (see AAll Member Booklet for AAPP, Appendix I, Competencies). Named person required for membership.
- Voting rights.
- Working group privileges.
- May apply for position on board of directors.
- Use of AAll logo.

- **Associate Membership Criteria**

- Organization or individual who is working at entry or intermediate level of selecting and/or specialized training animals for the purpose of placing them and/or supporting the training of a professional who works in the field of animal assisted interventions. Named person required for membership.
- No voting rights or board of directors appointments.
- Working group privileges upon invitation only.
- Use of AAI logo.



## Animal Assisted Placement Programs Standards of Practice – Accreditation Manual

The Standards of Practice have been produced by the authors under the direction of the Members and Board of Directors of Animal Assisted Intervention International (AAIL), to assist and encourage individuals, organizations, institutions, and health and human service providers who are interested in, or are implementing, any animal assisted intervention (AAI) program including AAA, AAE, AAT, AASP and AAPP. AAIL considers this a living document that will undergo revisions as needed to keep up with the scope of AAI around the world.

The standards outlined in **this** booklet are a minimum of what is required to conduct an **AAPP program** for Animal Assisted Intervention International (AAIL) members. All programs are encouraged to work at levels above the minimum standards and should also meet any standards or regulations that are required by governing bodies for their region and their home organization.

The term Animal Assisted Intervention (AAI) will be used throughout this document even though it could apply to any specific program such as AAA, AAT, AAE or AASP. The first set of standards listed here are specific to AAPP.

The following sets of standards are relevant to AAPP:

1. Standards of Practice for Animal Assisted Placement Programs (AAPP)
2. Standards of Practice for the Administration of Programs
3. Standards of Practice for Dog Handlers and the Support of Dogs
4. Standards of Practice for the Health, Welfare and Well-being of Dogs

AAPP's training and preparing dogs for placement with recipients should be aware of all AAIL standards and train recipients, accordingly, depending on the AAI work they plan to undertake.

Recipients, particularly if they are members of AAIL, should meet all the standards relevant to the AAI work they undertake – see other relevant AAIL booklets.

Attached to each standard is a description of the assessment method(s) that will be used during the accreditation process as follows:

|                      |   |
|----------------------|---|
| <b>Documentation</b> | Written evidence to show compliance                       |
| <b>Observation</b>   | Assessor observes standard during session, pre-video etc. |
| <b>Interview</b>     | Discussions with people involved in the process           |

For those seeking accreditation, the required documentation, and the order in which they need to be organized in your accreditation portfolio may be found in the section titled ACCREDITATION PORTFOLIO at the end of this document.

### Guidance Notes

Where appropriate, **Guidance Notes** are included to support the Standard and are there to facilitate understanding and/or clarifying the associated sentence(s).

### Recording the assessment

- ✓ Each section needs to be successfully met.

In this document:

“**Shall**” indicates a requirement.

“**Should**” indicates a recommendation.

## Standards of Practice for Animal Assisted Placement Programs (AAPP)

AAPP implementation assumes the participation of three valued parties:

- The organization/individual receiving training and/or a dog for intervention work – known as the **Recipient**.
- The Animal Assisted Placement Program - dog trainer/instructor/program (referred to as **program or AAPP** for rest of this document) - an individual or program with several individuals who have training and experience in dog handling, training, behavior, and instructional skills related to intervention work.
- The intervention support dog.

Dog training and placement organizations/individuals and recipients understand that these standards are for dogs who have been trained specifically for an area of Animal Assisted Interventions (AAA, AAT, AAE, AASP). These are not standards for dog released from programs.

### 1.0 Preparation and Placement

- 1.1 The AAPP shall maintain all preparation, training, and evaluation logs for the training of the dog and the recipient. **(Documentation)**
- 1.2 Prior to the dog being placed with the recipient, the AAPP shall complete a facility/environment visitation to the place where the dog will be based. **(Documentation)**
- 1.3 Prior to placement, the AAPP shall ensure that the dog has been thoroughly trained and evaluated to ensure the dog is physically and socially appropriate for their career path. Any career change, behavioral or health issues will be disclosed to recipient. **(Documentation)**
- 1.4 Prior to placement the AAPP shall teach the dog handler about humane equipment, knowledge of acceptable handling and training techniques, and ability to problem solve and teach new behaviours to the intervention support dog according to all AAPP Standards of Practice. **(Interview/Observation)**
- 1.5 Prior to the placement, it must be clear that the dog should always have the recipient dog handler nearby during the intervention work. The dog should, preferably, live at their handler's home in between sessions, but a consistent alternative housing situation can also work if carefully considered. **(Interview)**
- 1.6 Prior to the placement, specific animal assisted intervention sessions shall be identified for planning purposes, as well as emergency and evacuation plans created and documented prior to program implementation. See AAPP Standards for the Administration of Programs.
- 1.7 Prior to placement the recipient shall be given a thorough education on canine care and health, enrichment, animal welfare, and psychological well-being. **(Documentation/interview)**
- 1.8 Prior to placement the recipient shall have a thorough understanding of how to integrate the dog in canine assisted interventions and how to prepare for sessions that a dog cannot be partnered with (sick days, vacation days, appropriate work schedule that matches breed specific traits, and individual dog preferences and skills, etc). **(interview)**
- 1.9 Prior to placement the recipient shall have knowledge of local access laws and appropriate behaviour in working environment. **(Interview)**
- 1.2 If the AAPP owns the dog prior to placement, they shall provide medical and microchip, and training records to the recipient. Transference of ownership policies shall be made clear to the recipient with expectations and timelines in writing. **(Documentation)**

- 1.3 If the recipient is not already working within their professional field, the AAPP shall provide education on the population that the dog will be serving with them and safety considerations related to the work the dog will be doing. **(Interview)**
- 1.4 Prior to placement, the placement program shall make the recipient aware of the relevant AAI standards. **(Interview)**
- 1.5 The AAPP shall be responsible for teaching entry and intermediate level competencies to the recipient staff/volunteers. **(Documentation)**
- 1.6 AAPP's should ensure placement records are shared with and kept by the recipient and that there is feedback on the progress of the dog and appropriate follow-up. **(Documentation)**

**Guidance Note:**

- Assessors will want to see that the dog has gone through an appropriate training program and that the recipient has also been trained to meet the standards appropriate to support the dog in its AAI work.

## **2.0 Professional Qualifications and Ethical Guidelines**

- 2.1 The AAPP and the recipient's activities shall be practiced within the specific codes of conduct of their own professions. **(Interview)**
- 2.2 All recipient information and documentation obtained during the conduction of the AAPP placement program shall remain confidential unless otherwise disclosed legally. **(Interview)**
- 2.3 If a dog is being professionally trained and placed with a professional facility, the AAPP and the recipient are expected to follow the standards set forth by AAI. **(Observation)**

## **3.0 Mentoring and Supervision**

- 3.1 AAPP's and recipients who are new to AAI shall identify and collaborate with a mentor who has achieved professional competencies with experience in dog training and interventions within AAI. **(Interview)**
- 3.2 All documentation of the AAPP, recipient and dog shall be available to each party and maintained, including health and behaviour evaluations, participation summaries and incident reports, and discontinuation of services. **(Observation)**

## **4.0 Competencies**

- 4.1 AAPP's staff/volunteers shall demonstrate entry and Intermediate competencies at a minimum. Trainers/instructors should have a designated mentor until able to demonstrate professional level skills, and complete at least 8 hours of formal continuing education every year, these may be the same CEUs documented in AAA, AAE, AAT, AASP, animal behavior, training, etc. **(Documentation)**

This may include:

- Workshops
- In-services
- Webinars
- Books
- Formal coursework
- Conferences
- Mentorships/Internships



4.2 Where a dog is placed with a professional who they teach to be a dog handler there should be an annual follow-up. **(Interview)**

### **5.0 General Public Issues - Liability Insurance/Legislation**

5.1 AAPP professionals shall obtain and maintain liability insurance as required by their county, state, and local government as well as professional/facility requirements, and will not in any way jeopardize the implementation of the service due to violation of law. **(Documentation)**





# Standards of Practice for the Administration of Programs

These standards apply to all members/member organizations and their volunteers, staff, and anyone who is facilitating or participating in any program.

## 1.0 Program Structure

1.1 Members shall have an organizational chart for staff. **(Documentation)**

1.2 Where programs operate as not-for-profits, they shall be legally established with articles of incorporation/statutes/bylaws. **(Documentation)**

1.3 Where programs operate as for-profits, this shall be made clear to clients/partners. **(Documentation/Observation/Interview)**

## 2.0 Complaints Policy

2.1 Members shall have a written policy as to how complaints received from staff, volunteers, participants and facility partners will be addressed. **(Documentation)**

### **Guidance Note:**

The policy must provide a clear process for resolving complaints.

## 3.0 Safe Working Environment

3.1 Members shall carefully manage the locations where any type of training occurs, to ensure staff and dogs are always operating in a safe environment. **(Interview & Observation)**

### **Guidance Note:**

This includes, but is not limited to:

- Issues relating to dog transport and/or dog holding area issues (indoor or outdoor).

- Environment is conducive and comfortable for dogs and participants for AAI activity.

## 4.0 Image Protection

4.1 Members shall have a procedure in place for gaining written consent from participants, staff or volunteers for any filming or photography that involves them. **(Documentation)**

## 5.0 Confidentiality of Information

5.1 Members shall have a written policy that ensures any sensitive information and records regarding the placement is kept secure and confidential. **(Documentation & Interview)**

## 6.0 Insurance

6.1 Members shall have insurance in place appropriate to all activities undertaken and to deal with all key risks. This may include any or all the following: Professional liability, business liability, dog training, bodily injury to clients or other staff, etc. **(Documentation & Interview)**

## 7.0 Operating Partners

7.1 Where a member is working closely with another partner/organization (e.g. facility), appropriate documentation (e.g. contracts, leases, agreements, memorandum of understanding, etc.) shall be in place. **(Documentation)**

## 8.0 Marketing Statements and Fundraising

8.1 Members shall only make statements about their work in any form of promotional material that they know to be honest. **(Documentation/Observation)**

8.2 Members shall comply with any local fundraising regulations and, at a minimum, keep records of their fundraising activities, including the source of any money raised. **(Observation/Interview)**



## Standards of Practice for Handlers Supporting Dogs (Previously titled 'Animal Support')

These standards apply to AAPP organizations and individuals training and preparing dogs for AAI work and for training the recipients to meet these standards.

### 1.0 Human Interaction

1.1 Dog Handlers shall acknowledge and work within their own level of competence, education, licensure and skill set. **(Interview/Observation)**

1.2 Dog handlers shall demonstrate an understanding of human-animal interactions (HAI) and the human animal bond (HAB). **(Interview)**

#### **Guidance Note:**

- Everyone preparing dogs for interactions needs a good understanding of HAI and HAB, and evidence of how this has been developed through experience and educational work will be required. It is important you keep documentary evidence of any training you provide to your team.

### 2.0 Education/Experience

2.1 Dog handlers (including healthcare/human service/educational or special program providers who handle their own dogs) shall have good, general knowledge of dogs, including learning theory, and the application of humane training methods using relationship development and positive reinforcement (e.g. clicker training, body language, behavior, stress indicators, and calming techniques). Dog handlers will NOT use aversive equipment (choke chains, prong collars, martingale collars, electronic, or any other devices that administer negative or harmful stimuli), positive punishment nor negative reinforcement techniques. **(Documentation/Observation/Interview)**

2.2 Dog handlers shall have insight and training for breed specific traits, be knowledgeable about classical and operant conditioning, and demonstrate techniques of positive reinforcement and gentle handling rather than positive punishment and negative reinforcement or restraint (e.g. choke chains/leash corrections, leash jerks), show awareness of canine developmental milestones (mental, physical, and social), and individual skill level and range of capabilities for each dog he/she handles. Dog handlers should know the dog they are working with well and understand their individual preferences, strengths, and limitations. **(Interview/Observation)**

2.3 Dog handlers shall be able to demonstrate an understanding of the following areas:

- Potential dangers in the testing, educational, and/or treatment environment.
- Relevant regional specific bidirectional zoonosis and vaccination protocols.
- Signs of illness, injury, aging, resistance, or stress, which would temporarily or permanently prohibit the dog from participating in the program. It must be understood that a disability of the dog is not an automatic elimination from work; modifications will be in place.
- Participant specific precautions.
- General knowledge of dog care (demonstrates basic animal first aid, provide regular feeding schedule, continuous access to water, appropriate workloads for individual dogs, time for breaks away from people, enrichment, time for toilet breaks, participation of dog is within its skill level).
- Competency with any equipment used with the dog.
- Positive training and handling methods, use of appropriate equipment.
- Thorough knowledge of each dog he/she works with in the areas of signs of stress, calming techniques, reinforcement preferences, enrichment preferences, signs of refusal to work, and show the ability to respond appropriately to these behaviors.

- Elicit and reinforce desired behaviors, predict and inhibit undesired behaviors using professional and humane techniques during the selection, evaluation, training and handling.
- How to apply animal welfare and well-being to their work, transportation and living situation.
- Follow public access laws of the region relating to AAI dogs versus Assistance Dogs.
- The dog handler requires a working knowledge of learning theory relating to the practical training and handling off dogs.

**(Interview/Documentation)**

2.4 Dog handlers shall be trained in and demonstrate zoonotic risk/ infection control and public health crisis contact information, knowledge for their region, including risks to participant and environmental precautions (Winkle, 2016). Written documentation should include:

- Risk factor (e.g. tape worm).
- If and how it is transmitted between dogs and people (or from person to dog to another person).
- If it is transmittable to other dogs.
- Where/How it is spread.
- How to recognize it.
- Cleaning procedures (indoors/outdoors).
- Treatment for dog.
- Prevention for human and dog.

**(Documentation/Interview)**

**Guidance Note:**

- Assessors will want to talk to your dog handlers about how they have developed their skills and the approach they take during sessions. Their responses need to be in line with the standards.
- Assessors will also want proof that continuing training is in place for all handlers with at least 8 hours a year undertaken.

### 3.0 Assessment

3.1 Dog handlers shall undertake an assessment that includes their ability to handle (and if appropriate, train) a dog in the type of situation in which they will be working. If working in AAT this should incorporate working with therapists and contribution to planning programs. **(Documentation)**

**Guidance Note:**

- The assessment may be part of a formal course which the handler undertakes, or through an independent body, but the organization should ensure an assessment of skills/knowledge of the dog handler takes place before they can practice.

3.2 Dog handlers shall be assessed on their ability to provide consistent handling and develop a genuine relationship with the dog. It is important that the dog and handler are well matched. **(Observation)**

**Guidance Note:**

- The dog takes security from the handler and they must know that dog well in order to manage any situation that may arise and do the best for the dog. The dog handler should ensure that the dog demonstrate signs of enjoying interacting with specific populations, environments and that they find participating in the activities rewarding. Therefore, dogs should be friendly to participants and engage willingly. It is important the dog can initiate contact with participants in a genuine way, while remaining safe and under control.

3.3 The handler shall be assessed for their ability to handle and train each dog they will be working with. This will involve assessment of the temperament and behavior of the dog, and responsiveness to cues to

the level at which the handler works/trains the dog(s) they are working with (see competency tiers). **(Interview/Observation)**

3.4 The dog handler shall be able to direct the dog with a normal speaking voice or with discreet hand signals. **(Observation)**

3.5 The dog handler shall be able to walk the dog with minimal cues with a loose lead (no choke chains, prong collars or harsh restraint). **(Observation)**

**Guidance Note:**

- The dog handler needs to show considerate handling, always supporting the dog when needed, and showing consideration for the participant.

**4.0 Documentation**

4.1 Dog handler shall maintain vaccination records for each dog and provide proof to organizations in which the dog works, upon request. **(Documentation/Interview)**

**Guidance Note:**

[Redacted text]

**5.0 Risk Assessments/Safety**

5.1 The dog handler shall be aware of the relevant canine laws (e.g. transportation, leash laws and public access laws) within their region. **(Documentation/Interview)**

5.2 The dog and handler should be clearly identifiable, wearing uniform/carrying ID where appropriate. **(Observation)**

**Guidance Note:**

Assessors will want to see what type of risk assessments and management plans [Redacted text]

**References:**

Chandler, C. K. (2017). *Animal-assisted therapy in counselling*. Taylor & Francis.

Winkle, M. Y. (2016) *Dogs in practice: The art and science of animal assisted therapy* [Conference presentation]. Dogwood Therapy Services, Albuquerque, NM, United States.

## Standards of Practice for the Health, Welfare, Well-being, and Training of Dogs

These standards apply to AAPP organizations and individuals training and preparing dogs for AAI work and for training the recipients to meet these standards.

### 1.0 Basic Needs and Rights of the Dog

1.1 The “[Five Freedoms](#)” in conjunction with [Operational Details of the Five Domains Model and its key Applications to the Assessment and Management of Animal Welfare](#) (Mellor, 2017), and the [One Health Initiative](#) (Hediger et al., 2019), must underpin all AAI activity and form the basic rights that all animals can expect.

1. Freedom from thirst, hunger, and malnutrition by ready access to fresh water and a diet to maintain full health and vigor (*Grandgeorge & Hausberger, 2011; Milani, 2016*).

Aims: “Minimize thirst and hunger and enable eating to be a pleasurable experience” (*Mellor, 2017*).

2. Freedom from discomfort by providing a suitable environment including shelter and a comfortable resting area (*Grandgeorge & Hausberger, 2011*).

Aims: “Minimize discomfort and exposure and promote thermal, physical and other comforts” (*Mellor, 2017*).

Example: Shade (*Mellor, 2017*), good air quality (*Mellor, 2017*), room temperature (*Glenk, 2017*), protection from hazards, toilet area, etc.

3. Freedom from pain, injury, and disease by prevention and/or rapid diagnosis and treatment (*Grandgeorge & Hausberger, 2011*).

Aims: “Minimize breathlessness, nausea, pain and other aversive experiences and promote the pleasures of robustness, vigor, strength and coordinated physical activity” (*Mellor, 2017*).

Example: Foster good muscle tone, posture, and cardiorespiratory function (*Mellor, 2017*) and Bio-mechanics.

4. Freedom from fear and distress by ensuring conditions that avoid mental suffering (*Grandgeorge & Hausberger, 2011*).

Aims: “Promote various forms of comfort, pleasure, interest, confidence and a sense of control” (*Mellor, 2017*).

Example: “Provide safe, congenial and species-appropriate opportunities to have pleasurable experiences” (*Mellor, 2017*). Ensure goodness of fit for dog and environment, population, and activity level.

5. Freedom to express most normal behavior by providing sufficient space, proper facilities, and company of the dog’s own kind (*Glenk et al, 2013; Grandgeorge & Hausberger, 2011*).

Aims: “Minimize threats and unpleasant restrictions on behavior and promote engagement in rewarding activities” (*Mellor, 2017*).

Example: Congenial company and appropriately varied conditions (*Mellor, 2017*). Being able to rest, play and engage in enriching activities that the dog prefers and enjoys. **(Observation/Interview)**



**Guidance Note:**

- AAll members should ensure they treat these as an absolute minimum to be exceeded significantly for all dogs involved in AAI. “Animals develop a better relationship to humans if, above the quality of interactions, their life conditions are appropriate” (*Grandgeorge & Hausberger, 2011*).

[Redacted text block]

[Redacted text block]

**2.0 General Health, Welfare and Well-being of the Dog**

2.1 Dog waste shall be immediately picked up and disposed of in an appropriate place. The dog handler must practice hand-washing and standard precautions for hygiene and infection control on a regular basis. **(Observation)**

2.2 Dog(s) shall be under regular veterinarian supervision. The facility will maintain individual files for each dog and contain proof of current vaccinations (or titers), parasite prevention, and healthcare based on regional requirements. Routine evaluations by a licensed veterinarian and prevention procedures shall be in place for internal and external parasites (e.g. heartworm, fleas, ticks, etc.). **(Documentation)**

**Guidance Note:**

- Assessors will ask to speak to your current veterinarian or veterinary personnel on the phone, live video or in person, please provide a signed release form stating that AAll has permission to exchange information with veterinary staff.

[Redacted text block]

- You are expected to keep full documentation on all aspects of the dog’s welfare and well-being, treatments, etc.

2.3 Dogs participating in AAI shall not have any serious health problems (e.g. hip/elbow problems, Leishmaniasis) that would be exacerbated by participating in AAls. **(Documentation)**

2.4 Dogs under veterinarian care for illness, injury, or pregnancy, shall not work or be trained during the time of gestation/nursing or treatment until the veterinarian approves of the dog’s return to work. **(Observation/Documentation)**

2.5 Dogs shall not demonstrate any signs of injury or illness while working or in training, unless there is proof of a medical treatment plan and clearance by the veterinarian to work. **(Observation/Documentation)**



2.6 Area where dogs spend a lot of time shall be regularly disinfected and treated for parasites when necessary. **(Observation)**

2.7 Dog(s) shall be kept clean and free of hair tangles, debris, and offensive odor. The same applies to all AAI equipment (e.g. toys, blankets, dishes). **(Observation)**

2.8 Dogs shall show minimal signs of anxiety and no aggression towards people during in training. If working with other dogs, any signs of aggression outside of normal development and canine communication shall be manageable. **(Observation)**

2.9 AAI delivery shall be avoided in food preparation, medication, and infection sensitive areas as well any other areas specified by facility rules. **(Observation)**

2.10 Dogs shall be comfortable and safe during any of transportation used, with consideration of local laws, if any are in place. **(Observation/Interviews)**

**Guidance Note:**

- This includes minimal stress for motor vehicles, using booties to protect paws from heat or cold damage, protection from the elements, etc. Dogs should not be left alone in cars below 40 degrees Fahrenheit (4 degrees Celsius) or above 65 degrees Fahrenheit (18 degrees Celsius).

2.11 The *One Health Initiative* supports all Animal Assisted Interventions (*Hediger et al., 2019*). **(Interview)**

### **3.0 Temperament**

3.1 The minimum standards for a general dog assessment include the following:

#### **3.1.1 Environment:**

- Observation of the dog with its handler in various situations based on the planned or spontaneous intervention, and natural environments.
- The dog shall remain under control and easily redirected.
- The dog shall not regularly vocalize inappropriately according to the context, population, environment, and may be easily redirected, and presents in a safe manner.
- The dog shall be comfortable with and not overreact to distractions, unusual situations (e.g. sudden noises/movement, etc.) in the environment, or equipment that is commonly present. **(Observation)**

#### **3.1.2 Social:**

- The dog shall present itself in a safe and approachable manner.
- The dog shall display genuine signs of interest for socializing with people and receiving attention from a variety of people, demonstrating appropriate responses.
- Observation of the dog with its handler with different groups/individuals, representative of the participant groups with which the dog will work.
- The dog shall be assessed walking through a crowded area. The dog must not get over excited or show continual signs of stress.
- The dog shall demonstrate control around food, toys and other resources and show no signs of resource guarding.
- If the dog is required to play as part of the AAI work, this shall be assessed to ensure it will play in an appropriate way.
- If the dog is required to work in the presence of other dogs, it shall be well mannered around other dogs with consideration given to normal canine communication and development.

- If the dog works off lead, it will be evaluated off lead.
- Dogs shall show a good level of adaptability and demonstrate signs that it is enjoying interacting with the population for which it is expected to work with, the environment and activities. **(Observation)**

### 3.1.3 Handling:

- The dog shall remain relaxed with different people petting, checking over, and handling/grooming the dog IF that is what is expected in the dog's normal line of work. **(Observation)**

#### **Guidance Note:**

- Assessors will want to look at how your dog works in specific sessions and observe whether they meet these standards.

## 4.0 Preparation/Socialization

4.1 Puppies/dogs shall complete a documented socialization/preparation program tailored to prepare it for the AAI work with which it will be involved. **(Observation/Documentation)**

#### **Guidance Note:**

- The socialization program depends on the age at which the dog was obtained. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]. Socialization includes exposure to people, places and things in several environments and under different conditions.

4.2 Dogs shall be fully prepared for the environment, participant group, and work they are doing, with prior preparation and training ideally in a similar situation to that in which the dog will be working. **(Observation)**

#### **Guidance Note:**

- Where possible, dogs should be introduced to therapy/recreational/classroom supplies and equipment, the situation, and the environment prior to working in a structured session (Hatch, 2007; Glenk et al., 2013; Glenk, 2017; Winkle, 2016; Winkle & Ni, 2019). Some examples are as follows:

- [REDACTED]
- [REDACTED]
- [REDACTED]
- [REDACTED]

4.3 The dog shall have participated in conditioned handling/socialization with the types of behaviors participants may display (e.g. given space to meet potential participant groups with no pressure to interact), using positive/humane based methods. This will mean dogs are prepared to find the sessions and environments in which they work rewarding and enjoyable. **(Observation)**

4.4 The dog shall be able to perform previously introduced skills specifically needed for the session or demonstrate appropriate waiting behavior. Dog must only be involved in a session when its presence is planned to contribute towards the therapeutic outcomes, or if its presence is motivational, or beneficial for positive associations for the dog. **(Observation)**

## 5.0 Training and Handling

5.1 All training and handling methods should be designed to promote the welfare and well-being of dogs. Dogs should be trained and handled in a positive and humane manner at all times. **(Observation)**

### **Guidance Note:**

- When participants handle the dogs, they shall be encouraged to use positive methods and respect for the dog (*Mellor, 2017; Hediger et al., 2019; Winkle & Ni, 2019*).

5.2 Dog handlers shall use positive reinforcement/reward based (food, toys, verbal, cues, touch etcetera) and humane training techniques to train and engage the dogs to the greatest degree possible (*Glenk et al, 2013; Mellor, 2017*). The handler is able to elicit the dog to respond to verbal and/or non-verbal cues. **(Observation)**

5.3 The training technique shall be compatible with the situation in which the dog will be working. For example, down stays or 'place' cues could be taught so that the dog learns to relax in the position rather than be on high alert, waiting for the next cue. **(Observation)**

5.4 Dog handlers shall show careful handling, supporting the dog when needed. The dog handler must encourage initiative, adaptability, and problem-solving skills while still maintaining control. This is important for the dog to learn to have genuine interactions with participants. During AAI work, the participants should be able to observe the dog handler showing empathy and kindness to the dog at all times. This will help the participant to understand how to interact with dogs in a safe and positive way (*Winkle & Ni, 2019*). **(Observation)**

5.5 Choke chains, prong collars, electronic devices and any other equipment that can administer negative or harmful stimuli are NOT allowed. Training aids shall never be used in such a way as to inflict physical or psychological pain to the dog. The handler shall ensure that the dogs are not harmed, abused, or neglected in any way (*Glenk et al, 2013; Houpt et al, 2007*). The dog handler shall not demonstrate/use any harsh handling methods either leading up to, or during the AAI sessions. **(Observation)**

### **Guidance Note:**

- Assessors will want to see the dogs in training sessions and monitor their responses to all the training standards. They will also want to see the dogs working in a range of different environments, indoors and outside, on-leash and off-leash according to how the dog normally works. Assessors will want to observe that the dogs are being treated in a humane way at all times.

5.6 Dogs shall be given breaks during training and work activities appropriate for activity preference, stage of training and development (*Haubenhofer & Kirchengast 2007; Milani, 2016*). **(Observation)**

5.7 Dogs shall show an aptitude for training, a willingness to learn, and willingness to engage with participants. **(Observation)**

5.8 Dog handlers are responsible for ensuring that dogs are re-evaluated at least yearly (or when there is a change in health, population, or environment) for the type of work, population, environment, duration, distance work, etc. according to the demand of the typical working conditions for that team. The organization shall ensure assessments are consistent within the organization and between others. The

dog handler shall be with the dog during these assessments so that the dog and handler are evaluated together. **(Interview/Documentation)**

**Guidance Note:**

- You must outline your regular re-evaluation procedures and show proof that you re-evaluate the team annually, and the dog when there is any specific change in their health, or they are working in a significantly different environment. If the dogs are tested by an internal source, you must show how some element of objectivity is present in the assessment approach.

5.9 During sessions, Dog handlers shall be able to elicit an interaction by the dog directly with the participant when appropriate, as well as responding to cues given by participants (Winkle & Jackson, 2012). **(Observation)**

## 6.0 Obedience

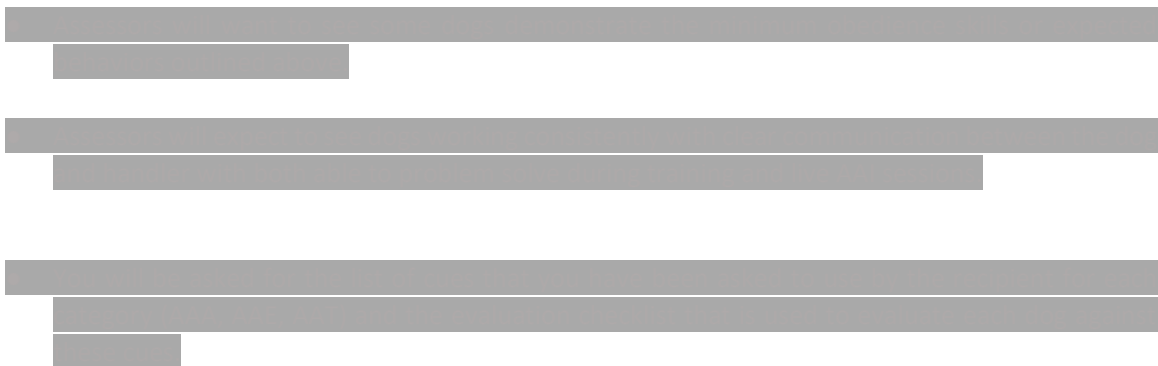
6.1 The dog shall be trained to respond to basic obedience cues including the following:

- Its name.
- Sit.
- Down.
- Stay or wait.
- Walk in a controlled position on a loose lead – the dog handler must be able to walk a dog with minimal cues with a loose lead.
- Come when called (i.e. if the dog will be interacting with participants off-lead, then off-lead behavior or control must be assessed).
- Leave it – items or food (i.e. the dog must show control around food, toys, etc. without snatching).
- Greet with calm behavior (not jumping up unless asked), vocalizations are acceptable if they are not disruptive to the setting/population. **(Observation/Documentation)**

6.2 In the training environment, the dog shall respond appropriately with 80% (8 out of 10 trials) accuracy when assessed for animal assisted activity and 90% (9 out of 10 trials) accuracy when assessed for animal assisted therapy or education. If a dog shows significant stress behaviors during an assessment it should not be continued, but rather the assessment should be stopped at that point with the indication that the dog needs further preparation, training/socialization before being submitted to another assessment. **(Observation)**

6.3 Recipients shall provide the placement program with a list of expected obedience and cues appropriate for each category in which the dogs participate (AAA, AAE, AAT, AASP), with each dog having an evaluation checklist. **(Documentation)**

**Guidance Note:**



## 7.0 Evaluation, Behavior and Assessment

7.1 Dogs with a history of training or participating in bite or protection work shall **NOT** participate in any branch of AAI. **(Interview and Observation)**

7.2 Dogs being prepared to work and working in AAI programs shall be evaluated for temperament and emotional soundness. **(Documentation/Interview)**

### **Guidance Note:**

- Dogs must display genuine interest and demonstrate signs of enjoyment for socializing with and receiving attention from a variety of people. The dog will also be evaluated for appropriateness and goodness of fit for work based on population, environment, activities, duration and frequency (Hatch, 2007; Winkle & Jackson, 2012; Glenk et al, 2013; Winkle, 2016; VanFleet, R., & Faa-Thompson, T. 2017; Kovacs et al., 2018).

Assessors will want to fully understand how you evaluate your dogs for this work.

7.3 Dogs shall maintain appropriate behavior – must not regularly vocalize unnecessarily or should be able to be redirected (e.g. barking, growling, or whining when in public); however, some vocal greetings and activity vocalizations are acceptable (Winkle, 2016). They shall present themselves in a manageable and safe manner, with appropriate contextual social skills in response to other dogs and humans. **(Observation)**

7.4 Breed type and breed specific traits shall be taken into consideration. While there is no standard for breed type, some types of dog will be more suited to a particular situation or intervention due to the temperament, activity level, size, etc. **(Documentation/Observation)**

7.5 The dog's evaluation shall include:

- reaction to strangers
- children
- people on floor
- level of obedience
- grooming acceptance/cooperative care
- walking on loose leash
- ability to respond off-leash if appropriate
- behavior in a crowd
- responding to its name
- ability to work with other animals in the environment and show resilience without any adverse reactions
- appropriate reaction to distractions
- ability to be redirected
- acclimation to healthcare equipment and environment
- ability to be alone, and separation from the handler

Dogs/puppies should demonstrate appropriate contextual responses in these situations. **(Documentation/Observation)**

### **Guidance Note:**

7.6 The assessment shall include the dog's temperament, behavior, and responsiveness to cues. Additional testing items that are unique and specific to the likely population, environment, distance, duration, and precision that the dog will be working in. **(Observation)**

**Guidance Note:**

- Assessors will want to ensure that handlers recognize behaviors and the implications. For example: the difference between 'aggressive behavior' versus 'aggressive dog'.

**8.0 Welfare of the Dog being prepared for AAI Sessions.**

8.1 Handler shall be aware of how human emotional state (both from handlers and participants) and behavior can influence dog's emotional state/behavior and vice versa. **(Interview)**

8.2 Dogs shall be comfortable working directly with participants and interacting with strangers, while viewing the handler as a secure base in order to explore environment, play, and interact with others. (Topal, Miklosi, Csanvi & Doka, 1998; VanFleet & Faa-Thompson, 2017). **(Observation)**

**Guidance Note:**

- There are times when a situation may be stressful for a dog and the assessor will closely observe how the handler prepares the dog for this situation. It is critical that you have a clear safe space within the facility for the dog to rest and the assessor will ask to see this.

8.3 Dogs being trained and prepared for AAI shall demonstrate signs of adaptability, even temperament, and flexibility in different situations (e.g. crowding) and interactions with the populations, environments, and activities in which they are being asked to participate **(Observation)**

**Guidance Note:**

- Includes persons with unusual or brisk movements, persons using wheelchairs, crutches or other equipment). Considerations for different handlers should be included (Wycoff, 2014; Glenk, 2017; VanFleet & Faa-Thompson, 2017).



## References:

- Glenk, L. M. (2017). Current perspectives on therapy dog welfare in animal-assisted interventions. *Animals*, 7(2), 7. <https://doi.org/10.3390/ani7020007>
- Glenk, L. M., Kothgassner, O. D., Stetina, B. U., Palme, R., Keplinger, B., & Baran, H. (2013). Therapy dogs' salivary cortisol levels vary during animal-assisted interventions. *Animal Welfare*, 22(3), 369-378. doi: 10.7120/09627286.22.3.369
- Grandgeorge, M., & Hausberger, M. (2011). Human-animal relationships: From daily life to animal-assisted therapies. *Annali Dell'Istituto Superiore Di Sanità*, 47, 397-408.
- Hatch, A. (2007). The view from all fours: A look at an animal-assisted activity program from the animals' perspective. *Anthrozoös*, 20(1), 37-50. <https://doi.org/10.2752/089279307780216632>
- Haubenhofer, D. K., & Kirchengast, S. (2007). 'Dog handlers' and dogs' emotional and cortisol secretion responses associated with animal-assisted therapy sessions. *Society & Animals*, 15(2), 127-150. <https://doi.org/10.1163/156853007X187090>
- Hediger, K., Meisser, A., & Zinsstag, J. (2019). A one health research framework for animal-assisted interventions. *International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health*, 16(4), 640.
- Haupt, K. A., Goodwin, D., Uchida, Y., Baranyiová, E., Fatjó, J., & Kakuma, Y. (2007). Proceedings of a workshop to identify dog welfare issues in the US, Japan, Czech Republic, Spain and the UK. *Applied Animal Behaviour Science*, 106(4), 221-233. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.applanim.2007.01.005>
- Kovács, K., Virányi, Z., Kis, A., Turcsán, B., Hudecz, Á., Marmota, M. T., ... & Topál, J. (2018). Dog-owner attachment is associated with oxytocin receptor gene polymorphisms in both parties. A comparative study on austrian and hungarian border collies. *Frontiers in Psychology*, 9, 435. <https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2018.00435>
- Mellor, D. J. (2017). Operational details of the five domains model and its key applications to the assessment and management of animal welfare. *Animals*, 7(8), 60. <https://doi.org/10.3390/ani7080060>
- Milani, M. (2016). Animal welfare in human-animal interactions. Retrieved from [https://habricentral.org/resources/55219/download/hc\\_brief\\_welfare\\_and\\_hai20160208access002.pdf](https://habricentral.org/resources/55219/download/hc_brief_welfare_and_hai20160208access002.pdf)
- Palestrini, C., Calcaterra, V., Cannas, S., Talamonti, Z., Papotti, F., Buttram, D., & Pelizzo, G. (2017). Stress level evaluation in a dog during animal-assisted therapy in pediatric surgery. *Journal of Veterinary Behavior*, 17, 44-49. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jveb.2016.09.003>
- Topál, J., Miklósi, Á., Csányi, V., & Dóka, A. (1998). Attachment behavior in dogs (*Canis familiaris*): A new application of Ainsworth's (1969) Strange Situation Test. *Journal of Comparative Psychology*, 112(3), 219. <https://doi.org/10.1037/0735-7036.112.3.219>
- VanFleet, R., & Faa-Thompson, T. (2017). *Animal assisted play therapy*. Sarasota, FL: Professional Resource Press.
- Vitztum, C., & Urbanik, J. (2016). Assessing the dog: A theoretical analysis of the companion animal's



actions in human-animal interactions. *Society & Animals*, 24(2), 172-185. <https://doi.org/10.1163/15685306-12341399>

Winkle, M., & Jackson, L. (2012). Animal kindness: Best practices for the animal-assisted therapy practitioner. *OT Practice*, 17(6), 10-14.

Winkle, M. Y. (2016) *Dogs in practice: The art and science of animal assisted therapy* [Conference presentation]. Dogwood Therapy Services, Albuquerque, NM, United States.

Winkle, M. Y. & Ni, K. (2019). Animal Assisted Occupational Therapy: Guidelines for Standards, Theory and Practice. In A.H. Fine (Ed), *Handbook on animal assisted therapy: Theoretical foundations and guidelines for animal-assisted interventions*. Academic Press.

Wycoff, K. (2014). Ethical considerations in animal assisted therapy. Retrieved from <https://suzanneclothier.com/pdfs/WYCOFF%20Ethical%20Considerations%20in%20AAT.pdf>



## Animal Assisted Therapy (AAT) Competency Summary

AAll members come from a variety of backgrounds and the scope of each member's work is different. AAll recognizes that there may be people with different expectations and skill sets from volunteer visiting through to expert instructors of any given member category (AAA, AAE, AAT, AASP, or AAPP). In collaboration with Dr. Leslie A. Stewart, PhD., LCPC, AAll adopted and adapted the following competency models:

Stewart, L. A. (2014). Competencies in animal assisted therapy in counseling: a qualitative investigation of the knowledge, skills and attitudes required of competent animal assisted therapy practitioners.

Stewart, L. A., Johnson, A., Bruneau, L., & Callahan, M. M. (2016). Animal-assisted interventions competencies.

Stewart, L. A., Chang, C. Y., Parker, L. K., & Grubbs, N. (2016). Animal-assisted therapy in counseling competencies. Alexandria, VA: American Counseling Association, Animal-Assisted Therapy in Mental Health Interest Network.

Due to the nature of our membership and the roles that people, and animals fulfil, AAll has outlined 4 tiers of competencies for each member category. The layout has changed, the competencies rearranged from three to four levels, and additional competencies were constructed ([represented in green](#)) to reflect AAll Standards that were not covered with the previous Competency versions (2014, 2016 and 2016). These changes allow individuals and programs to improve skills over time as required by membership standards.

**Entry Level** – The entry level encompasses awareness and initial implementation of skills, knowledge and attitudes reflected in the standards and competencies for those new to AAA, AAE, AAT, AASP and AAPP member categories.

**Intermediate Level** - The intermediate level reflects those who have mastered the entry level skills reflected within the standards and several competencies, but are still in the phase of being trained, mentored and/or supervised for AAA, AAE, AAT, AASP and/or AAPP. They are still learning the theoretical foundations of the standards and competencies and are learning to apply them to practice in their member category (or categories) and discipline. Those with a position of intern, assistant and apprentices and similar best fit this category.

**Advanced Level** - The advanced level reflects those who have mastered the entry and intermediate level skills reflected in the standards and many competencies of their member category (or categories). They have gained enough experience to be independent in theory and practice, and automatically implement standards and competencies into practice. Advanced level members recognize that continuing education and professional development is lifelong.

**Expert Level** - Members at the expert level have demonstrated mastery skills in one or more areas of AAI membership (AAA, AAE, AAT, AASP, AAPP), within their skill set and scope in the areas of theory, practice, research and constructive evaluation of people, animals, or programs within their membership field. This category would include those who teach or instruct coursework, complete research, publish papers or books, etc. in their membership category or categories. Expert level members are eligible to become assessors for AAll accreditation.

[See Appendix 1 for full details.](#)

As part of the Accreditation process, Assessors will want to ensure that programs are aware of the competencies of their volunteers and staff and that people are operating within the program at the appropriate level. They will do this through reviewing **Documentation**, through **Interview** and through **Observation** during the accreditation process, as outlined in the **Accreditation Portfolio Contents Section**.

AAII has produced a detailed paper on competencies and all practitioners are urged to read it in Appendix I. It is important to understand the function of the competencies which are detailed in this paper. Some competency sections are shared with all categories (AAA, AAE, AAT, AASP and AAPP) of AAI so the terminology includes AAls rather than only AAT. This booklet is for AAT practitioners who will be responsible for all items in their current level of competency as detailed in the **Accreditation Portfolio Contents Section**.

**Competency levels can be summarized as follows:**

|  | <b>Entry Level</b><br>(Awareness) | <b>Intermediate Level</b><br>(Trained) | <b>Advanced Level</b><br>(Experienced)                                   | <b>Expert Level (Expert)</b>                     |
|--|-----------------------------------|--|--|--|
| <b>Membership</b>                                | New Member                        | Working towards Accreditation          | Eligible for Accreditation   | Accredited                                       |
| <b>Animal Assisted Activity (AAA)</b>            | Volunteer                         | <b>Intern, Assistant, Apprentice</b>   | <b>Professional (even if volunteering), Mentor</b>                       | <b>AAA Instructor, Researcher, Author,</b>       |
| <b>Animal Assisted Therapy (AAT)</b>             | Volunteer                         | Intern, Assistant, Apprentice          | <b>Licensed/Degreed /Equivalent Practitioner, Mentor</b>                 | <b>Formal AAT Instructor, Researcher, Author</b> |
| <b>Animal Assisted Education (AAE)</b>           | Volunteer                         | Intern, Assistant, Apprentice          | <b>Licensed/Degreed /Equivalent Practitioner, Mentor</b>                 | <b>Formal AAE Instructor, Researcher, Author</b> |
| <b>Animal Assisted Special Programs (AASP)</b>   | Volunteer                         | Intern, Assistant, Apprentice          | <b>Professional or Practitioner, Mentor (Other than AAA, AAE or AAT)</b> | <b>Instructor, Researcher, Author</b>            |
| <b>Animal Assisted Placement Programs (AAPP)</b> | Volunteer                         | Intern, Assistant, Apprentice          | <b>Professional, Mentor</b>  | <b>Instructor, Researcher, Author</b>            |

Within AAA, AASP and AAPP, it is recommended that the minimum competency level required for lead collaborators within specific interventions are **marked in bold**. In the case of AAT and AAE, this minimum is essential as the intervention requires the active involvement of a licensed practitioner.

# AAll Accreditation Process

## Accreditation Application & Instructions

The AAll accreditation process includes both qualitative (descriptive) and quantitative (measurable) information. This is your opportunity to develop and implement systems that ensure the maintenance of standards set forth by AAll. Organizations that wish to apply for accreditation will provide, complete, or develop documents in AAT as listed below. You may be active in more than one field in which case, you must fill in the sections of other membership category booklets that you have not previously filled in. To be eligible for accreditation, members/organizations will have been full members for at least 1 year. The actual items that will be reviewed in the accreditation process are listed under [Accreditation Portfolio Contents Section](#).

## AAll Accreditation Process

|        |            |
|--------|------------|
| Step 1 | [Redacted] |
| Step 2 | [Redacted] |
| Step 3 | [Redacted] |
| Step 4 | [Redacted] |
| Step 5 | [Redacted] |
| Step 6 | [Redacted] |
| Step 7 | [Redacted] |
| Step 8 | [Redacted] |

## Accreditation Portfolio

Your **Accreditation Portfolio** should contain the following information, in this order, at a minimum. Each Heading is a new section in printed portfolio, or a new file on a computer.

**x AAIL Accreditation Application:** To be completed by every applicant.

| Portfolio Requirement   | Tick when completed |
|---|---------------------|
| Letter of recommendation for accreditation from Mentor (you will put this in last- see Step 6). |                     |
| Accreditation Application   |                     |
| Full Member status for at least 1 full calendar year.   |                     |

### Section 1: Standards – Animal Assisted Partnership Programs

| Standard | Portfolio Requirement | Tick when completed |
|----------|-----------------------|---------------------|
| 1.1      |                       |                     |
| 1.2      |                       |                     |
| 1.3      |                       |                     |
| 1.7      |                       |                     |
| 1.10     |                       |                     |
| 1.13     |                       |                     |
| 1.14     |                       |                     |
| 3.2      |                       |                     |
| 4.1      |                       |                     |
| 5.1      |                       |                     |

### Section 2: Standards - Administration

| Standard | Portfolio Requirement | Tick when completed |
|----------|-----------------------|---------------------|
| 1.1      |                       |                     |
| 1.2      |                       |                     |
| 1.3      |                       |                     |
| 2.1      |                       |                     |
| 3.1      |                       |                     |
| 4.1      |                       |                     |
| 5.1      |                       |                     |
| 6.1      |                       |                     |
| 7.1      |                       |                     |
| 8.1      |                       |                     |

### Section 3: Handlers Supporting Dogs (Animal Handlers)

| Standard | Portfolio Requirement | Tick when completed |
|----------|-----------------------|---------------------|
| 2.1      |                       |                     |

|          |  |  |
|----------|--|--|
| 2.4, 2.4 |  |  |
| 3.1      |  |  |
| 4.1      |  |  |
| 5.1      |  |  |

**Section 4: Standards – Health, Welfare, Wellbeing and Training of Dogs**

| Standard            | Portfolio Requirement | Tick when completed |
|---------------------|-----------------------|---------------------|
| 2.2/2.3/<br>2.4/2.5 |                       |                     |
| 4.1                 |                       |                     |
| 5.8                 |                       |                     |
| 6.1                 |                       |                     |
| 6.3                 |                       |                     |
| 7.2-7.5             |                       |                     |



## Animal Assisted Intervention International Glossary of Terms

**Accreditation:** The recognition of a program or institution that maintains standards of professional practice.

**Advocacy:** Providing or supporting a voice for the rights, needs and preferences of the people and animals with which you work.

**Agency:** The capacity, condition, or state of acting or of exerting power; action or activity; operation; choice making. To have a choice between at least two desirable options in a scenario.

**Advanced Level Competencies:** Discipline-specific knowledge, skills, and attitudes employed in a professional capacity such as an appropriately educated and trained, experienced, qualified professional that is active in a specific area of AAIs (AAA, AAE, AAT, AASP and/or AAPP). The advanced level reflects someone who has mastered the entry and intermediate level skills reflected in the standards and many competencies of their member category (or categories). They have gained enough experience to be independent in theory and practice, and automatically implement standards and competencies into practice. Advanced level members recognize that continuing education and professional development is lifelong.

**Animal Assisted Activities (AAA):** AAA incorporates specially selected and trained animals into impromptu or planned activities and interactions that may be offered by volunteer, paraprofessional or professional human-animal teams. AAA may be unstructured, or goal oriented in areas such as motivational, recreational, social, and general well-being. AAA teams have participated in a minimum of introductory preparation and training for the populations they visit and the dog they are handling. AAA may be provided in a variety of settings, with a variety of ages, may be individual or group in nature. With additional preparation and training, AAA teams can work directly with a licensed, degreed, or equivalent healthcare, human service, or educational professional in AAE, AAT and AASP. AAAs promote wellbeing and benefits for humans and animals, and provide a positive experience for the animal without force, coercion, or exploitation. AAT may directly or indirectly involve the animal.

**Animal Assisted Education (AAE):** AAE incorporates specially selected and trained animals into goal directed, educationally relevant teaching plans that are designed to promote development of general or special education skills in areas such as cognition, social functioning, personal growth, responsible pet carers, etc. AAE is developed, directed and/or delivered by a person who is licensed, degreed or equivalent education professional specialized expertise in teaching/education. The process is evaluated and documented. AAE providers who handle their own dogs have additional intermediate to advanced training in dog advocacy, handling, communication, behavior, husbandry, health, welfare and well-being in both living and working situations. Alternatively, teaching/education providers may choose to work in conjunction with an AAA team, a professional dog handler or an AASP who have additional training for the scope of AAE. AAE may be provided in a variety of settings, with a variety of ages, may be individual or group in nature. AAE promotes wellbeing and benefits for humans and animals, and provide a positive experience for the animal without force, coercion, or exploitation. AAE may directly or indirectly involve the animal.

**Animal-Assisted Intervention (AAI):** AAI is an interdisciplinary term that describes unstructured or goal-oriented activities that intentionally incorporate animals into human services, healthcare, education, and



similar fields. AAI's may be individual or group in nature and are appropriate for a variety of ages and abilities. AAI is an umbrella term that encompasses the AAI membership fields including Animal-Assisted Activities (AAA), Animal Assisted Education (AAE), Animal Assisted Therapy (AAT), Animal Assisted Special Programs (AASP) and Animal Assisted Placement Programs (AAPP). AASP and AAPP represent member categories that reflect the wide-ranging nature of AAI, and that AAI service providers who do not fit into AAA, AAE or AAT have indicated the need for. AAI's may be provided in a variety of settings, with a variety of ages, may be individual or group in nature. AAI's promote wellbeing and benefits for humans and animals, and provide a positive experience for the animal without force, coercion, or exploitation. AAT may directly or indirectly involve the animal.

**Animal Assisted Intervention Animal Handler:** A person who has been trained to handle animals for the specific area and level of AAI in which they provide services (AAA, AAE, AAT, AASP or AAPP). An AAI animal handler has knowledge in animal behavior, communication, animal training skills and animal welfare.

**Animal Assisted Intervention Instructor:** A person who is an expert with comprehensive and authoritative Knowledge, Skills and Attitudes in theory, practice (experience) and research in one or more specific areas of AAI. Instructors frequently demonstrate expertise by teaching coursework, participating in the development of theory and research, publishing papers, research, etc. in one or more areas of AAI (AAA, AAE, AAT, AASP) expertise.

**Animal Assisted Placement Program (AAPP):** An AAPP involves a professional program or individual who provides specially selected and/or trained animals to professionals in AAA, AAE, AAT or AASP. AAPPs instruct animal recipients/handlers about animal advocacy, handling, training, communication, behavior, husbandry, health, welfare and well-being in both living and working situations. Some examples of AAPPs are Assistance Dogs International (ADI) (or similar) dog training organizations or similar that raise, train and place "facility dogs" or train dogs for placement with healthcare, human service, education, crisis response, clinics. AAPPs also includes individuals or organizations that offer owner-self-training classes for healthcare, education, or human service providers, etc. AAPP promotes positive, safe relationships between the handler and the animal.

**Animal Assisted Special Program (AASP):** AASPs offer goal-oriented programs that incorporate specially selected and trained animals to work in professional fields outside of animal assisted education and therapy or in conjunction with these licensed professionals. AASP personnel may or may not have a license, degree, or equivalent, but are delivering a professional level service or program. Examples of these programs: Prison dog training classes that teach inmates life/job skills, community programs for people with disabilities, job training, etc., formal crisis intervention department work (e.g. victim advocates), at-risk populations, camps/vocational programs/after school classes for people with disabilities that develop specific skills, a person who teaches veterans with PTSD how to train animals as part of their life skills goals, dogs that work with paramedics/fire stations and that comfort of victims, ministry dogs ( dogs that work with priests, etc.). AASPs promote wellbeing and benefits for humans and animals, and provide a positive experience for the animals without force, coercion, or exploitation. AASPs may directly or indirectly involve the animal.

**Animal Assisted Therapy (AAT):** AAT incorporates specially selected and trained animals into goal directed therapeutic/intervention plans that are designed to promote improvement in physical, cognitive, psychosocial, behavioral, and/or emotional functioning of humans. The process is evaluated and documented. AAT is developed, directed and/or delivered by a person who has formal education, is licensed, degreed or equivalent and has specialized expertise in a specific discipline within healthcare/human service fields. AAT providers have additional intermediate to advanced continuing

education for AAT theory and practice. AAT providers who handle their own animals have additional intermediate to advanced training in dog advocacy, handling, communication, behavior, husbandry, health, welfare, and well-being in both living and working situations. Alternatively, healthcare, and human service providers may choose to work in collaboration with others in the AAI field including AAA, AAE, AASP, or AAPP or a professional dog handler who has additional training for the scope of AAT. Collaborative partners may or may not have separate goals. AAT may be provided in a variety of settings, with a variety of ages, may be individual or group in nature. AAT promotes wellbeing and benefits for humans and animals, and provide a positive experience for the animal without force, coercion, or exploitation. AAT may directly or indirectly involve the animal.

**Animal abuse:** Causing physical, psychological, or emotional harm to an animal.

**Animal neglect:** Failing to meet the basic health and welfare needs of an animal including access to water, food, shelter, adequate space for expression of normal behavior, and freedom from distress and pain.

**Animal related trauma:** The human experience of a traumatic event involving an animal.

**Animal Trainer:** A person who has skills and knowledge in animal development, husbandry, communication, behavior/behavior modification, practical skills to identify an animal's learning style, harness appropriate behaviors, teach an animal how to respond to cues and work with people of all ages and abilities. Animal trainers for AAls should have working knowledge about human-animal interactions, gather information about the specific handler, environment, population, and activities in which the animal will be living and working.

**Animal Training Instructor:** A person who possesses the skills of an animal trainer and can generalize and teach those skills to human recipients of professionally trained or owner self-trained animals for their work in AAA, AAT, AAE or AASP.

**Assessment:** The performance measurement of a program, participant, staff, or dog. May be part of the process of being accredited.

**Assessor:** AAI trained and approved representative who carries out the accreditation assessment.

**Autonomy:** Self-government; freedom to act or function independently.

**Beneficence:** A moral obligation to act for the benefit of others. There are 2 aspects of beneficence: 1 - providing benefits. 2 - balancing benefits and risks/harms.

**Board:** Board of trustees or directors – ultimately responsible for the program.

**Breed specific traits:** Behavior, anatomy and/or appearance typical of a specific breed of dog.

**Classical conditioning:** Learning concept wherein a benign stimulus and an intrinsically meaningful stimulus are repeatedly paired. The dog eventually responds to the benign stimulus alone with the behavioral response elicited by the intrinsically meaningful stimulus.

**Collaborative-Animal Assisted Education (C-AAE):** Where an organization contributes to AAE, for example by training dogs and acting as the dog handler but does not have a licensed human healthcare practitioner or human services provider on their staff or working with them as a consultant, the

collaborative work is recognized by AAIL and this element can be accredited. CAA-E promotes wellbeing and benefits for humans and animals, and provide a positive experience for the animal without force, coercion, or exploitation. AAT may directly or indirectly involve the animal.

**Collaborative-Animal Assisted Therapy (C-AAT):** Where an organization contributes to AAT, for example by training dogs and acting as the dog handler but does not have a licensed human healthcare practitioner or human services provider on their staff or working with them as a consultant, the collaborative work is recognized by AAIL and this element can be accredited. C-AAT promotes wellbeing and benefits for humans and animals, and provide a positive experience for the animal without force, coercion, or exploitation. AAT may directly or indirectly involve the animal.

**Collaborative Program:** occurs when an individual or organization collaborates with another who has complementary but different credentials, membership or skill sets and have a shared responsibility for program needs. Sessions or programs involve the joint work of each member's skills set. The work involves different skill sets in AAI collaboration, animal(s) and is experiential in nature. Examples include: A therapist who does not have an appropriate animal that calls in a skilled dog handler; AASP calls upon a therapist to build a therapy-based program, a AAA member calls upon a teacher to collaborate on an educational program, a placement program calls upon a therapist to teach AAT placement coursework to newly placed AAT teams, etc. The work involves different skill sets in AAI collaboration, animal(s) and is experiential in nature.

**Conditioned handling:** Graded exposure.

**Confidentiality:** Appropriate management of verbal, written and recorded participant information, which protects an individuals' right to privacy, as agreed by provider and participant at start of AAI service provision.

**Continuing education:** Individual engagement in face-to-face, online and paper resources to increase knowledge, skills competency in an area of AAI.

**Developmental disability:** A condition or diagnosis that impacts an individual's cognitive development and/or ability across the lifespan.

**Dog burnout:** An overall decrease in a dog's physical, mental, or emotional health and/or wellbeing due specifically to duration, type, or intensity of AAI work.

**Dog stress relief/prevention strategies:** Enriching activities embedded in the daily routine of dogs which promote typical behavior and access to diverse physical, cognitive, sensory and/or emotional stimulation.

**Enrichment:** Provision of activities that allow for an animal to demonstrate species-typical behaviors including physical, cognitive, sensory, or emotional stimulation designed to increase an animal's overall health, wellbeing, and quality of life.

**Entry Level Competencies:** Knowledge, Skills, and Attitudes required of anyone (human or animal) that is new to AAILs and extending through operating at all levels and in all capacities including AAA, AAE, AAT, AASP, AAPP (volunteer, paraprofessional, and professional). The entry level encompasses awareness and initial implementation of skills, knowledge and attitudes reflected in the standards and competencies for those new to AAA, AAE, AAT, AASP and AAPP member categories.

**Ethics:** Overarching moral principles that guide practice.

**Ethological:** Understanding a situation/event via the lens of natural animal behavior and evolution.

**Expert Level Competencies:** Knowledge, Skills and Attitudes required of anyone who has mastery skills (continuing education/professional development) in theory, practice (experience) and research in one or more specific areas of AAI. This category would include those who teach or instruct coursework, who complete research, publish papers, research, etc. in their membership category or categories. Members at the expert level have demonstrated mastery skills in one or more areas of AAI membership (AAA, AAE, AAT, AASP, AAPP), within their skill set and scope in the areas of theory, practice, research and constructive evaluation of people, animals, or programs within their membership field. This category would include those who teach or instruct coursework, complete research, publish papers or books, etc. in their membership category or categories. Expert level members are eligible to become assessors for AAI accreditation.

**Facility:** A building or place that provides a service to people who are in need of specific care e.g. residential home, clinics, hospital, etc.

**Facility Dog:** A dog trained and placed with a primary (and secondary) handler to work in a facility such as a school, hospital, aged care facility, etc. The dog lives with the primary handler, and the primary handler meets the dogs' health and wellbeing needs during the workday and while at home. The secondary handler may share the role of caring for the dog or may perform the primary handler's role when they are absent.

**Grooming:** Using specifically designed tools to clean a dog (example: brushing, trimming nails, cleaning ears, brushing teeth, bathing, etc.).

**Handling:** Using voice, physical contact and body position for communication intention and feedback to an animal.

**Healthcare/human service provider:** A person who has achieved professional practice with a college degree, license or equivalent in a primary discipline such as human mental health provider, occupational therapist, social worker, speech therapist, etc.

**Human-Animal Bond:** Mutually beneficial emotional, psychological, and physical interactions that lead to a relationship that supports the health and well-being of both humans and animals.

**Human-Animal Interaction:** General reference to any exchange between a person and a non-human animal. This encompasses the human-animal bond.

**Immuno-compromised:** An overall decrease in the body's ability to fight infection/disease/ill health due to an existing diagnosis or condition.

**Individual:** Person working in an area of AAI.

**Inservice:** A (brief) training intended for collateral staff about AAI programs that will be taking place within the organization, center, etc.

**Institution:** A society or organization founded for a religious, educational, social, or similar purpose.

**Intermediate AAI Competencies:** Knowledge, Skills, and Attitudes required of dog-handler teams providing animal-assisted interventions including handlers who work under the direction of professional providers of AAE/AAT (paraprofessional and professional). The intermediate level reflects those who have mastered the entry level skills reflected within the standards and several competencies, but are still in the phase of being trained, mentored and/or supervised for AAA, AAE, AAT, AASP and/or AAPP. They are still learning the theoretical foundations of the standards and competencies and are learning to apply them to practice in their member category (or categories) and discipline. Those with a position of intern, assistant and apprentices and similar best fit this category.

**Leishmania:** Skin condition caused by specific type of sand fly bite.

**Macro:** Large scale.

**Mentor:** A person with skills, knowledge and experience in AAI who is providing guidance, feedback and passing on skills and knowledge to another, typically less experienced, person working in AAI.

**Micro:** Small scale.

**Negative reinforcement:** Removing a stimulus that the recipient enjoys/finds favorable in response to a specific behavior.

**Negative punishment:** Removing something positive to decrease an undesirable or bad behavior.

**Non-maleficence:** Means non-harming or inflicting the least harm possible to reach a beneficial outcome. Harm and its effects are considerations and part of the ethical decision-making process.

**One Health Initiative:** Movement promoting cross-disciplinary collaboration between all sectors relating to humans, animals, and the environment for the betterment of all.

**Operant conditioning:** Learning concept wherein the dog is trained to make a link between a specific behavior and consequence.

**Organization:** an organized body of people with a particular purpose, especially a business, society, association, etc.

**Paraprofessional:** a person to whom a particular aspect of a professional task is delegated but who is not licensed to practice as a fully qualified professional.

**Participant:** Any individual who participates in AAI services – may also be known as patients, students or clients.

**Petting:** Physical contact/touch of a dog that is pleasant for both human and animal.

**Philosophy of practice:** Personal model that informs a provider's approach to all considerations related to daily service provision.



**Physical disability:** A condition or diagnosis that impacts an individual's physical development and/or ability across the lifespan.

**Policy:** Regularly revised document pertaining to practice, which clearly outlines a provider's position and expectations of staff and/or participants.

**Positive punishment:** Adding a stimulus that the recipient does not enjoy/does not find favorable in response to a specific behavior.

**Positive reinforcement:** Adding a stimulus that the recipient enjoys/finds favorable in response to a specific behavior, i.e. reward based.

**Procedure:** Regularly revised document pertaining to practice, which clearly outlines a process including expectations of staff and/or participants.

**Protection/bite work:** Role of a dog with specific training to respond using behavior designed to prevent an individual from accessing another individual or resource.

**Raw diet:** Uncooked meat or animal products.

**Secure base:** An individual who elicits a feeling of safety, comfort, health and/or happiness in another human or animal.

**Session:** Instance of AAI conducted with individual or group.

**Scope of practice:** The limits within which a provider can ethically provide care, training, advice, or information to a participant.

**Standard(s):** A set of rules that describe the quality of the administration and scope of programs, the participants, the animals, and the AAI members.

**Temperament:** An individual's naturally offered affect or behavior.

**Welfare:** Refers to the state of a being; the treatment that a being receives and provision for physical, cognitive, and emotional needs.

**Well-being:** An individual's (human animal or other animal) state of being safe, comfortable, healthy and happy. It involves quality of life.

**Zoonosis:** A disease that can be passed between humans and animals.

## Appendix 1: Competencies

This document is a ‘work in progress’ and is intended as a guideline for members. The chart below outlines the key knowledge, skills, and attitudes competencies for each level of AAPP:

| Knowledge                              | Core competencies   |
|--|---|
| <b>Entry Level</b><br>(Awareness)      | <p>Trainers/instructors/programs new to AAPP should possess general knowledge about the provision of AAI, with an awareness of the AAI standards of Practice. They should also possess a basic working knowledge of the health, welfare, wellbeing, and training of dogs (<i>See AAI Standards of Practice for the health, well-being and training of dogs</i>). Specifically, they should:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) Understand the different disciplines within AAI that you are training/preparing the dog for (AAT, AAA, AAE, AASP, AAPP).</li> <li>b) Have specific knowledge of AAPP (obtained through comprehensive induction process covering paperwork, systems, participant population).</li> <li>c) Show basic knowledge of infection control procedures, zoonoses, standard precautions, risk management, incident reporting and protocols for hygiene and infection control e.g. cleanliness of dog and equipment.</li> <li>d) Understand dog welfare and wellbeing, and the needs and rights of a dog e.g. five freedoms/ domains.</li> <li>e) Have knowledge of developmental stages of the dog</li> <li>f) Have knowledge of training aims and objectives of an AAI dog, including temperament and typical skills required from the dogs.</li> <li>g) Understand communication between people and dogs (body language and facial expression, effect of emotions, intonation of voice).</li> <li>h) Have knowledge of signs of stress or illness in dogs.</li> </ul>   |
| <b>Intermediate Level</b><br>(Trained) | <p>Competent trainers/instructors/AASP programs possess in-depth knowledge about dogs on an individual, breed, and species level. Specifically, they should:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) Have extensive, species-specific ethological knowledge about the dog(s):             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i) Physiology, behavior &amp; history.</li> <li>ii) Care &amp; husbandry: health and welfare practices, including vaccination protocols, parasite control protocols (both dog and environment).</li> <li>iii) Understanding that knowledge about one particular breed is not necessarily generalizable to other breeds, and that there may be intra-breed differences.</li> <li>iv) Knowledge of canine development (including social, educational, temperamental, and physical development) and socialization approaches.</li> <li>v) Knowledge of dog handling, behavior, preparation, and training techniques and use of appropriate equipment.</li> <li>vi) Working knowledge of learning theory relating to the practical training and handling of dogs.</li> <li>vii) Positive, humane, non-coercive preparation and training methods.</li> <li>viii) Ability to manage, train, support, and advocate for dog(s) in a variety of environments and situations.</li> <li>ix) Ability to facilitate dog’s socialization, desensitization, and comfort.</li> <li>x) Understanding of dog temperament traits suited to AAI as well as specific needs of program, and knowledge of assessment methods.</li> <li>xi) Understanding the supportive role required by the general public within the local community in which the puppy is placed, i.e. public image.</li> </ul> </li> <li>b) Understanding the social, religious, and cultural factors relevant to AAI and multicultural implications of human-animal interactions:             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i) Respecting the attitudes of others, particularly those concerned with the dog’s presence.</li> <li>ii) Understanding that human-animal interaction may hold different meanings across a variety of cultures and beliefs.</li> </ul> </li> <li>c) Awareness on how the recipient can maximize the potential for safe interactions between participants and dogs:             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i) Infection prevention/control and consideration of other zoonotic agents.</li> <li>ii) Considerations for allergies, phobias, history of witnessing or participating in animal abuse or, neglect, and history of animal-related trauma and incorporation in participant screening process.</li> </ul> </li> </ul> |



|  |   |
|--|---|
|  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>iii) Awareness of the future participant groups the dog will be working.</li> <li>iv) Inclusion of pre-intervention strategies e.g. familiarization visits, planned introduction with participant and dog, instructions for appropriate interaction.</li> </ul> <p>Awareness of the One Health Initiative and its relevance in Animal Assisted Interventions (Hediger et al., 2019).</p>   |
| <p><b>Advanced Level (Experienced)</b></p> | <p>Experienced trainers/instructors/AAPP providers acquire AAI specific training, assessment, and supervision. Specifically, they should:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) have advanced knowledge of selecting, raising, training, and evaluating dogs <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i) Ability to source, assess and identify suitable dogs for future AAI work taking into the account their temperament, health, breed type and background.</li> <li>ii) Ability to analyze temperament and behavior.</li> <li>iii) Ability to recognize temperament traits that should ideally be present in a puppy selected as a future intervention support dog and those present in the dog ready for AAI.</li> <li>iv) Have knowledge of the current ways of raising puppies to support their development.</li> <li>v) Have knowledge of advanced training methods and behavior modification techniques to be able to identify and intervene timely to prevent behavioral issues being developed.</li> <li>vi) Thorough evaluation to ensure the dog is physically and socially appropriate for their career path.</li> <li>vii) Ability to evaluate and recognize a dog is not suited to the role.</li> <li>viii) Knowledge of dog health and welfare need and ways of managing these.</li> <li>ix) Understanding of basic principles of therapy interventions.</li> <li>x) Understanding of the needs of future participants and how these are supported by the dog.</li> </ul> </li> <li>b) Have successfully completed relevant coursework. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i) Coursework and evaluation of dog training.</li> <li>ii) Knowledge of how dogs are incorporated into therapeutic settings.</li> <li>iii) Evaluation of AAI knowledge. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. History of AAI in general</li> <li>b. Literature and evidence-based practice of AAI</li> </ul> </li> </ul> </li> <li>c) Understand the impact of the human-animal bond: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i) Understand the physiological &amp; neurological impact of human-animal interaction and the potential for emotional states of humans and animals to influence each other.</li> <li>ii) Understanding the development of the bond between recipient and dog.</li> </ul> </li> <li>d) Understand the vital role of effective risk management strategies and skills. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i) Knowledge of liability issues related to AAPP.</li> <li>ii) Confirm personal and professional insurance coverage.</li> <li>iii) Completion of risk assessments and solutions.</li> </ul> </li> </ul> <p>Show knowledge of legal issues associated with AAPP such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i) Local public access laws relating to working dogs, identification requirements.</li> <li>ii) Relevant of local canine laws e.g. leash laws, transportation.</li> </ul> |
| <p><b>Expert Level (Expert)</b></p>        | <p>Knowledge of AAI specific training and techniques. Specifically, they should:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) Understand the implications for specific future participant populations and different environments having been working with a variety of therapists and AAI programmes.</li> <li>b) Understand the implications for specific presenting concerns.</li> <li>c) Understand therapy and theory-based interventions: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i) Understanding of the goals of AAI interventions.</li> <li>ii) Awareness of current literature outcomes for the AAI selected interventions.</li> </ul> </li> </ul> <p>Competent providers of AAPP demonstrate integrated ethics. Thus, competent providers of AAI are aware of AAI specific ethical considerations and can incorporate ethical professional practice with ethical AAI practice. Specifically, they should:</p>   |

|  |  |
|--|--|
|  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) Be able to recognize and discuss the ethical implications of AAI.</li> <li>b) Discuss and address potential safety issues.</li> <li>c) Maintain respect for the dog(s), handler/AAI provider (recipient for the rest of the document), the patient(s)/participant(s), and the treatment process.</li> <li>d) Be able to recognise and point out the recipient's personal biases, including the impact of the recipient's emotional bond with the dog and its impact on the treatment process.</li> </ul> |
|  |  |

| <b>Skills</b>                          | <b>Core Competencies</b>   |
|--|--|
| <b>Entry Level</b><br>(Awareness)      | <p>Trainers/instructors/programs new to AAPP demonstrate ability to describe the principles of AAI, socialisation and demonstrate basic dog handling skills. Specifically, they should show:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) Ability to support a dog, identify signs of stress.</li> <li>b) Ability to reflect on their own practice and adapt methods to achieve success. If they are new can they do this and how?</li> <li>c) Ability to perform a supportive role to help AAPP programs to deliver services.</li> </ul>   |
| <b>Intermediate Level</b><br>(Trained) | <p>Competent trainers/instructors/providers of AAPP programs demonstrate ability to raise, train and support the dog while considering the needs of the future participants when preparing the dog for the role.</p> <p>Ability to prevent and respond to dog stress, fatigue, and burnout (Hediger et al., 2019). Specifically, they should:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) Actively prevent dog burnout and fatigue.</li> <li>b) Proactively plan stress-relief and stress-prevention strategies for the dog(s).</li> <li>c) Show ability to accurately predict, prevent and immediately address unexpected dog stress.</li> <li>d) Show ability to identify and respectfully respond to dog's signals and body language, especially when they do not want to interact whether on or off lead.</li> <li>e) Show ability to provide for the dog's needs, both in the training sessions and in general living conditions: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i) Access to water, a quiet rest/retreat area, and regular bathroom breaks.</li> <li>ii) Provision appropriate transportation.</li> <li>iii) Attending to dog's overall wellbeing through appropriate provision of quality nutrition, exercise, grooming, enrichment, and veterinary care, making decision to not carry out formal training and give the dog rest if unwell.</li> <li>iv) Ability to use positive training methods effectively and skilfully showing consideration for the dog e.g. breaks, choice of skills suitable for individual dog.</li> </ul> </li> </ul> <p>Ability to objectively assess a dog's suitability, strengths, and limitations despite the trainer/instructor/AAPP provider's potential emotional bond with or personal bias towards the dog. (See Standards section 1.3, 1.4, 1.7). Specifically, they should show:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) Ability to predict future behaviour and suitability for the role by assessing the puppies' temperament and recognise potential future intervention support dogs.</li> <li>b) Ability to identify and address personal biases towards the dog(s).</li> <li>c) Ability to objectively assess a dog's suitability for AAI, according to environment, population, activities. The match between the individual dog and recipient and/or programme is crucial.</li> <li>d) Ability to objectively describe and document the dog's response to training, overall behavior, and strengths and weaknesses on a daily or weekly basis using appropriate terminology.</li> </ul> |

|  |   |
|--|---|
|  | <p>Competent trainers/instructors/AAPP providers should have sound social and communication skills. They should maintain preparation, training, and evaluation logs for the training of the dog and the recipient.</p>  |
| <p><b>Advanced Level</b><br/>(Experienced)</p> | <p>Experienced trainers/instructors/AAPP providers demonstrate good teaching and coaching skills. Specifically, the trainers/instructors/AAPP providers should show instructional skills and teach recipients about:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) Canine care and health, enrichment, <b>animal welfare</b>, and psychological well-being.</li> <li>b) Signs of ill health, and how to apply basic first aid and when to seek veterinary advice to inform decisions as to dog’s participation in training sessions.</li> <li>c) Using humane equipment appropriately, acceptable handling and training techniques, and how to problem solve and teach the dog new behaviors.</li> <li>d) Establishing and maintaining a strong working and supportive relationship with the dog.</li> <li>e) <b>General and individual dog’s stress triggers</b> so that the recipient is able to identify stress and/or anxiety responses to novel stimuli.</li> <li>f) Recognizing and applying effective calming interventions to mitigate the dog becoming stressed or anxious dog.</li> <li>g) How to integrate the dog in animal-assisted interventions and how to prepare for sessions when the dog cannot be physically present (sick days, vacation days), e.g. through storytelling, etc. This should only be for recipient unless reworded to rights of dog to have time off, etc.</li> <li>h) Planning and keeping records of appropriate work schedule that matches breed specific traits and individual dog preferences and skills based on the population served and types of activities.</li> <li>i) Any inappropriateness from either the participants (e.g. inappropriate language or heavy petting) or dogs (e.g. antisocial behavior) should not be overlooked, and immediate remediation put in place.</li> <li>j) The partnered dog’s preference for environments, populations, and activities.</li> <li>k) The importance of freedom of choice for the dog, understanding the preferences and skills of the individual dog.</li> <li>l) Respecting consent from dogs to ensure safety.</li> <li>m) Recognizing when AAI services are no longer appropriate for the dogs due to age, health concerns, changes in the environment, handler or population and are not conducive to the dog’s skills or wellbeing.</li> <li>n) Effectively processing loss and bereavement of a dog (self and participants).</li> <li>o) What appropriate interactions with dog(s) are so that the recipient is able to transfer this knowledge to the participants.</li> </ul> <p>The AAPP provider gives them the foundation, while the recipient should then further develop the competencies laid out in AAA/AASP/AAE/AAT sections.</p> |

|  |   |
|--|---|
|  | <p>Competent trainers/instructors/AAPP providers demonstrate ability to teach recipients to perform a risk-assessment to evaluate and eliminate/decrease risks within AAI programs.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i) Ability to evaluate and decrease potential participant or population risks.</li> <li>ii) Ability to evaluate and decrease potential dog risks.</li> <li>iii) Ability to evaluate and decrease environmental risks.</li> <li>iv) Ability to evaluate and decrease handler/staff risks.</li> <li>v) Ability to evaluate and decrease activity risks.</li> </ul> <p>They should also show:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) Ability to accurately read, interpret and respond to dog body language: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i) Ability to link dog-participant interactions to participant behaviors/goals/conceptualization.</li> <li>ii) Ability to link unexpected events or interactions to participant goals or presenting concerns.</li> <li>iii) Ability to model appropriate, respectful, and empathetic dog care and interactions.</li> </ul> </li> <li>b) Ability to prepare and conduct a training program for handlers/AAI providers and their self-trained dogs.</li> </ul> |
| <p><b>Expert Level</b><br/>(Expert)</p>        | <p>Competent providers of AAPP demonstrate a mastery of professional skills in dog training for AAI interventions. Specifically, they should show:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) Ability to mentor, supervise and teach others about best practices in training and placing dogs with recipients.</li> <li>b) Ability to develop placement programs.</li> <li>c) Quality control - ability to objectively assess a range of dogs, including self-trained (if program includes these type of placements), both, pre- and post-placement. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i) ability to make sound judgement and decision on removing the dog out of the placement program should the standards not be met and the dog's wellbeing compromised.</li> </ul> </li> <li>d) Involvement in developing AAI as an industry, collaboration with other professionals <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i) Participation in supervised professional practice</li> </ul> </li> </ul>  |
| <p><b>Attitudes</b></p>                        | <p><b>Core Competencies</b></p>   |
| <p><b>Entry Level</b><br/>(Awareness)</p>      | <p>Trainers/instructors/AAPP providers new to AAI should be working under the supervision of an experienced professional/mentor. Specifically, they should:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) Demonstrate awareness of their role and level of responsibility</li> <li>b) Follow all procedures and policies set by the AAPP provider to protect the wellbeing and safety of all involved</li> <li>c) Act in the best interests of the program, recipients, and dogs</li> <li>d) Utilise a reflective approach to their own learning</li> <li>e) Understanding that the dogs involved are their responsibility</li> <li>f) Understand animal welfare, well-being, and advocacy and that they directly impact future participant safety</li> </ul>   |
| <p><b>Intermediate Level</b><br/>(Trained)</p> | <p>Competent trainers/instructors/AAPP providers prioritize their responsibility to dogs both, placed and being prepared for AAI and are effective dog advocates.</p>   |

|  |   |
|--|---|
|  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) Understanding that the dogs involved are the trainers/instructor’s responsibility both, prior and after they are placed with the recipient <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i) Understanding that animal welfare, well-being and advocacy directly impact participant safety.</li> <li>ii) Understanding that animal advocacy is essential to the ethical practice of AAI.</li> </ul> </li> <li>b) Respecting animal rights, animal welfare, and well-being. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i) Awareness and avoidance of the potential for dog exploitation, either accidentally or intentionally.</li> <li>ii) Show good judgement and be able to make decisions on behalf of the dog and not compromise the dog’s wellbeing.</li> <li>iii) Respond to signs of ill health or reluctance to interact and act accordingly e.g. postpone training sessions, consider withdrawing from the program or choose a different career path.</li> </ul> </li> <li>c) Promoting awareness of AAI at micro and macro levels (individual, community, public) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i) Awareness that they are ambassadors for the field.</li> <li>ii) Maintaining appropriate professional behavior when representing AAI.</li> <li>iii) Willingness to speak to and educate individuals, groups, and organizations/institutions about AAI.</li> <li>iv) Supporting learning opportunities for AAI enthusiasts, students and trainees.</li> <li>v) Supporting and advocating for the development of AAI specialty credentials.</li> </ul> </li> </ul> <p>Competent trainers/instructors/AASP providers strive towards AAI specific professional values.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) Enthusiasm and passion for dog training, behavior and AAI.</li> <li>b) Flexibility, openness, and creativity.</li> <li>c) Calm demeanor during unexpected events/situations.</li> <li>d) Effective, expressive, polite and receptive communication, and respectful, non-judgmental attitude. with recipients and other people they work with.</li> <li>e) Adequate/Appropriate empathy for humans and animals.</li> </ul> |
| <p><b>Advanced Level</b><br/>(Experienced)</p> | <p>Experienced trainers/instructors/AASP providers prioritize their own formal education, assessment and supervision for general AAI history, theory and practice and dog specific care, training, communication, etc.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) Formal coursework and keeping abreast of the literature on dog related matters (training methods, behavior, cognition, emotions etc.) and general AAI coursework including history and current literature.</li> <li>b) Understanding the human-animal bond and how it impacts training and intervention strategies.</li> <li>c) Understanding the importance of formal education pertaining to humane care, training, communication, enrichment and general well-being of dogs.</li> <li>d) Understand importance of record keeping e.g. health and behavior evaluations, training progress records, evaluation, incident reports.</li> <li>e) Understanding ethics and duty to all parties. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i) Recipient</li> <li>ii) Participants</li> <li>iii) Dogs</li> <li>iv) Self/Discipline</li> </ul> </li> </ul>  |

|                                 |   |
|---------------------------------|---|
|                                 | <p>f) Show consideration for participants, recipients, other staff and volunteers (<i>relating to not taking advantage e.g. photos</i>).</p> <p>g) Give accurate, honest, and professional representation of AAPP program.</p>  |
| <b>Expert Level</b><br>(Expert) | <p>Competent trainers/instructors/AAPP providers have a well-developed professional identity and are professional advocates for AAI. Specifically, they shall have:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) Active involvement in continuing education and engagement in professional development</li> <li>b) Regular consultation and collaboration with other AAPP or AAI providers</li> <li>c) Regular consultation and collaboration with professional dog specialists</li> <li>d) Maintaining familiarity with existing and emerging discipline-specific AAI literature: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i) Familiarity with current AAI language/terminology</li> <li>ii) Encouraging and supporting the continued development of AAI or other dog related literature</li> </ul> </li> </ul> |

