

Due to the nature of our membership and the roles that people and animals fulfil, AAI has outlined 4 tiers of competencies for each member category.

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 AAI accreditation.

Competency levels can be summarized as follows:

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

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.