

Professional Dog Trainer's Certification Program

Our professional dog trainer's program has been developed with extreme thoughtfulness and care. Becoming a dog trainer is more than just following a course, and writing an exam. It involves mastery of the science of dog training, and detailed knowledge of how dogs learn. It also demands that the trainer have the ability to apply that knowledge practically and effectively to a wide range of dogs and owners. To call oneself a dog trainer, one needs both technical knowledge and hands-on experience. Our program strives to give you exactly this combination.

Pre-Requisites:

- High school diploma or equivalent
- Minimum 18 yrs of age
- Have never been convicted of animal cruelty or abuse

Our program consists of 4 separate units of study:

- Unit 1 - Dog Training Foundations (32 hours)
- Unit 2 - Instructional Techniques (34 hours)
- Unit 3 - Advanced Trainer Skills (36 hours)
- Unit 4 - Behavioural Modification (36 hours)

* Successful completion of Unit 1 is a pre-requisite for Units 2 and 3.

* Successful completion of Units 1 and 2 are a pre-requisite for Unit 4.

Upon successful completion of each unit of study, students will be awarded a certificate.

Upon successful completion of all 4 units, students will be awarded the designation of Certified Journeyman Dog Trainer.

Upon completion of all 4 units of study, and 150 hours of dog training experience (at least 75% of these hours must consist of teaching classes as the Head Trainer), the student will be awarded the designation of Certified Professional Dog Trainer. These hours may be completed at any training facility, however the student must provide proof of completion in order to be awarded the CPDT designation.

A Head Trainer or Instructor is defined as the individual responsible for running the class or private session. There is only one Head Trainer per class. The Head Trainer responsibilities must include much of the following:

- *Prepares lesson plans and curriculum*
- *Prepares homework and handouts*
- *Works with both owners and the dogs; a session where the trainer is working only with the dog and not the owners does not qualify for Head Trainer hours*
- *Decides which tools are appropriate for each class/client*
- *Designs room layout, timing, and schedule for each class*
- *Manages people, dogs, and environment for everyone's safety*
- *Is responsible for class goals being met*

UNIT 1 DOG TRAINING FOUNDATIONS (32 hours)

In this unit, the student will be introduced to the fundamental knowledge necessary for any dog trainer. Through a combination of self-study, lecture, practical exercises and assignments, the following elements will be covered:

- Canine ethology
- Body language and calming signals
- Breeds and registries
- Health and vaccinations
- Canine developmental periods
- Tools and Equipment
- Dog learning theory
 - Classical, operant conditioning
 - Operant training quadrants
 - Primary, secondary reinforcers
 - Schedules of reinforcement
 - Extinction
 - De-sensitization, flooding, counter-conditioning
- Targeting, modeling, shaping, backchaining, prompting
- Stimulus control, self control
- Management and passive training
- Core skills
 - Basic obedience skills
 - House training
 - Bite inhibition
 - Common problem avoidance and solving

Students are required to have a 'class dog', a dog that is available to them to perform various assignments, both in and out of the classroom. This dog will come to class with the student and will spend several hours a day crated, so must be crate trained.

Upon completion of this unit, student's knowledge will be assessed by written and practical examination. The student must receive a grade of 80% or higher in order to pass this unit.

Mandatory Reading Material:

Excel-erated Learning: Explaining in English How Dogs Learn and How Best to Teach Them, by Pamela j. Reid, Ph. D

The Culture Clash, by Jean Donaldson

Don't Shoot the Dog, by Karen Pryor

Recommended Reading Material:

Calming Signals, by Turid Ruugas

UNIT 2 INSTRUCTIONAL TECHNIQUES (34 hours)

In this unit, the student will learn the skill of being a dog training instructor. Through a combination of lecture, practical exercises and assignment, students will learn how to set class objectives, prepare a lesson plan and hand-outs, organize the classroom, present the lesson and monitor their pupils' success.

After having attained a demonstrated and confirmed level of skill(*) teaching course peers in the first 12 hours of this unit, students will then complete this unit of study by satisfactorily assisting(+) in a minimum of 14 hours of group puppy and basic obedience classes, and then teaching a further 8 hours of private obedience lessons to actual clients under supervision.

* If the student does not demonstrate the required ability, he/she will not be permitted to move on to working with actual clients. This unit will have to be repeated in its entirety.

+ If the student does not demonstrate the required ability, he/she will not be permitted to move on to working with private clients. The student will be required to continue to assist group puppy and obedience classes until his/her performance is satisfactory.

Students are required to have a 'class dog', a dog that is available to them to perform various assignments, both in and out of the classroom. This dog will come to selected classes in the first 12 hours of this unit with the student and will spend several hours a day crated, so must be crate trained.

The student's skill level will be under constant supervision. Supervising instructors will advise the student on shortcomings and strengths after each teaching assignment. Students will only be allowed to advance in this unit if their performance is satisfactory, hence completion of the unit indicates the student has passed the unit.

UNIT 3 ADVANCED TRAINER SKILLS (36 hours)

In this unit, the student will gain deeper understanding of many different dog training arenas and the training methods employed. Through lecture, video, demonstration, and practical exercises/participation, the student will not become an expert in any given area but will become conversant with a broad range of training activities and their considerations. The following elements will be included:

- Competitive obedience and Rally O
- Tracking, SAR, Canine Nosework
- Agility
- Therapy
- Service Dogs
- Sledding/Skijoring

The following elements may be included, depending upon the availability of expert instructors:

- Protection sports
- Disk, flyball
- Field
- Herding

In addition to formal classroom instruction, students will be required to complete a minimum of 12 hours of volunteer time in activity-specific events of their choice (ring steward at an obedience trial, steward at an obedience match, quarry for a SAR dog, etc) so as to expand their knowledge base.

Students are required to have a 'class dog', a dog that is available to them to perform various assignments, both in and out of the classroom. This dog will come to class with the student and will spend several hours a day crated, so must be crate trained.

Upon completion of this unit, students' knowledge will be assessed by written examination. The student must receive a grade of 80% or higher in order to pass this unit.

UNIT 4 BEHAVIOURAL MODIFICATION (36 hours)

In this unit, the student will learn how to modify behavioural problems in dogs. Through a combination of lecture, video, self-study and by working with problematic dogs and their owners, the following elements will be covered:

Common Behavioural Concerns

- Aggression
- Anxieties
- Fears
- Obsessive compulsive disorders

Behavioural Modification Techniques

- Counter Conditioning
- Desensitization
- Homeopathic Options
- Management
- Flooding
- Pharmacological Intervention

Taking a Behavioural History

Determining a Behavioural Modification Strategy

Execution and Follow-Up

After completing 6 hours of study in the classroom, students will then assist with actual clients by sitting in on behavioural counseling sessions, then by conducting follow-up training sessions with these clients to ensure comprehension and compliance with the behavioural modification plan.

The student is required to have access to a car, and a driver's license, so as to go to clients' homes for follow-up sessions.

Upon completion of this unit, students' knowledge will be assessed by written examination. The student must receive a grade of 80% or higher in order to pass this unit.

Mandatory Reading Material:

How to Right a Dog Gone Wrong, by Pamela Dennison

Clinical Behavioural Medicine for Small Animals, by Karen Overall

Fight!, by Jean Donaldson