

The Dog and Cat Management Board

Policy on Assessment Criteria for Disability Dogs

Description:

A policy for the assessment criteria for disability dogs



Government of South Australia

The Dog and Cat Management Board

Document Control:

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Introduction

The Board has the authority to accredit disability dogs under *the Dog and Cat Management Act 1995 (Act)* and has developed a standard criteria for assessment of these dogs.

Legislation

21A—Accreditation of disability dogs, guide dogs etc

- (1) The Board may, on application, accredit a dog, or renew the accreditation of a dog, as—
 - (a) a disability dog; or
 - (b) a guide dog; or
 - (c) a hearing dog.
- (2) An application for accreditation must—
 - (a) be made to the Board in the manner and form approved by the Board; and
 - (b) be accompanied by the fee fixed by the Board.
- (3) An applicant must provide the Board with any information required by the Board for the purpose of determining the application.
- (4) Accreditation of a dog remains in force for the life of the dog unless it is earlier revoked by the Board or surrendered by the owner of the dog.
- (5) The Board must maintain a register of dogs accredited under this section by the Board (which may be kept in the form of a computer record) that is to be readily available for public inspection without fee.
- (6) The Board may only revoke the accreditation of a dog if the Board is satisfied that—
 - (a) the dog's ill-health, injury or advanced age prevents the dog from carrying out its functions as a disability dog, guide dog or hearing dog (as the case may be); or
 - (b) the dog is temperamentally unsuitable to continue to be accredited as a disability dog, guide dog or hearing dog (as the case may be); or
 - (c) the owner of the dog is unable to maintain effective control of the dog (whether by command or by means of physical restraint).

The Dog and Cat Management Board has accredited a member of Assistance Dogs International to carry out assessments on its behalf.

Assessment Criteria for Disability Dogs.

Any person wishing to apply for disability dog accreditation must prove to the Dog and Cat Management Board that they cannot carry out functions as an able bodied person without the aid of the dog. For example, the dog picks up dropped items, empties washing machines, and provides warning when smoke alarms sound.

- The dog must not be a prescribed breed. (Japanese Tosa, Filo Brasileiro, Dogo Argentino, Presa Canario, American Pit Bull).
- The dog must be of sound temperament. If this is in doubt, then a recognised temperament test e.g. National Consultative Committee for Animal Welfare or SAFER, should be undertaken by a person familiar with the test.
- Dogs that are the subject of a control dog order such as dangerous, nuisance or menacing may not be accredited as a disability dog.
- Public Access Test – approximately 4 hours (cost \$120.00 per hour).
- The dog must be made available for reassessment to ensure that it is physically and temperamentally fit to continue with accreditation as per section 21(a) (6) (b).
- The owner of the dog must inform the Board if the dog ceases to be physically and temperamentally fit to continue with accreditation.
- The dog must observe any conditions if so specified by the Dog and Cat Management Board.
- Only residents of South Australia may apply and receive Disability Dog Accreditation.

Evidence Required

- Person must provide the Board with a letter from both a General Practitioner and a Specialist who are treating the person, stating both the illness and details of the disability and whether or not a dog would assist with activities of daily living.
- Dog must be assessed for its temperament and capabilities by the accredited trainer of the Dog and Cat Management Board.

Visitors to South Australia

The Board have delegated authority for Board staff to issue temporary disability dog accreditation for up to 28 days for visitors passing through the state that have similar accreditation or permissions from their interstate Government.

Attachment 1

Disability Dog Application Form

Client Information

Applicant Name: _____
Address: _____ _____
Telephone: _ _____
Preferred method of contact: eg e-mail, fax etc. _____

Dog Information

Dog Name: _____
Age: _____
Breed/ description: _____ <i>Dog cannot be of a prescribed breed.</i>
Has dog undergone any formal training Yes <input type="checkbox"/> <i>If yes with what training and with whom</i> No <input type="checkbox"/>
Details of training: _____

Illness/Disability

GP Letter Attached	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>	<i>If no application cannot proceed</i>
Specialist Letter Attached	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>	<i>If no application cannot proceed</i>
The General Practitioner and Specialist letters should outline your disability or illness, describe how the dog will assist with your daily activities and that a dog is required to be with you in public to assist with your disability or illness.			

Payment

The Public Access Test assessment may take up to four hours to complete and you will be required to pay for the assessment.– approximately 4 hours (cost \$120.00 per hour).

An invoice/account will be sent to you after the assessment has been undertaken.

Release of medical information to a third party

The information provided on this form will be available and forwarded to a third party who will assess you and your dog on behalf of the Board. This information and the assessment results supplied by the third party will be provided to the Board and Board staff to determine the suitability of your dog for accreditation as a disability dog.

Ihereby authorise all medical authorities concerned on my behalf to release relevant medical information as requested, to staff at the Dog and Cat Management Board, for the purpose of accrediting my dog as a disability dog.

Attachment 2

PUBLIC ACCESS TEST **(For all Assistance dogs)**

PURPOSE OF TEST

This test is designed to provide a set of practical flexible tests. These are easily performed in a range of environments and locations and will assess whether a dog and its owner, are sufficiently capable to be granted access to public areas. The owner and dog must satisfy criteria that will determine that they are not likely to cause safety concerns or become obtrusive in public areas.

Note

Due to the diverse range of illnesses, injuries and disabilities that require a person have an assistance dog; each test should be provided to suit the required task of each individual case.

- There is no set order in which to complete this test as long as the full criteria have been met.
- The tester will take into account any unforeseen situations and will ensure that these are awarded fair merit.

THE EXAMINERS RESPONSIBILITIES

Guidelines for the examiner

1. The examiner will clarify each module explaining what is both expected and acceptable.
2. The examiner will decide how and where the testing is to be carried out, ensuring structure and flexibility.
3. The examiner must ensure any person involved in the testing process are prepared and versed in the testing procedure and dismissal policy.
4. All parties must have prior agreement should media clips, such as video or photographs, be used during the examination process.
5. The examiner does not disclose any information regarding their agency, or the test to the owner but is to deliver their report to the Dog and Cat Management Board.
6. The tester has the right to terminate a test if he/she feels for any reason that to continue, would put someone's health, welfare or safety at risk. Other reasons for termination, such as nerves or stress are acceptable but every effort should be made to minimize such occurrences.

DISMISSAL FROM TEST POLICY

Causes for dismissal from the examination process.

1. Any dog that is known to have health issues likely to affect its ability to perform as an assistance dog.

2. Any dog having a temporary illness at the time, which will unfairly affect its ability to perform.
3. Any dog showing signs of stress, fear or hesitation.
4. Any dog displaying aggression or suspicious behavior.
5. Any dog showing signs of undue excitement or lack of control causing a nuisance likely to affect public safety and perception of Assistance Dogs.
6. Any owner appearing too harsh in his/her control of the dog, or not willing to abide by relevant laws.
7. The examiner has the right to terminate a test at any time, providing constructive feedback to the owner. The examiner may wish to refer the owner to another examiner for a second opinion.

FAILURE TO PASS

Procedure on failing initial examination

The Dog and Cat Management Board will contact the client to inform them of the outcome of this test.

EXAMINATION

Basic Obedience and Control

Purpose of Module:

The obedience phase of this test is to ascertain that the dog and owner are able to interact with the public, with the dog being well mannered and under control.

Note: Satisfactory is the minimum pass level, with **Good** and **Excellent** being given greater value.

This phase should be tested in an area where the dog can be controlled through buildings, both inside and out, preferably in the local High street, or CBD, with shops and café's.

Scenario:

1. Instruct the owner to perform a typical travel scenario heeling the dog (Or at the side of a wheelchair) He/she should incorporate left and right turns and weaving between objects.

Both dog and owner displayed sufficient control throughout.

Poor	Needs Work	Satisfactory	Good	Excellent
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2. Instruct the owner to demonstrate two separate sits with one being a sit/stay of thirty seconds to one minute.

The dog willingly complied with the owners commands and remained in position.

Poor	Needs Work	Satisfactory	Good	Excellent
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3. Instruct the owner to demonstrate two downs with one being a down stay of three to five minutes.

The dog willingly complied with the owners commands and remained in position.

Poor	Needs Work	Satisfactory	Good	Excellent
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(If the dog moved) The owner was able to quickly gain control.

Poor	Needs Work	Satisfactory	Good	Excellent
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Basic Obedience and Control (Continued)

4. Instruct the owner to demonstrate a minimum of two down/stays in a crowded area – one being for a minimum of 3 minutes under a bench, table or chair.

The dog willingly complied with the owners commands and remained in position.

Poor	Needs Work	Satisfactory	Good	Excellent
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(If the dog moved) The owner was able to quickly gain control.

Poor	Needs Work	Satisfactory	Good	Excellent
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5. Instruct the owner to perform a controlled down whilst at a café or restaurant with food put down within a short distance of the dog for one minute. The command **Leave it/No** can be used.

The dog willingly complied with the owners commands, remaining in position and ignoring the distraction of food.

Poor	Needs Work	Satisfactory	Good	Excellent
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6. Instruct the owner to perform a controlled down whilst in the presence of another dog (Other dog should be a minimum of 2 metres away and a maximum of 5)

The dog willingly complied with the owners commands, remaining in position and ignoring the distraction of the other dog.

Poor	Needs Work	Satisfactory	Good	Excellent
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EXAMINATION

Recall 2 metres and 15 metres on lead

Purpose of module:

To ensure the owner demonstrates sufficient control of the dog from a distance and the dog displays a sound level of self control minimizing public risk.

Note:

This part of the examination should take place, 1st in a quiet area and then moved to an area where some level of distraction can be achieved, such as outside a shopping centre.

Scenario:

1. Instruct the owner to do the “come” command from a distance of 2 metres and then from 15 metres. This is to be done on flexi-lead with minimal distraction.

The owner demonstrated good control of the dog.

Poor	Needs Work	Satisfactory	Good	Excellent
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The dog readily complied with the owners commands.

Poor	Needs Work	Satisfactory	Good	Excellent
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2. Repeat the exercise but this time in a location providing some level of distraction, such as outside the local shopping centre.

The owner demonstrated good control of the dog.

Poor	Needs Work	Satisfactory	Good	Excellent
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The dog readily complied with the owners commands.

Poor	Needs Work	Satisfactory	Good	Excellent
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EXAMINATION

Toy or Play Distraction Test

Purpose of Module:

This phase is to evaluate the owner's ability to control the dog should an incident occur that causes the dog to get free of the owner. It is necessary for the owner to be able to demonstrate a level of control sufficient to get the dog back before it causes any type of public nuisance or becomes an undue risk.

Scenario:

1. Having placed a number of toys and balls in the path of the dog, instruct the owner to heel the dog at normal pace through the discarded items.

The owner shows effective control.

Poor	Needs Work	Satisfactory	Good	Excellent
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2. From a distance of six to ten metres, the tester is to play with a ball or toy in front of the dog and owner.

The owner shows effective control.

Poor	Needs Work	Satisfactory	Good	Excellent
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3. Instruct the owner to place the dog in a "down/stay". The tester is to then throw a ball or toy down past the dog. The ball/toy should be approximately 2 metres away at all times.

The owner shows effective control.

Poor	Needs Work	Satisfactory	Good	Excellent
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EXAMINATION

Embarkation/Disembarkation of Public Vehicles (Taxi Bus Train)

Purpose of module:

The purpose of this phase is to ensure the dog is well mannered and under sufficient control.

Scenario:

1. Instruct the owner to control the dog when embarking or disembarking any public vehicle. The dog does not have to perform any specific tasks but must remain calm and controlled when on/in the vehicle. A good sit/stay down/stay is preferred to enhance safety and the general public's perception of good control.

The owner displayed effective control when entering and exiting the vehicle.

Poor	Needs Work	Satisfactory	Good	Excellent
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The dog remained calm and in position until instructed otherwise.

Poor	Needs Work	Satisfactory	Good	Excellent
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2. Repeat the exercise above adding distractions such as people walking by or people in/on the vehicle.

The owner displayed effective control with distractions provided.

Poor	Needs Work	Satisfactory	Good	Excellent
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3. Repeat the exercise for bus/trains with another dog in/on the vehicle; owner and dog are to maneuver past static dog.

The owner displayed effective control in the presence of another dog.

Poor	Needs Work	Satisfactory	Good	Excellent
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EXAMINATION

Startle Test

Purpose of module:

This section is designed to ensure a dog is stable enough when startled to assess the situation and to not act in a fearful, shy or aggressive manner. Any alarm the dog does display, should be short lived.

Scenario:

1. Instruct the handler to place the dog in a controlled down beside him/her. Place an empty stainless steel food bowl three metres behind the dog and out of view. Drop a chain collar into the bowl to assess the dog's reaction.

The dog remained calm or if startled, recovered quickly, ignoring the noise distraction.

Poor	Needs Work	Satisfactory	Good	Excellent
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2. Instruct the owner to heel the dog at a normal pace, and then let off a party popper from two metres away to the side and slightly forward of the dog and owner.

The dog remained calm or if startled, recovered quickly, ignoring the noise distraction.

Poor	Needs Work	Satisfactory	Good	Excellent
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3. From an angle that does not cause the dog to focus on the tester, approach the dog and owner, from about six to eight metres away, open an automatic umbrella.

The dog remained calm or if startled, recovered quickly, ignoring the noise distraction.

Poor	Needs Work	Satisfactory	Good	Excellent
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EXAMINATION

Public Areas

Purpose of Module:

This section is designed to evaluate that the dog and owner is working in unison and that they are going to be safe and reliable in public.

Note:

This phase should be tested in an area providing crowds, walkways, corners and corridors such as a suburban shopping area, or shopping centre.

Scenario:

1. Instruct the owner to heel the dog (or at the side of a wheelchair) from the car parking area in a shopping area/centre, through crowds, down walkways, making left and right corner turns when asked. If possible, ask the owner to control the dog through a narrow corridor. (Most shopping centres have corridors leading to public toilets for example).

The dog displayed a neat and practical heeling position.

Poor	Needs Work	Satisfactory	Good	Excellent
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The dog remained calm and confident around traffic in the car park.

Poor	Needs Work	Satisfactory	Good	Excellent
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The dog remained calm and controlled around people and crowds, showing no suspicion at unusual objects or people. **Note:** If the dog did show any sign of suspicion, the tester is to note the recovery time as this does not necessary mean a fail.

Poor	Needs Work	Satisfactory	Good	Excellent
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Public Areas (Continued)

The dog stopped and was controlled when commanded to stop, or automatically when the owner stopped.

Poor	Needs Work	Satisfactory	Good	Excellent
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EXAMINATION

Note:

As Assistance dogs are likely to come into contact with other Assistance dogs in public places. This part of the test is designed to demonstrate that the dog can continue to work in public areas in the presence of other animals, without causing concern or undue risk to the general public.

2. Instruct the owner to continue through the shopping centre where on route, the tester will be stood with another dog. The owner is to continue past at a minimum distance of 2 metres and a maximum of 10 metres.

The owner showed effective control when moving past the dog.

Poor	Needs Work	Satisfactory	Good	Excellent
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The dog showed no aggression when working past the other dog.

Poor	Needs Work	Satisfactory	Good	Excellent
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