



European Society for Animal Assisted Therapy  
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## **Minimum requirements for basic training of a “Therapy Assisting Animal Team” according to the criteria of the European Society of Animal-Assisted Therapy (ESAAT)**

### **I. Introduction**

Therapy animal teams should be trained by means of a basic training course according to the criteria of the European Society for Animal-Assisted Therapy (ESAAT).

Such teams are active in offering pedagogical, psychological, rehabilitative and social integration activities for children, youths, adults and the aged with cognitive, social-emotional and motoric impairments, behavioural problems and other specific support needs.

A therapy assisting animal team works in the specific field of occupation as a human team member or integrated with a specialist. Specialist integration takes place according to the field of activity, e.g. with occupational therapists, physiotherapists, psychologists, (social) pedagogues, doctors or specialists in animal-assisted therapy.

The general aims of the use of therapy animal teams are:

1. to provide assistance in the re-establishment and maintenance of physical, cognitive and emotional functions,
2. to provide support in the facilitation of capabilities and skills through activities and treatments,
3. to provide support in the stimulation of a feeling of inclusion in the particular life situation.

The specific aims of the therapy assisting animal team are oriented upon the indications defined by the specialist regarding needs, resources and disorders, as well as the particular person's special need of support.

The task of the therapy assisting animal team is to provide support within the specific field of occupation of the human team member or integrated with a specialist regarding the client's impairments, their need for relief of their complaints, autonomy as well as personal and social integration. Activities are carried out in a goal-oriented manner taking into account ethical principles and must be documented.

## **II. The accreditation procedure**

Accreditation takes place as follows:

- Submission of accreditation documentation to ESAAT by the responsible body
- Formal examination of the accreditation documentation by the Accreditation Commission
- Notification of the Accreditation Commission's assessment
- If positive: transmission of the licence agreement regarding the ESAAT logo.
- The licence agreement is restricted to two years for an initial accreditation. Re-accreditation is necessary thereafter. The licence lasts 4 years on re-accreditation.

## **III. Prerequisites for accreditation**

### **1. Organisational structure**

A clear description of the organisational structure must be provided.

#### **1.1 Body responsible for basic training**

The body responsible for basic training must be unambiguously named.

- Institutions and associations must provide an excerpt from the registry of associations and a Police Clearance Certificate for the President of the institute or association as well as details regarding the number of members.
- Companies must provide a certified excerpt from the commercial register and a Police Clearance Certificate for the Managing Director.
- Other organisational structures must be clearly described and a Police Clearance Certificate provided for the head of the organisation.

#### **1.2 Professional responsibility**

The professional manager(s) of the basic training must be nominated and their qualifications specified.

#### **1.3 Premises and technical facilities**

A description of the technical facilities and the space available must be provided.

### **2. Information on basic training**

Provide proof that information material is available for interested parties.

Provide proof that applications for basic training can be made via the Internet or using printed media.

### **3. Structure of basic training**

#### **3.1 Length of course**

Basic training must amount to a total of 35 hours.

#### **3.2 The curriculum and work materials**

A teaching curriculum, structured according to the total hours available and teachers responsible for specific lesson content, must be provided in writing.

### 3.3 Content of basic training

The defined content can be taken from the particular curriculum with the defined number of hours. The defined numbers of hours are minimum times. Only one type of animal can be covered in each basic training course!

Theoretical content	Hours
First aid for the animal	2
The animal and its behaviour	4
Pedagogic principles	3
Psychological principles	2
Medical principles, particularly geriatrics	2
Preparation for practical activities	2
<b>Practical training</b>	<b>20</b>
Social behaviour with humans	
Social behaviour with other animals	
Controllability and receptivity	
Therapy-specific situations	

## 4. Performance records

Performance records on the active participation in the compulsory teaching events as well as the theoretical and practical examination. A final certificate may only be issued if all three sections of the course have been completed successfully.

### 4.1. Active participation in the theoretical seminars

Proof that presence at theoretical seminars is documented. Active participation must be proven by at least 80% attendance of the events. Attendance is to be documented.

### 4.2 Examinations

The examination regulations must be provided in writing. They must contain the number and type of the examinations to be implemented and provide details on those setting the exams, the composition of the Examination Committee, the admission requirements for exams and the possibilities for repeating exams. The precise content and type of implementation of the practical examination must be documented in detail.

One theoretical and one practical examination must be implemented.

1. Oral or written exam forms may be used for the theoretical examination. The theoretical exam must be equivalent to an examination with at least 30 questions.
2. The practical examination must, among other things, test social behaviour in everyday situations, social behaviour towards people in direct and indirect contact (especially those with particularly striking behaviours), and behaviour during feeding or whilst playing. The interaction of the human/animal team is to be assessed.

### 4.3 Completion of assistant activities

At least three assistant visits of the human/animal team together with an experienced team or under supervision are to be completed in an appropriate facility or institution. These must be documented.

## **5. Lecturers**

An overview of the lecturers must be provided. Their qualifications must be proven. The particular topics for which lecturers are responsible must be documented.

Brief curriculum vitae must be provided. Evidence of specific qualifications must be provided. Qualifications must be adequate for the topic to be taught.

## **6. Costs**

The cost of the basic training of the participants is to be documented.

## **7. Final certificate**

Reference is to be made to the particular occupation-specific qualification of the human team member in the final certificate. If no basic therapeutic, pedagogic or support qualification exists the phrase "Qualified for activities with visiting animals" is to be used.

## **8. Regular monitoring**

All therapy animal teams are to be monitored annually. The compulsory follow-up check includes examination of the training level of the animal, interaction in the human/animal team, and the provision of a veterinary certificate.

Every two years it is necessary to check whether the human team member has complied with their obligation to undergo 16 hours of further training.

The follow-up checks are to be documented in writing and the records are to be kept for at least the duration of the accreditation.