



**PET CERTIFICATION
SUMMARY OF INITIAL EVALUATION ITEMS
Dogs**

The evaluated test items must be passed without the use of treats, harsh verbal or physical corrections, and without the dog displaying any of the following disqualifying behaviors at any point once the dog enters the evaluation facility:

- Growling
- Raising lips in a snarl
- Biting/nipping
- Attempts to drag handler away from, or towards evaluator or test dog
- Urination anywhere inside the test facility before, during, or after the test begins
- Excessive whining
- Excessive barking
- Other signs of excessive stress
- Avoidance of evaluator/staff (can include flattened ears, crouching, backing up, submissive belly roll)
- Jumping on the evaluator or evaluation staff inside the test facility before, during, or after the test begins

SECTION A – TEMPERAMENT & APPEARANCE

1. INTEREST IN INTERACTION

Evaluator will approach handler and dog for an introduction and to prepare handler for the test. Evaluator will invite the dog to approach for a greeting. The dog must approach the evaluator without force or coercion and without jumping.

2. EXAMINATION/PETTING/HUGGING

Dog will be examined and handled by the evaluator as described below. The dog may sit, lie down or stand while the evaluator approaches and does the following:

- Pat on top of head
- Gentle examination by hand of ears and mouth
- Gently lift of one front paw and then one back paw
- Pet the body with light tugging of fur/hair
- Gently grasp the tail
- Hugging

3. APPEARANCE

The dog must not have any of the following conditions:

- Long nails
- Dirty or foul-smelling coat
- Open sores
- Discharge

4. APPROACH VARIATION

Dog sits or stands beside handler while the evaluator moves towards them as described below. The evaluator will stop 2-3 feet before reaching the dog and will not interact with the dog.

- Approaches at a fast pace
- Approaches with an unsteady gait
- Approaches from behind
- Approaches slowly while making eye contact with the dog
- Approaches speaking loudly while stomping and reaching towards the dog

5. MEDICAL ARTICLES

Dog will be presented with 3 medical apparatus items: crutches, walker, and wheelchair. Evaluator will use each apparatus, moving past the dog. The handler will then be asked to approach the evaluator in each apparatus and position the dog for petting. For small dogs, handlers will be required to either place pet on a towel in evaluator's lap while evaluator sits in the wheelchair, or handler will hold the small dog in their arms, close enough for evaluator to reach for petting. In addition, the crutch will be dropped to see how the dog reacts to the loud noise.

6. COMFORT IN A CROWD

Three people will approach the dog at the same time and pet the dog from different angles to determine if the dog is comfortable or welcoming, or if it shows signs of fear, stress, or aggression.

7. REACTION TO ANOTHER DOG

Handler will walk with the dog toward another certified dog and handler (test team). Both dogs must stay on the left side of their handler's body, making no contact with each other. The dog may be curious about the test team, but must not react aggressively. Handlers will stop, shake hands and continue walking. The handler may choose to put the dog in a sit stay while he/she shakes the hand of the test dog's handler, though this is not required. Dog and handler will then stop and hold a stationary position while the test team approaches from the front and walks in a circle around them maintaining a distance of 3-4 feet. The dog being evaluated must remain under the handler's control. Barking, if any, must be brought under control within 3 barks or it will be considered excessive.

SECTION B – HANDLER SKILLS

8. BASIC COMMANDS

The dog must be able to do the following:

- Sit - Dog must sit on command
- Stay - Dog is put into a stay on a 4 to 6-foot leash, then handler backs up to the end of the leash while the dog remains in a stay
- Recall – Handler calls the dog to him/her and the dog goes directly to the handler

9. LOOSE LEASH WALKING

The handler will walk the dog on a 4' or 6' leash around the room along a path directed by the evaluator. The path shall include two turns and a stop at the end. The dog must walk on a loose leash without pulling the handler.

10. LEAVE IT

Dog is placed in a sit or down stay. A food treat is placed two feet from the dog by the evaluator. The dog must be able to "leave it." The evaluator will then pick the treat up and replace it further away on the ground while the dog is watching. The handler must then walk the dog past the treat, no further than two feet away from the treat and the dog must "leave it."

11. TAKE IT

Dog is offered a food treat and must be able to "take it" gently without excessive mouthing or contact with the evaluator's hand.

A Note Regarding Multiple Handlers:

If a dog is being tested with multiple handlers on the same day, all items will be tested by the initial, primary handler applicant. The second (or third, etc.) handler(s) will only be asked to perform tasks 4 - 11. If a dog demonstrates an aggressive reactive behavior during "Reaction to Another Dog" (number 7) with any handler applicant, both handlers and the dog, will fail.

For the dog's comfort and to minimize stress, it is highly recommended that multiple handlers be tested during separate evaluation sessions.

If your dog or cat does not successfully pass the initial evaluation after three attempts, we require that you take a six-month break to obtain documented, professional training before being retested. [View our listed or recommended pet trainers.](#)