



Application Handbook

To become an IAABC Certified, Accredited, or Affiliate member, you must complete an application which is submitted to the Application Review Committee. This volunteer committee of qualified professionals will score your work according to specific scoring rubrics.

All applications are scored blind. Your identity is not known to the scorers before, during, or after your application is scored, regardless of outcome.

Upon passing, you will be welcomed to the selected group of IAABC animal behavior and training Certified, Accredited, or Affiliate professionals.

The IAABC offers multiple levels of assessment. By doing so, we honor the hard work and dedication our members devote to excellence in the field, while still delineating between levels of experience and expertise.

You do not need to be certified to join the IAABC. All members join as Supporting members. We welcome all professionals, regardless of where they are in their education and experience, without any exam required.

Each application has several parts and is designed to give us a well-rounded picture of your ability as an animal behavior consultant, trainer, or shelter worker. It asks you to address real-life examples of behavior problems, tests your knowledge of the principles of behavior modification, and requires that you demonstrate good working relationships with other professionals.

You must be an IAABC Supporting member to move forward to any level of certification, accreditation, or affiliate membership.

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Certifications

- **Certified Behavior Consultant**
 - Certified Dog Behavior Consultant (CDBC)
 - Certified Cat Behavior Consultant (CCBC)
 - Certified Horse Behavior Consultant (CHBC)
 - Certified Parrot Behavior Consultant (CPBC)
 - Certified Animal Behavior Consultant, fully certified in 3 or more species (CABC)
- **Certified in Shelter Behavior**
 - Certified in Shelter Behavior – Dog (CSB-D)
 - Certified in Shelter Behavior – Cat (CSB-C)
 - Certified Shelter Behavior Specialist, certified in more than one shelter species (CSBS)

Accreditations

- Accredited Dog Trainer (IAABC-ADT)
- Entrenador Canino Acreditado (IAABC-ECA)

Affiliate Membership

- Shelter Behavior Affiliate (SBA)

Requirements

A strong foundation of knowledge and practice is necessary in order to successfully complete certification or accreditation through the IAABC. The IAABC does not confirm a specific number of hours of past education or logging of previous work, as the evidence of experience is made clear through our application process.

IAABC applications are thorough, comprehensive, and assess not just what you know, but also how you apply what you know. Be prepared to be precise in your answers and to give clear, concise, detailed descriptions of exactly how you applied or carried out aspects of your behavior plans. Don't name a protocol, for instance, without thoroughly explaining which mechanisms of learning are in play, and exactly how you carried it out, step-by-step.

Each application is put through our plagiarism checkers to ensure original work from all applicants.

- **Certified**

We suggest:

- A minimum of four years and 500 hours of experience in animal behavior consulting
- 400 hours minimum of coursework, seminars and mentorships
- A working knowledge of learning theory, counterconditioning, desensitization, training and husbandry, with additional in-depth knowledge of assessment skills and application of species-specific knowledge

- **Accredited**

We suggest:

- A minimum of 2 years experience dog training
- A working knowledge of learning science, training, and husbandry, and seminar, mentorship, and other additional education

- **Affiliate Membership**

We suggest:

- A minimum of 200 hours experience in shelters
- A working knowledge of learning science, training, and husbandry, with additional knowledge of animal management skills related to shelter work
Familiarity with dogs, cats, and other species if applicable

- **DACVBs & CCABs**

- Board Certified Veterinary Behaviorists (US DACVB) who are currently practicing in animal behavior consulting with clients will be granted Certified status in their species of specialty with submission of membership dues and application fee.
- Certified Clinical Animal Behaviourists (UK CCABs) accredited by the ASAB who are currently practicing in animal behavior consulting with clients will be granted Certified status with submission of membership dues and application fee.
- DACVBs and CCABs requesting Certified Animal Behavior Consultant (CABC) status must submit an attestation to info@iaabc.org from a fellow DACVB or CCAB confirming their work with three or more species. CABC status can only be granted upon receipt of this letter of confirmation, or by attaining certification in three or more species of expertise.

Aggression and Types of Cases

- Certified-level applicants must be comfortable working all manner of major behavior cases.
- Case studies are level appropriate. Only Certified-level applicants are evaluated on aggression cases directed at humans.
- Case studies must come to a successful resolution. The presenting behavior concerns relative to the case study prompt must be successfully resolved through the applicant's consulting work with the client and animal.
- “Aggression” is defined as behavior resulting in injury to people or other animals.
- You may not become certified by presenting only one type of behavior case. An ongoing, varied caseload is expected and necessary to achieve IAABC certification.

Case Studies and Training Questions

We request specific case studies depending on the application. Topic requirements are randomized from application to application.

- The Certified application contains three case study prompts and four scenarios, as well as questions about learning science and behavior consulting methods.
- The Accredited applications do not have case studies but do have training questions that offer situations with more than one possible solution.

We want to see that you know more than one way to resolve things!

LIMA and Positive Reinforcement

While the IAABC does not require pledges or promises, we are a positive reinforcement-based organization.

LIMA does not justify the use of punishment in lieu of other effective interventions and strategies. Applicants are expected to focus on the animal's environment, physical well-being, and operant and classical interventions such as differential reinforcement of an alternative behavior, desensitization, and counterconditioning.

IAABC applicants are expected at all times to focus on LIMA strategies and positive reinforcement solutions to behavior challenges. Applicants who respond with punishment-based intervention strategies are assumed to be inadequately experienced to be awarded certification. We do not accept punishment-based interventions as LIMA solutions.

Scoring

- All applications are scored anonymously. Reviewers do not know whose application they are scoring.
- Applicants should not include any identifying information (name, location, books written, courses given, business affiliation, etc.) in the application, except where it is explicitly requested.
- Reviewers score without knowledge of other reviewers' scores.
- Reviewers score using a rubric containing a list of aspects and answers expected to be covered in some way by the applicant.
- Reviewers leave notes within each independent rubric to inform the Chair of questions raised during the review of an application. The Chair then reviews all scores to ensure reviewer accuracy before submitting the findings to the applicant. Applicants do not see the rubric, the scores on individual questions, the scoring procedure, or the reviewers' notes. Applicants will be provided with their final scores on each section of the application and their overall application score.
- Applicants must receive a score of 80% or higher on each section of the application to pass at the application level submitted.
- Certified species applicants who score between 74% and 79% on the application will be welcomed as Associate Certified members in that species division.
- Applicants who score below these requirements on any section of the application remain valuable Supporting members. Supporting members are welcome to retake the exam after receiving their notice. There is no waiting period for exam retakes.
- Applications will not be returned to the applicant after submission or scoring.

Applicant Assistance

- If you are having difficulty with your IAABC account, or filling out the application for some reason, write to info@iaabc.org.
- **Always save your work in another location.** While we have redundancy systems in place to ensure all work is saved and protected, never fill out your application without also having a full copy of your answers in another location.
- We cannot answer individual application content questions. This guide and the instructions on the application are all you have to work from. We will not answer, "Is this what you're looking for," or other questions having to do with your individual responses, or questions, beyond technical issues.
- **Always save your work in another location. Yes, we are saying this twice.**

How long do I have to fill out the application?

- You have 60 days from the time your last endorsement letter of reference is received.
- We understand endorsements can take longer than any of us would like.
- The 60-day clock on your application doesn't start until your last letter of reference has been received.

The Application Process

IAABC applications require demonstrated knowledge of scientific principles and their application, critical thinking, and in most cases, require the presentation of case studies.

Application Fee and Dues

- If you are new to the IAABC, you pay an initial join fee. You are now a Supporting Member, in good standing for 1 year.
- If you wish to apply for a certification, accreditation, or affiliate membership, IAABC members of any level may do so at any time.
- Each application has an associated application fee. Members pay the fee each time they begin an application.
- Dues are specific to each level of membership (Supporting Members, Certified Members, Accredited Members, etc.)
- Once accepted, you pay that membership level's dues, starting 1 year after acceptance to the new level.
- If you are not accepted at the desired level, you will be accepted at the next appropriate level, according to your score.
- Regardless of how many accreditations and certifications a member holds, only one annual dues amount, that of your highest level of membership, is charged. You never pay more than one annual dues fee.

Agreement to Standards

Before moving forward with an application, you'll be required to agree to:

- The IAABC General Terms and Conditions
- The IAABC Code of Ethics and Standards of Practice
- The IAABC Application Plagiarism Policy
- The IAABC LIMA Guidelines and Addendums

Endorsements

We require three letters of reference before you begin an application. Your references will receive, via e-mail, a form through our application system to complete as part of the application process.

Reference requests include a brief attestation of familiarity with you and your work.

- Species Certified
 - One reference from a colleague
 - One reference from a veterinarian you work with
 - One reference from a client
- Shelter Certified and Affiliate
 - One reference from a shelter manager, board member or supervisor
 - Two references from coworkers familiar with your work
- Accredited
 - Two references from clients
 - One reference from a colleague

We make the endorsement process as convenient as possible by having our application system send the request to your listed contacts. The email simply reads:

Hi there,

You are being contacted as a [client / colleague] of [applicant's name], an IAABC applicant.

Please take a moment to complete the brief, secure endorsement form at this link: [we include a link that takes them to a form].

Thank you!

If you have any questions, please contact us at: info@iaabc.org

Applicants do not see letters of reference.

Only when all three references have been received does the application's 60-day clock begin.

Applicants are notified via email when all of their letters of reference have been received.

What does a Scenario look like, and how is it scored?

Scenarios are sample cases with more than one possible approach to resolution. Scenarios assess applicants on their problem solving and critical thinking skills. To achieve a passing score, you'll need to show awareness of best practices.

Scenarios do not have one answer or theory to follow. Often, there could be several reasons for a situation or particular behaviors. Scenarios contain specific details to which an applicant must respond in order to receive a passing score.

You may be asked to provide recommendations for safety and management based on your assessment of the issue. You may include your behavior modification strategies, and other problem-solving tactics, but there is no feedback possible from the client. We want to know what you might ask, given only the information provided.

In the example scenario below, a successful answer will include basic content that someone wanting to be “certified in car mechanics” would need to know, and be able to explain clearly. A Scenario for a car mechanic's application might be:

John calls your auto repair shop for help. He tells you that his Lamborghini Veneo Roadster isn't “acting right.” He tells you that, since the weather turned cooler, he's been sitting in the garage with the car running to make sure the car doesn't lose its performance capabilities from lack of use. He mentions that he closes the garage door to help keep the car as warm as possible. John complains that since he's been doing this, he's smelling a strong gasoline odor that's making him feel sick while the car idles.

John says that he's been letting his car run every day like clockwork, but yesterday the car wouldn't start at all, even though he kept trying. John's been leaving the car's wing door up to easily get in and out, but when he decided to close the door today it felt very heavy and was hard to move. He decided to leave it open until he'd had a chance to call you.

- *What questions might you ask John?*
- *How might you assess what's going on with the car?*
- *What immediate suggestions might you make to tide him over until you could see the car?*
- *What aspect of this case do you think is especially important to note?*

APPLICANT RESPONSE

The first thing I'd do is tell John to stop idling or in any way running the car when in his garage with the garage door closed.

I'd ask John what his gas level was in the car. That he's been sitting in it, letting it idle for days on end, suggests that he may be low on or out of gas, contributing to his starting issues.

I'd also make sure that he was putting the key in the ignition correctly. Lamborghini keys, though multi-directional, sometimes fit better in one direction than another. Further, the trim near the ignition could scratch from the alternative position.

I'd have him check the battery. The car "not starting at all," combined with the "heavy door" (because the doors rotate vertically at a fixed hinge at the front, the doors require battery assist to open and close easily), leads me to think that the battery is dead.

Especially important to note here is that John is smelling gas and idling in the garage. While that's a concern in any situation, Lamborghini Veneos have a defective evaporative-emission system that can let gasoline soak through its charcoal filter and into the purge valves. If this happens, excess fuel vapors can come into contact with hot exhaust gas and ignite.

Lamborghini has stated that "particular maneuvers, for instance an engine over revving at idle" can exacerbate the problem, causing a fire.

I'd explain the known dangers to the client, and strongly urge them to immediately stop idling the car, even if they get it to start again, and especially in the garage, and to only run the car outside with good ventilation.

The reviewers have a list of aspects and answers the applicant should cover. Reviewers cannot see each other's scores. The reviewers score using a rubric, and leave notes to explain the marking down of a question or to note something else.

The Chair then reviews all scores to ensure each scorer responded appropriately and without error. Next, the Chair sends the final score to the applicant. Below is an example of the rubric. Applicants do not see the rubric, the scores or the scorer notes.

Answer Rubric for Scorers

On a scale of 0 (incorrect) to 3 (perfectly accurate), please select	Bonnie	Clyde
Did the applicant ask questions to assess what might be going on?	0 1 2 3	0 1 2 3
Did the questions cover issues likely to be important to the case?	0 1 2 3	0 1 2 3
Did the applicant offer immediate suggestions that might be helpful?	0 1 2 3	0 1 2 3
Did the applicant address not starting the car while in the garage?	0 1 2 3	0 1 2 3
Did the applicant address an “important aspect” of the case?	0 1 2 3	0 1 2 3
Was that aspect in fact important to the case?	0 1 2 3	0 1 2 3
Score (total score possible 18)	18	16
<p>Scorer’s Notes Clyde: The applicant never suggested having the alternator checked. Bonnie: Great work from the applicant making clear the danger of idling in the garage with the door closed.</p>		

Case Studies

Case studies are also scored against a rubric, ensuring that pivotal questions and best practices are addressed by the applicant.

[See our example case study here.](#)

When will I learn whether my application was accepted?

- Our application turnaround time is about four weeks. Once the reviewers have finished scoring, the Chair will send the determination letter to you via email.
- If you have passed your desired level, you'll be informed and congratulated!
- If you have not passed or passed at a lower level, included in the email sent to you will be personalized notes addressing areas in which you did well, and areas in which you needed support to successfully complete the application at the desired level should you decide to retake the application in the future.
- If your scores were below the level required for passing any section, you will remain at the membership level you hold at the time of application, and are welcome to retake the exam after receiving your notice. All member benefits associated with Supporting membership remain in place, and your membership is uninterrupted.

What happens after I'm accepted?

We celebrate!

- You will receive an automated email, sent the day your application is accepted.
- You will then receive a downloadable certificate from us in your user account - this is a big deal!
- Your IAABC Membership card gets updated and is downloadable from within your IAABC account.
- Your IAABC account will also now have level-specific logos for your use on websites, business cards, printed and other materials.
- If you are Certified or Accredited, you'll be able to go into your IAABC account and create your listing for display in our Consultant Locator.
 - Be sure to select "yes" on the "Make listing public?" button.
 - Be sure to select "yes" if you also do phone and virtual consulting.
- Your member benefits will now include more benefits, including unlimited access to our video library of free conference (and other) presentations, for CEUs.
- You will need to log 36 Continuing Education Units every 3 years.

Continuing Education

- IAABC Certified and Accredited members are expected to maintain current, ongoing education.
- A total of 36 Continuing Education Units (CEUs) must be accrued every 3 years in order to maintain certification, accreditation, or affiliate status.
- You can learn more about our continuing education policy [here](#).
- Education must be based on our [Core Competencies](#).

- The IAABC does not award CEUs for education in the use of tools and techniques advocating the use of punishment or aversives. Examples include, but are not limited to: prong collars, cattle prods, verbal/physical abuse, electronic collars, whips, excessive confinement, etc.

I've got questions! FAQ

Because the IAABC Application is unique in asking not only what you know, but what you do with what you know, our application requires more thought than simple right or wrong answers. We love thinkers! While we've done our best to make the application instructions clear, some people do have additional questions.

Can I ask for help?

You are free to write to info@iaabc.org with questions, but we cannot answer questions like:

- "Is this what you have in mind?" (Sent with an excerpt from your answer.)
- "I don't understand what you want here."
- "Are you looking more for X, or for Y?"

Any response from info@ will match the information included in this handbook.

"I don't work this kind of case. Can I substitute another case?"

- No. We ask that you respond to the questions given and case studies requested.

Can I save and come back later?

- Yes. We have an autosave feature on our applications.
- That said, we are not responsible for lost work, and we can't explore various reasons on the applicant's end if work seems to have disappeared.
- **SAVE YOUR WORK ON A SEPARATE BACKUP.** Write your answers in Word or Google Docs or whatever you like, and then paste them into the application so that you always have a backup copy.

Can I get more time?

- Applicants have 60 days to complete their application. The 60-day clock starts after your last letter of reference has been received by us.
- In cases of significant injury, hospitalization or similar circumstances beyond your control, we do grant extra time in rare cases. You may write to info@iaabc.org to request assistance.
- We do not grant extra time because life got busy.

- The 60-day clock also allows ample time for differently-abled learners. No additional time is given due to learning differences, as we've more than doubled the expected necessary time for completion of the application.

I only work in one area of specialty. Can I apply and submit my own case studies?

- No. We expect IAABC Certified and Accredited trainers to have well-rounded abilities and assessment skills.
- The case studies you'll be asked to complete are assigned.
- The case study topic requirements are randomized.
- The case studies are level appropriate. We do not evaluate cases involving injury to humans for any level but Certified.

I work with more than one species. how do I get certified in multiple species?

- You are welcome to be certified in as many divisions as you like.
- Each application is treated individually, with the same process for each one.
- We do require new endorsements for each application. In order to be answerable and keep accurate records, we must ask you to be endorsed for each level. We also want to be sure that you're being endorsed for working with the species in question.
- Members qualified in 3 or more species can be certified as Certified Animal Behavior Consultants, CABC.
- Members with 2 or more shelter certifications can be certified as Certified Shelter Behavior Specialist, CSBS.
- Members pay one dues fee per year, regardless of how many credentials they hold with the IAABC.

Do I have to earn 36 CEUs for each certification?

- No. The total required number of CEUs remains at 36, and counts across all your certifications.

Can I Appeal the Decision About My Application?

- No. We do not have an appeals process.
- Because our applications are scored anonymously against a rubric, and by more than one independent reviewer, we're confident that a fair and just evaluation has been given.
- Applicants not attaining their desired level are sent a detailed letter outlining areas in which they excelled, and areas in which they needed support.



- Members are invited to re-apply at any time in the future. All application fees and steps are required.

What are the IAABC's positions?

- The International Association of Animal Behavior Consultants does not discriminate against any individual on the basis of race, color, ethnicity, national origin, gender, age, disability, physical limitation, marital or familial status, sexual orientation, religion, political beliefs, or any other characteristic prohibited by law.
- IAABC members work to minimize the use of aversive stimuli and maximize the effective use of reinforcers to modify animal behavior. Members agree to adhere to LIMA guidelines (least intrusive, minimally aversive, effective training methods) and the IAABC Code of Ethics upon joining. Within that framework, the IAABC welcomes diversity and openness. Positive regard and respect for differences are among our core values, always striving toward solid, effective, positive reinforcement-based work.
- The IAABC's position statements can be found [here](#).