

When you use the APDT Trainer Search, you will see a variety of degrees and certifications listed after our members' names. This handout is a helpful guide to understand what these mean.

One thing that's important to know when looking for a trainer is that there are many ways that one can become a professional dog trainer. Some trainers have apprenticed for some period of time with an experienced trainer before branching out on their own. Some have special schooling, such as higher degrees from colleges and universities in animal behavior, or schooling at online vocational programs that may be combined with a hands-on mentoring component. Others came into the profession through working in animal shelters or competing in dog sports and competition. It is not unusual to come to the profession through a combination of experiences both experiential and educational.

There is no required certification or licensing to become a professional dog trainer or behavior counselor. Certification, while not mandatory, does however imply that a trainer takes his or her profession seriously and is dedicated to continuing their professional growth and education for the benefit of their human and canine clients.



Be aware that not all certifications are the same. Some trainers are "certified" by the school that they took their educational program through whereas others are certified through independent certifying bodies that are not affiliated with any particular school or program. So a "certified trainer" could be someone who simply took a two-week course on training or someone who has studied dog training and behavior extensively for years and was independently tested on their knowledge and skills.

To learn more about certifications or degrees listed below, you can visit the web pages of the organization or school that performs the certification process.

**A Note About Animal Behaviorists:** Many persons employed in the dog training field use the title "behaviorist" incorrectly. A Behaviorist is someone who has a doctorate level graduate degree. A Certified Applied Animal Behaviorist is a Behaviorist who is certified through the The Animal Behavior Society. Persons who do not meet these qualifications should not be using the term "behaviorist" to describe themselves - in this case, the terms behavior consultant, behavior counselor or behavior specialist are acceptable.

### APDT Professional Member Certifications

The following certifications allow a member to have APDT Professional member status:

#### Professional Designation

CPDT-KA or - KSA - Certified Professional Dog Trainer Knowledge Assessed or Knowledge and Skills Assessed  
ACAAB - Associate Certified Applied Animal Behaviorist  
CAAB - Certified Applied Animal Behaviorist  
CABC - Certified Animal Behavior Consultant  
CDBC - Certified Dog Behavior Consultant  
CCAB - Certified Clinical Behavior Consultant  
DACVB – Diplomate

#### Approved Organization

Certification Council for Professional Dog Trainers  
Animal Behavior Society  
Animal Behavior Society  
International Association of Animal Behavior Consultants  
International Association of Animal Behavior Consultants  
International Association for the Study of Animal Behavior  
American College of Veterinary Behaviorists

- **ABCDT:** Certified by (graduated from) Animal Behavior College, [www.animalbehaviorcollege.com/](http://www.animalbehaviorcollege.com/)
- **ABMA:** Member of Animal Behavior Management Alliance, [www.theabma.org/](http://www.theabma.org/)
- **ACAAB:** Associate Certified Applied Animal Behaviorist by The Animal Behavior Society, [www.certifiedanimalbehaviorist.com/](http://www.certifiedanimalbehaviorist.com/)
- **ACDBC:** Associate Certified Dog Behavior Consultant by the International Association of Animal Behavior Consultants, [www.iaabc.org](http://www.iaabc.org)
- **ANWI:** Associate Nose Work Instructor through National Association of Canine Scent Work, <http://www.nacsw.net>
- **AS-ES:** Associate Degree in Science-Equine Science from an accredited college or university
- **BA:** Bachelor's of Arts Degree from an accredited college or university
- **BEd:** Bachelor's of Education from an accredited college or university
- **BFA:** Bachelor's of Fine Arts Degree from an accredited college or university
- **BS (or BSc):** Bachelor's of Science Degree from an accredited college or university
- **BFRAP:** Bach Foundation Registered Practitioner, [www.bachflower.com/](http://www.bachflower.com/)
- **BVetMed:** Bachelors of Veterinary Medicine, awarded by the University of London, UK

- **CAAB:** Certified Applied Animal Behaviorist by The Animal Behavior Society, [www.certifiedanimalbehaviorist.com](http://www.certifiedanimalbehaviorist.com)
- **CABC:** Certified Animal Behavior Consultant through the International Association of Animal Behavior Consultants, [www.iaabc.org](http://www.iaabc.org)
- **CAP1 and CAP2:** Competency Assessment Program Levels 1 and 2 (through Kay Laurence, United Kingdom - [www.learningaboutdogs.com](http://www.learningaboutdogs.com))
- **CCAB:** Certificated Clinical Animal Behaviourist through the Association for the Study of Animal Behaviour, <http://asab.nottingham.ac.uk>
- **CCBC:** Certified Cat Behavior Consultant through the International Association of Animal Behavior Consultants, [www.iaabc.org](http://www.iaabc.org)
- **CDBC:** Certified Dog Behavior Consultant through the International Association of Animal Behavior Consultants, [www.iaabc.org](http://www.iaabc.org)
- **CDT:** Certified Dog Trainer through the International Association of Canine Professionals, <http://canineprofessionals.com>
- **CDTI:** Certified Trick Dog Instructor from Do More With Your Dog!®, [www.chalcy.com/pages/instructorinfo.html](http://www.chalcy.com/pages/instructorinfo.html)
- **Cert DDC:** Dog Daycare Certificate from the Companion Animal Sciences Institute, [www.casinstitute.com](http://www.casinstitute.com)
- **Cert SRW:** Shelter and Rescue Work Certificate from the Companion Animal Sciences Institute, [www.casinstitute.com](http://www.casinstitute.com)
- **Cert DT:** Dog Training Certificate from the Companion Animal Sciences Institute, [www.casinstitute.com](http://www.casinstitute.com)
- **Cert CBST:** Canine Behavior Sciences and Technology Certificate from the Companion Animal Sciences Institute, [www.casinstitute.com](http://www.casinstitute.com)
- **Cert PBST:** Parrot Behavior Sciences and Technology Certificate from the Companion Animal Sciences Institute, [www.casinstitute.com](http://www.casinstitute.com)
- **Cert.PDTST:** Professional Dog Training Science and Technology Certificate from the Companion Animal Sciences Institute, [www.casinstitute.com](http://www.casinstitute.com)
- **Cert FBST:** Feline Behavior Sciences and Technology Certificate from the Companion Animal Sciences Institute, [www.casinstitute.com](http://www.casinstitute.com)
- **CFI 1 and 2:** Certified Freestyle Instruction from Canine Freestyle Federation, [www.canine-freestyle.org](http://www.canine-freestyle.org)
- **CNWI:** Certified Nose Work Instructor through National Association of Canine Scent Work, <http://www.nacsw.net>
- **CPCT:** Certified Pet Care Technician through the Pet Care Services Association
- **CPDT-KA:** Certified Professional Dog Trainer - Knowledge Assessed through Certification Council for Professional Dog Trainers, [www.ccpdt.org](http://www.ccpdt.org)
- **CPDT-KSA:** Certified Pet Dog Trainer - Knowledge and Skills Assessed through Certification Council for Professional Dog Trainers, [www.ccpdt.org](http://www.ccpdt.org)
- **CTC:** Certificate in Training and Counseling through San Francisco SPCA Dog Training Academy
- **CVT:** Certified Veterinary Technician - [www.navta.net](http://www.navta.net)
- **DACVB:** Diplomate American College of Veterinary Behaviorists, [www.dacvb.com](http://www.dacvb.com)
- **Dip ABT:** Diploma in Animal Behavior Technology from the Companion Animal Sciences Institute, [www.casinstitute.com](http://www.casinstitute.com)
- **Dip CBST:** Diploma in Canine Behavior Science and Technology from the Companion Animal Sciences Institute, [www.casinstitute.com](http://www.casinstitute.com)
- **DIP CCBT:** Diploma of Canine Counseling and Behavior Training, Companion Animal Sciences Institute, [www.casinstitute.com](http://www.casinstitute.com)
- **Dip FBST:** Diploma in Feline Behavior Science and Technology from the Companion Animal Sciences Institute, [www.casinstitute.com](http://www.casinstitute.com)
- **Dip PBST:** Diploma in Parrot Behavior Science and Technology from the Companion Animal Sciences Institute, [www.casinstitute.com](http://www.casinstitute.com)
- **DVM:** Doctor of Veterinary Medicine from an accredited college or university
- **DWA:** Dog Tec Dog Walking Academy Graduate from Dog\*Tec, [www.dogtec.org](http://www.dogtec.org)
- **JD:** Juris Doctorate (law degree) from an accredited college or university
- **KPA CTP:** Karen Pryor Academy Certified Training Program through the Karen Pryor Academy, [www.karenpryoracademy.com](http://www.karenpryoracademy.com)
- **LCSW:** Licensed Clinical Social Worker
- **LISW:** Licensed Independent Social Worker
- **LVT:** Licensed Veterinary Technician
- **MA:** Masters Degree from an accredited college or university
- **MAT:** Masters of Arts for Teachers Degree from an accredited college or university
- **MBA:** Masters of Business Administration from an accredited college or university
- **MEd:** Masters of Education from an accredited college or university
- **MLA:** Masters of Liberal Arts from an accredited college or university
- **MPH:** Masters of Public Health from an accredited college or university
- **MRCVS:** Member of the Royal College of Veterinary Surgeons (United Kingdom)
- **MS:** Masters of Science from an accredited college or university
- **MSW:** Masters of Social Work from an accredited college or university
- **NADOI:** Endorsed by National Association of Dog Obedience Instructors, [www.nadoi.org](http://www.nadoi.org)
- **PhD:** Doctoral Degree from an accredited college or university
- **PsyD:** Doctor of Psychology from an accredited college or university
- **RN:** Registered Nurse
- **RVT:** Registered Veterinary Technician - [www.navta.net](http://www.navta.net)

For more information on the Association of Pet Dog Trainers,  
visit our Website at [www.apdt.com](http://www.apdt.com) or call 1-800-PET-DOGS (738-3647) or email [information@apdt.com](mailto:information@apdt.com).