2024 American Kennel Club®
Professional Grooming Credential
Program Resource Guide

Credentialing

The Professional Grooming Credential (PGC) program assesses grooming practices and showcases the extensive knowledge of professional groomers. Earning the PGC credential demonstrates a pet groomer's expertise and dedication to providing top-quality care and services to their clients, while also enhancing the competitiveness of their grooming business. This resource guide provides essential preparation details for the Professional Grooming Credential Exam.

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Introduction

Thank you for your commitment and participation in the American Kennel Club's Professional Grooming Credential (PGC) Program. The PGC is the world's first measurement system that evaluates groomers using a recognized, standardized exam adhering to best practices in the credentialing community. This credential assesses the foundational knowledge, safety, and technical skills of groomers. Achieving the PGC mark signifies that a groomer has the core competency knowledge and skills to provide professional and safe grooming services.

The PGC credential is valid for five years. To maintain it, groomers must complete an extensive continuing education requirement of twenty-five hours (25 CEUs) within this period. These CEU's must cover 5 of the 6 education domains.

This resource guide[1] contains essential information about the PGC program and is required reading for all exam applicants. Before taking the PGC exam, candidates must attest to their compliance with the policies, procedures, and deadlines outlined in this guide and sign the application statement confirming they have read it.

Contact Information

For general information, questions, resources and policies, email groomer@akc.org. You may also contact us for the following:

- Scheduling Test Appointments
- Rescheduling Test Appointments
- Canceling Test Appointments
- Practice Test and Score Report Questions
- Requesting Test Accommodations
- Hand Scoring Requests

The AKC Groomer Hub

Throughout the credentialing process, candidates are encouraged to consult the AKC Groomer Hub https://www.akc.org/groomer-hub/ to support their journey through the program requirements and exams, and to stay informed of program updates.

- General Information and Requirements
- Frequently Asked Questions
- Resources
- Apply for Exams
- Policies and Procedures

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[1] Subject to change without notice.

Credentialing

Purpose

The American Kennel Club supports voluntary credentialing exams for professional groomers. Credentialing assesses an individual's grooming expertise and knowledge.

The purpose of credentialing in pet grooming is to promote competency by:

1. Promoting high standards of training, competence, skills, and knowledge.
2. Providing a standard for requisite knowledge in pet grooming.
3. Recognizing groomers who meet the standards of eligibility established by the AKC Dog Grooming Institute (AKC DGI).
4. Encouraging continued professional growth in pet grooming for the purpose of improving the quality of service to clients.
5. Establishing the level of knowledge required for credentialing in professional grooming.

PGC Credentialing Process Overview

The PGC credentialing process involves several steps which are outlined below. Comprehensive instructions are available throughout this resource guide.

Step 1 –Eligibility Requirements and Documentation
- Confirm your eligibility requirements and collect required documentation.

Step 2 –Suggested Study Resources
- The AKC DGI has compiled a recommended Resource List on page 33 to assist candidates in studying for the PGC exam. This list includes journals and textbooks that provide valuable insights into grooming practices.

Step 3 –Practice Exam and System Compatibility
- For $12.99, candidates can access a practice test on the AKC Groomer Hub to verify their system's compatibility and ensure their computer can run the required PGC exam proctoring software. The practice test includes eight questions without a time limit and can be taken up to three times.
- Completing this online practice test will familiarize candidates with computer-based exams and provide an overview of the topics and question types in the PGC exam, including their formats and difficulty levels.

Step 4 – Submit Online Application and Fee
- The examination fee is $179 and will be submitted to the AKC DGI. The PGC credential is valid for five years.

Step 5 - Email Acknowledgement
- The AKC DGI will email candidates their application status within 10 business days. If approved, the candidate will receive a follow-up PGC exam authorization email.

Step 6 – Test Authorization
- Once candidates receive their authorization email, they may access their test with the proctoring company.

Eligibility Requirements

Candidates must fulfill at least one of the three requirements listed below to qualify for the PGC.

1. Work Experience

At least 360 hours of verifiable work experience in the grooming field within the last 18 months. Defined here.

- Examples of verifiable work experience may include the following:
  » Business References
  » Employer References
  » Business or Occupational Licenses

2. Education

At least 25 verified hours of education in grooming completed in the past five years. Proof of 180 hours of hands-on-dog experience in a salon setting or similar environment. Defined here.

- Examples may include badge scans, receipts or proof of purchase, or instructor authorization for the following:
  » Community College or Trade School
  » In person at a trade show conference, at a school, or education retreat
  » Online/virtual course or training
  » Certification through a recognized practical certification body (AKC, NDGAA, etc.)

3. Relevant Practical Experience

At least 240 hours of relevant and verifiable grooming experience in the past five years. Defined here.

- Examples may include badge scans, receipts or proof of purchase, or attendance certificate for any combination of the following:
  » Dog/cat grooming competition history (placement and win)
  » Dog/cat show experience: handler, handler's assistant, breeder (include relevant details)
  » Relevant experience within another pet profession (work experience and responsibilities)
  » Published content in industry publication (include copy of the publication or course link, etc.)
  » Speaker, educator, or contest judge at industry events (include a source that allows verification)

Eligibility Statement

Candidates must complete an Eligibility Statement and include supporting documentation with their requirement selection (Work, Education or Relevant Practical Experience). Ensure that no Social Security numbers are submitted or visible. Retain original copies of all submitted documents and other supporting information.

Completion of Application

For new or returning applicants, the application process is outlined below.

Step 1 – Fill Out the Application

- Go to AKC Groomer Hub and click on the application.
- Complete all required application fields.
- Enter your first and last names exactly as shown on your current government-issued photo identification (e.g., driver's license, passport or US Military identification).
    - » Applications are not complete until all information and payment has been provided. If your exam fee is part of a tuition program[2], your application will be emailed directly to you.

Step 2 – Submit Exam Fee and Application for Review

- The AKC DGI will send an email confirming that your payment and application have been received. This email will also serve as notice that your application is in review.
    - » The application review can take up to 10 business days.
- Once the application review is complete, the AKC DGI will send a follow up email.

Step 3 – Receive Application Status Update

- Candidates with approved applications will receive instructions on accessing the exam proctoring portal.
- If a candidate's application is reviewed and not approved, the AKC DGI may send another email update for the following reasons:
    1. Reopened for More Documents
        - » This means we are missing your attestation forms or that you have been selected for random audit. Follow the directions in the email.
        - » Applications that are incomplete as of 21 days before the start of the testing window will be refunded minus the administration fee (See Fees on page 8).
    2. Rejected
        - » This means you are not eligible to take the exam. The reason will be explained in the email.
        - » Rejected applications will be refunded minus the administration fee (See Refunds on page 8).

Step 4 – Receive PGC Exam access on proctoring site

Approved candidates will receive an exam authorization email with further instructions.

- The PGC exam will be unlocked upon application approval. Once in the portal, candidates will need to download proctoring software to access their exam, and ensure they follow the exam requirements on page 27.

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[2] Educational Institutions may purchase exam access on behalf of their student. This relationship will be outlined separately – link coming soon.

Exam Fees

Scheduling and Transfers

Fee Type	Amount	Details
Application Fee	US $179.00	– Non-refundable[3] – Non-transferable – Includes proctoring fees – Includes $75 non-refundable administration fee
Transfer Fee	US $45.00	– Applies to candidates who need to move to an in-person testing venue. (See page 11) – Please contact AKC DGI directly for information on transfers. Email groomer@akc.org – Must submit new application and fee to AKC DGI
Rescheduling Fee	US $20.00	– For candidates who need to move their in-person appointment within three days prior to their scheduled date. (See page 11)

Refund Eligibility

Reason	Amount	Details
Candidate Ineligible for Exam	$104	– The $179 application fee includes a $75 non-refundable administration fee
Candidate applied for incorrect exam	No refunds issued	– Candidate must reschedule for correct exam and submit applicable fees
Candidate applied for incorrect venue	No refunds issued	– Candidate must reschedule for correct venue and submit applicable fees
Candidate failed to make an exam appointment	No refunds issued	– Candidate must schedule their exam and submit applicable fees

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[3] Applicants who are ineligible to take the exam or whose applications have an incomplete application will have their exam fees returned minus an administrative fee.

Exam Administration and Scheduling

Exam Authorization

The PGC exam can be accessed online at any time. Once a candidate's application is approved, they will receive an email from the AKC DGI notifying them that their PGC exam is unlocked and accessible. If you do not receive this notification or other relevant correspondence about your exam status, please contact groomer@akc.org.

Accessing an Online Remote Proctored Exam

The online PGC exam takes place via live remote proctoring in your home or another quiet, distraction-free area. Candidates will interact in real-time with a remote proctor and it is the candidate's responsibility to be sure their equipment and workspace meet all the requirements for Live Remote Proctoring. This includes the following:

- A laptop or desktop computer with an integrated or external working camera. No phones or tablets can be used to take the exam. Candidates must allow access to this camera during their exam.
- An internal or external working microphone. Candidates must allow access to this microphone during their exam.
- A stable Internet connection during the duration of their exam.

After a PGC exam is unlocked, candidates have 90 days to complete it.

Remote Proctoring Commitment and Examination Fee Forfeiture

Should a candidate commit to remote proctoring but fail to meet the timeframe, technical, or workspace requirements, they will forfeit their examination fees. In such cases, candidates must adhere to the exam's transfer policies.

Scheduling Test Event Exam Appointments

Candidates are responsible for scheduling their exams and may arrange to take the PGC exam in-person at an authorized test event. Registration for the test will be available at the AKC Groomer Hub. Appointments operate on a first-come, first-served basis, so it is advisable to book your slot as soon as you find a suitable event. Those who delay might miss out on their preferred date, time, and testing site.

Candidates who fail to schedule their exam are not eligible for refunds.

Test Appointment Confirmation

Test appointments will be confirmed via an email from the AKC DGI and will include the date, time, and location of your PGC exam. Please check this confirmation carefully for accuracy.

Choosing a Test Event or Live Remote Proctoring

Logistics	Test Event Exam	Live Remote Proctored Exam
Fees	No Additional Fees	No Additional Fees
ADA Accommodations	Yes	Yes – Extra time and private room accommodations only
Breaks	Unscheduled breaks are permitted; however, the exam timer will continue counting down.	Breaks are NOT permitted. Candidates must NOT leave camera view until the exam has ended.
Equipment Needed	None – Computer provided at test event	Candidate provides their own laptop or desktop computer to take the exam. The computer must have: – Webcam – Microphone – Secure, reliable internet For complete requirements refer to page 9.
Testing Space	Testing space is provided by the test event	Candidates must test alone at a desk or table in a room with a door and no distractions or interruptions. Other people or pets are not permitted in your testing area.
Check-in Procedure	Candidates must present their current government-issued photo identification and be prepared to roll up sleeves and turn out pockets for a visual inspection.	Prior to check-in, the candidate's equipment needs to pass a compatibility check. During check-in, candidates must show their current government-issued photo identification; perform a 360° scan of the room using their camera; and roll up sleeves and turn out pockets for a visual inspection.
Monitoring	Proctors monitor candidates through video and physical walkthroughs in the testing room.	Remote proctors monitor candidates through video and audio, as well as security software.

This information is provided as a courtesy summary and may not represent full requirements or specifications for in-person testing or live remote proctored testing. For Live Remote Proctored FAQs (coming soon), visit the AKC Groomer Hub.

Exam Transfers and Rescheduling

Candidates may request a **one-time** transfer of their PGC exam. Transfers apply when a candidate needs to change their testing event venue, **or** to change their testing period, but not both. Candidates should plan their testing locations and test periods accordingly.

Transferring from Online to In-Person Test Event Venue

If candidates scheduled an online PGC exam and wish to transfer to a physical testing location instead, they may request a one-time test event venue transfer.

- Transfer requests must be received within 90 days of the originally unlocked exam date.
- Candidates must contact the AKC DGI directly to request their transfer. Email groomer@akc.org for assistance.
- Requests to transfer require submitting a new application *and* an administrative transfer fee of $45.00 to AKC DGI. This fee is due when the transfer request is approved.

Transferring to Another Testing Period

Candidates unable to take the PGC exam within 90 days of their originally unlocked exam may request a one-time transfer to a different testing period.

- Transfer requests must be received within 90 days of the originally unlocked exam date. Failure to transfer within 90 days will result in forfeiture of your testing fees. No refunds will be issued.
- Candidates must contact the AKC DGI directly to request their transfer. Email groomer@akc.org for assistance.
- Requests to transfer require submitting a new application *and* an administrative transfer fee of $45.00 to AKC DGI. This fee is due when the transfer request is approved.
- Candidates are responsible for contacting groomer@akc.org to cancel their original exam appointment.

Exam Rescheduling

Candidates who need to reschedule their in-person PGC exam within three days of their scheduled appointment must contact groomer@akc.org and submit a $20 rescheduling fee.

Failing to Report for an Exam

Candidates failing to report for their PGC exam will forfeit all fees paid to take the exam. See Refunds on page 8. Contact groomer@akc.org for assistance.

Non-Passing Exam Score (Retake)

Candidates who did not pass their PGC exam and wish to retake it will need to submit a new exam application and fees. There is no limit to the number of times the exam may be repeated. Refer to the process on page 7 for new applicants.

Test Accommodations

The AKC Dog Grooming Institute (AKC DGI) supports and complies with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). AKC DGI will take steps reasonably necessary to make the PGC Exam accessible to persons with disabilities covered under the ADA. According to the ADA a person with a disability is someone who has a physical or mental impairment that greatly limits major life activities (like seeing, hearing, learning, reading, concentrating, walking) or a major bodily function (like neurological, endocrine, or digestive system). The information you provide and any documentation regarding your disability and test accommodations will be kept private. If you will need to use your cell phone or another electronic device to monitor a medical condition, such as diabetes, please be sure to include this on Part 1 of the Request for Test Accommodations Form so that we can notify Proctors in advance.

All approved test accommodations must maintain the psychometric nature and security of the exam. Accommodations that change the nature or security of the exam will not be granted.

Test Accommodations Form

To request test accommodations, candidates must complete and sign the **Request for Test Accommodations Form**. This form will be available on the AKC Groomer Hub or by emailing groomer@akc.org. It is essential to use the official form; letters from medical professionals will not be accepted without this form. All accommodation requests should be submitted when applying, as they cannot be added to an already scheduled exam.

This form must be uploaded with the online application **no later than eight weeks before your testing period**. Candidates who do not submit the form with their application are not guaranteed accommodations for that testing window. Those candidates may need to transfer to a new testing period following the transfer policies described on page 11.

Please note: Proctoring Service OR the in-person hosting venue or event is NOT authorized to approve accommodations. All requests for PGC test accommodations must be submitted on the AKC DGI Request Form in advance.

Exam Preparation Checklist

Candidates should review and understand the Exam Rules prior to their PGC exam appointment.

Candidate Identification

1. Ensure that you have a current government-issued photo identification (driver's license, passport or U.S. Military identification) when you make your exam appointment. Proctors at the testing event will refuse admission to candidates with expired or temporary/paper identification. Candidates will be marked as no-shows and will forfeit their exam fees.
2. Confirm that your first and last name on your identification match the first and last name on your Scheduling Authorization email. Proctors at the testing event will refuse admission to candidates with names that do not match their records. Candidates will be marked as no-shows and will forfeit their exam fees.

Testing Location

1. Familiarize yourself with the location of your testing site and be aware of any specific parking rules.
2. Check the weather and traffic before heading out and give yourself ample time to get there. If you're late, you might not be allowed to test.

Inclement Weather

In the event of inclement weather, check the AKC Groomer Hub for updates and site closures.

Testing via Live Remote Proctoring

1. Prior to your exam date, check your system compatibility. Taking the practice exam in advance is strongly encouraged and will identify any system or technical issues prior to your actual exam date.
2. Allow at least 30 minutes for check-in prior to your exam time. This time is not factored into your actual test time allotment.
3. Prior to your exam date, you will need to download Proctoring Software onto a compatible device, ensuring that both the camera and microphone are allowed access. See Remote Exam Requirements on page 9.
4. Candidates are not permitted to take a break or leave camera view during the examination.
5. **No scratch paper is allowed.** Be sure your workspace is clear of any extra items and electronic devices except for your government-issued photo identification.

Read the Live Remote Proctoring FAQs here https://nationaldoggroomers.com/pgc

Online Practice Test

For candidates who would like to take a practice test in preparation for their actual exam, we offer a sample test that includes eight questions, each representing a core standard, and can be completed without any time constraints.

Fees

An online practice test is offered for $12.99, payable by credit card. You may take this practice test up to three times.

Why Take It?

A practice test helps you understand what taking a computer-based exam is like and familiarizes you with PGC exam topics, question formats, styles, and difficulty levels. Additionally, you can check if your computer supports proctoring software.

What if My Computer Doesn't Support the Software?

If your computer does not support the online proctoring software, be sure that you schedule an in-person exam instead of an online remote proctored exam. See Transfers on page 11 if you need to change your testing venue.

Will I Receive a Score Report?

Yes. Upon completion, an instant score report is provided that indicates overall performance as well as performance in individual content areas. After the practice test has been scored; candidates cannot revisit the questions.

The practice test helps candidates get accustomed to the type of questions they may encounter. This information can assist candidates in determining their future study requirements.

- Your performance on the practice test does not predict your success on the actual PGC Exam.
- Taking the practice test is not necessary for eligibility.
- Additionally, the practice test does not influence your performance on the exam in any manner.

Optional or Required?

Candidates can use the online practice test as an optional resource while preparing for the exam. This tool may assist candidates in pinpointing their strong and weak areas. However, it is important that it not be relied upon solely for exam preparation or to determine readiness for the actual exam.

- The practice test isn't a study guide or the only preparation tool for the actual exam.
- Candidates won't get the answer key, rationales for questions, or feedback on specific questions.

HOW TO APPLY: Go to https://nationaldoggroomers.com/pgc.[4] (This link will update to originate from the AKC Groomer Hub)

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[4] Password protected "Approval Needed"

Sample Exam Questions

In the following questions, choose the one best answer.

1. What term is used to describe the shoulders and front legs of a dog?
   a. Front Assembly
   b. Chest Assembly
   c. Elbow Assembly
   d. Advanced Assembly

2. What is the correct frequency to trim or grind the nails on a dog to help maintain healthy foot structure?
   a. 4 – 6 Months
   b. 7 – 9 Months
   c. 4 – 6 Weeks
   d. 7 – 9 Weeks

3. On which of the following breeds would it be considered safe to utilize a heated drying method?
   a. Papillon
   b. Pekingese
   c. Lhasa Apso
   d. Japanese Chin

4. Which of the following blades leaves the longest length of coat on a dog?
   a. #10
   b. #4F
   c. #40
   d. #7F

Weighted Exam Content

The Professional Grooming Credential Exam is a three-hour computerized test with 100 multiple-choice questions. The exam's content is detailed in the outline below.

The questions for the exam are written by people with expertise in professional grooming and are reviewed for construction, accuracy, and appropriateness by the AKC DGI test development team. The competencies evaluated in the Professional Grooming Credential Exam are outlined in The American Kennel Club National Core Professional Dog Grooming Education Standards.

The Professional Grooming Credential (PGC) exam will be structured with the following approximate weightings:

- Professional Dog Groomer Safety (PDGS) – 12%
- Pet Safety Professional Practices (PSPP) – 12%
- Safe and Humane Handling of Pets (SHHP) – 12%
- Safe and Humane Behavior Management (SHBM) – 12%
- Dog Grooming Sanitation Procedures (DGSP) – 13%
- Description and Physical Characteristics of Dogs (DPCD) – 13%
- Professional Pet Grooming Practices (PPGP) – 13%
- Professionalism and Business Soft Skills (PBSS) – 13%

AKC National Core Professional Dog Grooming Educational Standards

The *American Kennel Club - National Core Professional Dog Grooming Educational Standards* aims to establish clear expectations that ensure all professional dog groomers have the skills and knowledge necessary to succeed in the dog grooming industry. *The American Kennel Club -Core National Professional Dog Grooming Educational Standards* allow flexibility in the design and method of instruction and recognizes that the standards reflect an evolving process and are subject to revision.

The standards of care, safety, and sanitation developed by the Professional Pet Groomers and Stylists Alliance (*Standards • Professional Pet Groomers and Stylists Alliance, 2017*) were considered and are valued and reflected in *The American Kennel Club National Core Dog Grooming Educational Standards.*

DOMAIN ONE – PROFESSIONAL DOG GROOMER SAFETY	
Core Standard 1 (12%)	**Professional Dog Groomer Safety (PDGS)** - Safety practices must be considered and implemented to ensure the safety of groomers.
PDGS1.1	Complete an intake form that includes the following before receiving the pet: owner and veterinarian contact information; up-to-date vaccinations or titer information; pet name; breed; microchip information if available; dog treat denial or permission; and current medical and behavioral concerns.
PDGS1.2	Take steps to correct or guard against possible hazards during all stages of the grooming process by staying alert, focused, and aware.
PDGS1.3	Assess that all equipment, tools, grooming, and bathing areas are in good repair and safe operating conditions.
PDGS1.4	Check for the placement of a non-slip surface on the floor by each tub to prevent groomers from slipping and falling.
PDGS1.5	Apply knowledge of reasons dogs may bite. Evaluate and select preventive measures, e.g., staying out of the bite range, using a muzzle, leash, grooming loop, or groomer's helper to direct the dog's mouth away from the groomer.
PDGS1.6	Report any bite to the owner. Note the incident in the owner/pet file. Apply knowledge of first aid for bite wounds and scratches.

DOMAIN ONE – PROFESSIONAL DOG GROOMER SAFETY	
PDGS1.7	Apply knowledge of personal protective equipment and measures and consider wearing the following recommendations: water-resistant and quick-dry clothing; closed-toe shoes with non-slip soles; mask to prevent breathing in and out of hair and dandruff; gloves, long pants, and arm coverings; hearing and eye protection.
PDGS1.8	Locate a first aid kit for groomers and a fire extinguisher to be maintained on-site, including eye wash products and equipment.
PDGS1.9	Apply knowledge of ergonomically friendly practices.
PDGS1.10	Practice hand hygiene; wash hands upon arrival and exit of the salon, before and after handling each pet, after cleaning tasks, before eating and drinking, and after restroom use.
PDGS1.11	Follow the practice of storing clean backup clothing at the salon for changing, if necessary, especially to prevent zoonotic diseases from spreading.
PDGS1.12	Apply knowledge of the dangers of parasites and take precautions.

DOMAIN TWO - PET SAFETY AND HUMANE TREATMENT	
Core Standard 2 (12%)	**Pet Safety Professional Practices (PSPP)** - Safety practices must be considered and implemented to ensure the safety of pets.
PSPP2.1	Assess all equipment, tools, and grooming and bathing areas are in good repair and safe operating conditions.
PSPP2.2	Evaluate that products and chemicals used on dogs are pet-friendly and comply with local, state, and federal guidelines, rules, and regulations.
PSPP2.3	Ensure all grooming and drying tables are safe, sturdy, and operating well. Equip tabletops for pets with a non-slip surface that is easy to clean.
PSPP2.4	Check for the placement of a non-slip surface on the floor by each tub to prevent dogs from slipping and falling.
PSPP2.5	Be attentive to the pet's eyes and ears. **PSPP2.5 A** - Use a gentle facial shampoo around the face **PSPP2.5 B** - Utilize cotton balls to remove earwax. **PSPP2.5 C** - Pinch the ear leather closed while bathing. **PSPP2.5 D** - Avoid plucking internal ear hair; gentle external cleaning is permittable.
PSPP2.6	Ensure and set water to an appropriate temperature to prevent discomfort or injury from excessively cold or hot water.
PSPP2.7	Maintain all dryers, assess safe operating conditions, and use them safely and professionally.
PSPP2.8	Locate a first aid kit for pets and a fire extinguisher to be maintained on-site, including eye wash products and equipment. Contact information of a local emergency veterinarian is readily available.
PSPP2.9	Operate all dryers at low heat settings, avoid heated air concentrated on one area, and keep airflow moving.

DOMAIN TWO - PET SAFETY AND HUMANE TREATMENT	
PSPP2.10	Operate air movement dryers safely and humanely. Closely and frequently monitor pets' safety and comfort. **PSPP2.10A -** House only one pet per kennel with an air mover. **PSPP2.10B** - Determine if the enclosure will accommodate the pet to sit comfortably, stand, and turn around. **PSPP2.10C** - Frequently monitor pets during drying every 5 - 7 minutes.
PSPP2.11	Slowly introduce the clippers, be aware of clipper sensitivity and burns, and be cautious trimming.
PSPP2.12	Notify the owner of possible symptoms and signs of health concerns; however, diagnosis and treatment are the role and responsibility of veterinarians.
Core Standard 3 (12%)	**Safe and Humane Handling of Pets (SHHP)-** Safety practices must be considered and implemented to ensure pets' safe and humane handling.
SHHP3.1	Practice safe and humane use of pet-friendly restraints and use only under constant direct human supervision. Safely and humanely secure pets when necessary, with restraints such as leashes, cross ties, muzzles, groomer's helpers, and loops.
SHHP3.2	Accept pets and return them safely to owners. **SHHP3.3A** Exchange pets using a slip lead with the pet on floor level. **SHHP3.3B** Do not accept pets from the owner's arms to avoid the dog's biting range. **SHHP3.3C** Toy size dogs are the exception to SHHP3.3B; utilize the back-to-back/slip-and-transfer between owner and groomer movement for dogs that experience limited to no floor contact time. **SHHP3.3D** Ensure all exits are secure and closed with two barriers.
SHHP3.3	Offer fresh water and out-of-crate movement for pets confined for more than four hours.
SHHP3.4	Follow protocol that no pet be left unsupervised within an arm's length while on the grooming table or in the bathing tub.

DOMAIN TWO - PET SAFETY AND HUMANE TREATMENT	
SHHP3.5	Report incidents to the school or facility in case of an accident, including the owner's name, address, phone number, pet's name, service provided, and date of service.
SHHP3.6	Arrange kennels in an escape-controlled environment where groomers can safely see and access all areas of the kennels. **SHHP3.6A** Remove the dog's collar from the dog before placement in a kennel to prevent accidental choking. **SHHP3.6B** Utilize the bottom kennel for dogs with kennel aggression tendencies.
SHHP3.7	Evaluate and select kennels that meet the following requirements: in good repair, secure, safe, stable, durable, ventilated, clean, and accommodate the pet's ability to sit, stand, and turn around completely.
SHHP3.8	Monitor air and water temperatures at levels that provide a safe and comfortable environment.
SHHP3.9	Recognize that at least one person is familiar with pet first aid during grooming hours.
SHHP3.10	Follow emergency action protocols to ensure all pets receive care should an emergency arise.
SHHP3.11	Define situations and select best practices for the prevention of zoonosis and removal of ticks and parasites.

DOMAIN TWO - PET SAFETY AND HUMANE TREATMENT	
Core Standard 4 (12%)	**Safe and Humane Behavior Management (SHBM)** - Safety practices must be considered and implemented to ensure pets' safe and humane behavior management.
SHBM4.1	Speak in a calm, friendly, and assertive manner to pets.
SHBM4.2	Evaluate the pet's stress level and respond accordingly to reduce fear and anxiety.
SHBM4.3	Obtain permission from the owner if providing treats.
SHBM4.4	Acquire knowledge of the pet's known behavior tendencies or triggers.
SHBM4.5	Identify behavioral changes, such as but not limited to, pacing and showing teeth and ears pinned back.
SHBM4.6	Utilize humane methods of correcting behavior during grooming.
SHBM4.7	Refuse service of aggressive and unmanageable pets.
SHBM4.8	Report behavioral incidents to the school or facility and owner that include the owner's name, address, phone number, pet's name, service provided, and service date.
SHBM4.9	Refuse to administer either natural or prescription sedation or medications to dogs. Recommend that clients contact a veterinarian.
SHBM4.10	Recognize that puppies and geriatric dogs require accommodations for age-related needs.

DOMAIN THREE - DOG GROOMING SANITATION PROCEDURES	
Core Standard 5 (13%)	**Dog Grooming Sanitation Procedures (DGSP) -** Best practices of sanitation must be considered and implemented to maintain the health of groomers & pets & safeguard against disease transmission.
DGSP5.1	Dispose of sitting water to mitigate stagnant water diseases.
DGSP5.2	Follow the protocol of regular and proper trash disposal.
DGSP5.3	Execute immediate cleaning of urine and feces.
DGSP5.4	Disinfect all grooming areas, tools, equipment, and cages after grooming each dog.
DGSP5.5	Use disinfected clippers, shears, leads, and tools for each dog.
DGSP5.6	Follow the daily cleaning schedule of all grooming areas, tools, equipment, and cages.
DGSP5.7	List and label all products used for cleaning and disinfecting at the salon. Prepare, use, and store solutions according to the manufacturer's instructions.
DGSP5.8	Verify disinfectants are bactericidal, virucidal, and fungicidal compliant and registered by the United States Environmental Agency (EPA).
DGSP5.9	Disinfect product bottles and containers to avoid cross-contamination.
DGSP5.10	Compare and contrast the processes of cleaning, sanitizing, and disinfecting.

DOMAIN FOUR - DESCRIPTION AND PHYSICAL CHARACTERISTICS OF DOGS	
Core Standard 6 (13%)	Description and Physical Characteristics of Dogs (DPCD) - Students will apply knowledge of the dog's body from an anatomical and physiological standpoint, the form of the dog's body and size, coat phenotype, and breed classification for grooming decisions.
DPCD6.1	Define and learn anatomical terminology related to dogs to converse clearly and accurately about health and grooming issues.
DPCD6.2	Apply knowledge of the physiological functions of nails, skin, hair, and anal sacs and glands while grooming.
DPCD6.3	Identify coat phenotype and understand the form of a dog's body and size for grooming decisions.
DPCD6.4	Identify breed classification for grooming decisions.
DPCD6.5	Apply knowledge of anatomical and physiological features of brachycephalic breeds for grooming decisions.

DOMAIN FIVE - PROFESSIONAL PET GROOMING PRACTICES	
Core Standard 7 (13%)	**Professional Pet Grooming Practices (PPGP)** - Consideration of best grooming practices to ensure safe and healthy grooming.
PPGP7.1	Select the type of tool best suited for the intended purpose and coat type.
PPGP7.2	Apply knowledge of best practices of brushing and combing techniques for grooming decisions.
PPGP7.3	Remove the undercoat by carding and undercoat raking, especially for dogs with double coats.
PPGP7.4	Select the best practices of different patterns according to coat types.
PPGP7.5	Examine the coat for matted areas and follow the procedure for basic dematting techniques.
PPGP7.6	Determine the necessity of shaving for mat removal. Inform clients of shaving negatives, and if shaving is deemed necessary, obtain written permission.
PPGP7.7	Select the best bathing and drying practices as well as basic skin and coat conditioning procedures.
PPGP7.8	Determine best practices and tools for nail trimming, paw care, and sanitary trims.

DOMAIN SIX - PROFESSIONALISM AND BUSINESS SOFT SKILLS	
Core Standard 8 (13%)	**Professionalism and Business Soft Skills (PBSS)** - Use the appropriate skills and behaviors for personal and professional environments.
PBSS8.1	Demonstrate professionalism by meeting attendance expectations, promptness, preparation, task completion, and following policies, rules, and regulations.
PBSS8.2	Demonstrate professionalism by taking responsibility for creating a safe and positive work environment.
PBSS8.3	Apply and express professional etiquette and effective communication skills to clearly express ideas and messages to others that foster positive relationships.
PBSS8.4	Apply effective speaking and listening skills to communicate the client's desired style and grooming expectations for their pet.
PBSS8.5	Maintain and update files, such as but not limited to, intake forms, release forms, waivers, and contact information.
PBSS8.6	Advocate for pets. Take immediate action and inform the supervising instructor if a pet is being mishandled or in an unsafe situation.

What to Expect at the Testing Event

The AKC DGI works with proctors to deliver PGC exams to candidates. Below is a list of what you can expect when you arrive at your PGC testing venue. You may also visit AKC's Groomer Hub for up-to-date testing information.

Candidate Check-In

1. Candidates will be asked to present their current identification.
2. Candidates will be asked to empty and turn out their pockets.
3. Inspection of eyeglasses, jewelry, and other accessories will be conducted. Jewelry other than wedding and engagement rings is prohibited.
4. Space will be provided for candidates to store their purses, mobile phones, jackets, food, drinks and medical supplies.

During the Exam

2. No breaks are scheduled during the exam. Candidates testing at a physical testing event who must leave the testing room to take a break will not be given extra time on the exam.
3. Candidates testing remotely are NOT permitted to leave the camera view.
4. Candidates testing at a physical testing event are only permitted to leave the testing room to use the restroom or to access food, drink, or medicine/personal healthcare.
5. Candidates at a physical testing event who take an unscheduled break are subject to additional security screenings before being permitted to reenter the testing room.
6. Accessing mobile phones, study materials, or anything other than food, drink, or medicine/personal healthcare items during the examination is prohibited.
7. Smoking is prohibited at the testing event.
8. **All Exams are monitored and may be recorded in both audio and video format.**

Exam Testing Protocol

1. You must present your government-issued photo identification. Examples include your driver's license, passport, or US Military identification. Candidates without valid identification will not be allowed to test. Temporary or paper copies of your identification will not be accepted.
2. You will be informed and must abide by test event regulations specific to the site, to include any prohibited items.
3. No questions about the content of the exam may be asked during the exam session. The candidate should read the directions that are provided on screen at the beginning of the exam session.
4. If testing at a physical testing event, candidates are prohibited from leaving the testing room while their examination is in session except for going to the restroom and during testing breaks.
5. Those testing via live remote proctoring may not leave camera view at any time during the examination.
6. Bulky clothing, such as sweatshirts (hoodies), jackets, coats, and hats (except hats worn for religious reasons), and most types of jewelry may not be worn while taking the exam.
7. All watches and electronic fitness type devices may not be worn during the exam.
8. No food/beverages are permitted inside the testing room.

Testing Conditions or Exam Feedback

There may be other exams taking place simultaneously with your PGC exam. You might hear unavoidable sounds like typing, coughing, or people entering and leaving the testing room. Proctors will periodically walk through the testing area for security purposes. AKC DGI cannot guarantee a completely noise-free environment.

Candidates who feel that conditions at the test event negatively impacted their exam should notify the proctor immediately. Candidates should also contact groomer@akc.org within 15 days of the test appointment. Any comments about the test itself should also be reported to AKC DGI.

Exam Results Report

The AKC Dog Grooming Institute will email candidates a score report within two weeks after they submit their exam. This report will specify whether the candidate has passed or failed the exam, as well as provide scores for the major sections and the overall exam. If candidates do not receive their score report, they should reach out to the AKC DGI by emailing groomer@akc.org.

Hand Scoring Requests

Candidates who do not pass the exam can request a hand scoring of their results. Hand scoring involves a thorough manual review by the AKC DGI to confirm if there were any mistakes in the original scoring. Such errors are highly unlikely.

Requests for hand scoring must be submitted to the AKC DGI within 30 days following the exam date. To request this service, candidates need to complete and return the Request of Handscore form along with a $25 fee. Please note that candidates who fail the exam cannot access the exam questions. For test security reasons, no candidate is permitted to review the test or its contents.

As a quality control measure, the AKC DGI conducts manual scoring for candidates who are within three (3) points of passing to guarantee accurate result reporting. Consequently, it is highly unlikely that any exam results will shift from "fail" to "pass" due to manual scoring.

Privacy

The AKC Dog Grooming Institute will provide test scores solely to the respective candidates. For any inquiries regarding the test results, please contact AKC DGI[5].

Attainment of Credential

The PGC credential is valid for five (5) years. To retain their credential, candidates must complete a total of 25 Continuing Education Units (CEUs) within a 5-year period from programs approved by the AKC. Find more information at https://www.akc.org/groomer-hub/ for courses that qualify as approved CEUs.

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[5] Educational institutions may request results from the participants. AKC Staff will not release private information to institutions.

Program Rules and Guidelines

"It should be the goal of every Pet Groomer and Stylist to treat all pets entrusted to their care with kindness, patience, respect and compassion, ensuring their safety, health and well-being. Pet Groomers and Stylists should exhibit professional behavior and always maintain their businesses with honesty and integrity toward their clients while encouraging professionalism, compassion and participation in continuing education within the industry."

– *Professional Pet Groomers and Stylist Alliance* (PPGSA)

Standards of Practice

The AKC Dog Grooming Institute Standards of Practice provide a framework of principles to convey professionalism, skill, knowledge, and values.

Each individual credentialed groomer will:

- Prioritize and advocate for the pet's well-being in all activities.
- Act as a trained observer in the field to support and maintain healthy skin, hair, and coat.
- Adhere to the Professional Pet Groomers and Stylist Alliance (PPGSA) standards.
- Continue their professional development including the utilization of AKC DGI (AKC DGI) approved educational content.
- Avoid performing medical tasks, but still provide observations to clients.
- Promote safe pet handling practices at all times.
- Ensure a safe and professional workplace.
- Maintain professionalism by offering honest services, treating pets and clients with respect, and being professional with colleagues.

Code of Conduct

The AKC Dog Grooming Institute Professional Code of Conduct was created to set guidelines for credentialed groomers. Any credentialed groomer is subject to revocation of DGI credentialing, if they: (a) engage in conduct which could lead to the conviction of an offense related to their qualifications or function of their job, (b) engage in cruelty, abuse, or neglect of pets or humans, or of violence against pets or humans, or (c) fail to cooperate with the organization during the necessary proceedings associated with any complaints. Any credentialed groomer, or candidate applicant, who wishes to appeal the revocation of credential may do so in writing.

Revocation of Credential

One's credential will be canceled for any of the following reasons:

1. Falsifying any information, including experience information, requested in the application process.
2. Misrepresentation of credential status.
3. Violation of the Standards of Practice or Code of Conduct.

Principle I: Responsibility to Clients

I agree to:

1. Be aware of, and comply with, all applicable local, state and federal laws. Understand that I am a trained observer of the pet in the field. My scope of practice extends to the hair, skin, and coat of the pet.
2. Ensure the safety and well-being of all pets in my care by utilizing or following the "AKC DGI Standards of Practice and Code of Conduct".

Principle II: Professional Competence and Integrity

I agree to:

1. Keep accurate and complete records of all clients, their pets, services provided, including payment receipts and consent/release forms as applicable.
2. Provide other professional pet service providers, such as veterinarians and trainers, with professional feedback on services provided to improve the continuity of care and ensure collaborative relationships for the well-being of the pet.
3. Maintain competence of skills and knowledge through continued education.
4. Provide truthful representation to clients concerning my qualifications, certifications, experience, performance, and pricing of services.
5. Work within my professional education, skill set, and individual expertise.
6. Seek professional assistance when confronted with complex or difficult situations, or refrain from servicing a pet when the situation is beyond my professional capability.
7. Not advise on problems outside my recognized professional education, and not provide advice or recommendations in areas of veterinary medicine.
8. Not permit employees or supervisees to perform or complete professional grooming services beyond their training, experience, or competency level without supervision from a professional groomer.

Principle III: Responsibility to the Profession

I agree to:

1. Be respectful of clients, other groomers and other pet professionals.
2. Privately notify the person most capable of addressing any issues where I have concerns about unprofessional grooming work or potential harm to a pet.
3. Refrain from spreading rumors or gossip about grooming on social media and will avoid making disrespectful comments or using language that reflects poorly on the grooming industry in public conversations, whether on media, websites, internet chat lists, or social media. Additionally, I will not engage in cyberbullying or any deliberate, repeated, and hostile behavior against other groomers.
4. Perform grooming services with adequate professional liability insurance coverage.

Complaint Policy and Form

Since 1884, the AKC has been the nation's leading not-for-profit organization devoted to the study, breeding, exhibiting, welfare, and advancement of purebred dogs. Our certificants are held to high standards and are expected to comply with our Standards of Practice and Code of Conduct. As part of our mission, we will investigate complaints alleging violations of either of these policies.

Instructions for Filing a Complaint With AKC

1. To file a complaint about an AKC PGC certificant, complete the Complaint Form and email it to groomer@akc.org.
2. The Certificant Compliance Committee will review the complaint and determine if the complaint alleges facts that violate the AKC PGC Standards of Practice and Code of Ethics.
3. If the allegations suggest a policy violation, witnesses will be contacted and may be required to sign an affidavit.
4. The person named in the Complaint Form will receive a copy, which includes the complainant's name(s).

Upon completion of the investigation, the Certificant Compliance Committee will notify the AKC Executive Committee of its findings in compliance with the AKC PGC Certification Compliance and Disciplinary Procedures.[6]

Purpose

The main objective of the AKC® Dog Grooming Institute's Standards of Practice and Code of Conduct is to promote responsible, professional, and ethical behavior among AKC DGI candidates, certificants, and credentialed groomers. These guidelines are intended to protect the public and maintain trust in the dog grooming industry.

Filing a Complaint

1. Anyone with credible proof of a violation by an AKC DGI candidate or certificant can send a written complaint to groomer@akc.org.
2. Required information includes contact details of both the Complainant and Respondent, specific facts of the alleged conduct, principles violated, and supporting documentation.

Receipt and Initial Review of a Complaint

1. AKC DGI reviews the complaint to ensure it meets filing requirements within one week of receipt.
2. An Acknowledgment of Complaint receipt is sent via email within one week.
3. An initial review of evidence related to the Standards of Practice and Code of Conduct.

Confidentiality

The AKC DGI investigates complaints confidentially. Anonymity is maintained for good faith complainants, with results not publicly disclosed unless required by law or policy.

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[6] Complaint Form can be viewed here & Complaint Document can be viewed here

Resources

To prepare for their exams, candidates are encouraged to use a range of resources and reflect on their own educational background and experiences. The AKC DGI offers a resource list featuring journals, textbooks and courses that offer valuable guidance on grooming practices. It is important to note that being on this list does not equate to an endorsement of specific professional literature, and relying solely on these resources will not guarantee passing the exam.

American Kennel Club (2017). *The New Complete Dog Book: Official Breed Standards and Profiles for Over 200 Breeds AKC Complete Dog Book*, 22nd Edition

American Kennel Club - National Core Professional Dog Grooming Educational Standards

Anthony, C. *Groomer Ergonomics Course*

Anthony, C*. Everything Shears*

Bishop-Jenkins, J. *The 15 Coat Types and How to Groom Them Course*

DiMarino, T. *Bather Brusher Course*

Elbert, S. (2024) *The Pet Stylist Playbook*

Elbert, S*.* (2024) *The Pet Stylist Resource Book*

Faver, C. Dr. *Hair and Skin Certificate*

Faver, C. Dr. *Skin and Coat Health*

Harrell, Boyd, DVM (2010). *Groomers Guide to Pet First Aid, Injuries & Health*

Kalstone, S. (2000) *Poodle Clipping and Grooming: The International Reference*

Kohl, S. (2012) *The All Breed Dog Grooming Guide*

Kohles, M. Dr. *Nutrition for Groomers*

Oquenda, M. Vlog Salon Sanitation

Sanson, D. Ph.D *Shampoo Science Course*

Quinlan, C. *Sanitation Course*

Stammworthy, C. *Salon Sanitation Course*

Verplank, M. Blog: *The Secret to Handling Challenging Dogs*

Verplank, M. (2016). *Notes from the Grooming Table,* 2nd Edition

Eligibility Pathways Defined

Verifiable Educational Experience Defined

Purpose

Verifiable educational experience refers to the documentation and validation of formal and informal learning activities to confirm an individual's competencies in a specific domain. These requirements ensure that the knowledge and skills acquired meet professional standards and are recognized by relevant authorities or organizations.

Implementation Guidelines:
A. Eligibility Criteria

1. **Minimum Hours of Education**

   o A set number of educational hours, such as 25 verified hours in the past five years, must be documented.

2. **Relevant Practical Experience**

   o Demonstration of hands-on experience, such as 180 hours in a professional setting (e.g., salon, workshop).

3. **Approved Institutions or Programs**

   o Educational activities must be undertaken at accredited institutions or recognized certification bodies.

B. Verification Methods

1. **Proof of Attendance or Completion**

   o Certificates, transcripts, or attendance logs.

2. **Instructor or Institutional Endorsements**

   o Signed documentation from instructors or program coordinators.

3. **Receipts or Proof of Payment**

   o Documentation of payments for courses, workshops, or seminars.

C. Examples of Acceptable Educational Experiences

1. Community College or Trade School Programs.

2. In-person training at trade shows, conferences, or educational retreats.

3. Online or virtual courses with proper accreditation.

4. Certification programs through recognized organizations (e.g., AKC, NDGAA).

Documentation Standards

A. Content Requirements

1. **Personal Information**

   o Full legal name, address, and contact details.

2. **Course or Program Details**

   o Title, duration, description, and learning outcomes.

3. **Verification Signatures**

   o Authorized signatures from educators, or institutions.

B. Formats

- Digital and printed copies accepted with legible and official seals or watermarks.

- Scanned copies of badges, receipts, or certificates.

Review and Approval Process

1. **Initial Submission**

   o Candidates must submit all required documentation with their application.

2. **Review Timeline**

   o Typically completed within 10 business days.

3. **Feedback Mechanism**

   o Applicants receive notification of approval or requests for additional documentation.

Verifiable Work Experience Defined

Purpose:
The Work Experience Guidelines outline the minimum professional experience requirement for individuals pursuing the Professional Grooming Credential. This guideline ensures that candidates have the necessary practical exposure to handle a variety of dogs, grooming tools, and situations in a salon or similar professional grooming environment.

Minimum Experience Requirement:
To be eligible for the Professional Grooming Credential, candidates must complete a minimum of 360 hours of professional work experience in a grooming environment. This experience must have been conducted within the previous 6 months immediately prior to AKC PGC Application date and be directly related to the practice of dog grooming, including the handling of dogs in various grooming situations.

Scope:
This guideline applies to all candidates seeking the Professional Grooming Credential who are currently working in, or have worked in, a professional grooming setting or facility. The experience gained should be in direct support of the duties of a professional groomer, including but not limited to the competencies outlined in *The American Kennel Club National Core Professional Dog Grooming Educational Standards.*

Implementation Guidelines:
1. **Definition of Work Experience:**

   o Work experience refers to direct, hands-on grooming and care of dogs, including tasks such as bathing, brushing, trimming, nail care, ear cleaning, and handling various dog breeds and temperaments. It also includes customer service, equipment maintenance, and other tasks that are part of the grooming environment.

2. **Setting:**

   o The work experience must take place in a professional grooming facility, salon, or mobile grooming service. It must be an environment where dogs are regularly groomed under industry-standard practices.

3. **Supervision and Mentorship:**

   o Candidates must work under the supervision of an experienced groomer who is qualified and has a minimum of 5 years' experience. Work done as a mentee may also be included if the work is done under the guidance of a skilled professional.

4. **Documentation:**

- o Candidates are required to maintain a detailed log of their work experience hours. The log must include the dates, tasks performed, types of dogs worked with, and the name and qualifications of the supervising professional. The log should be submitted to the credentialing body for verification upon completion.

- o References may be provided to support experience, including employers, mentors, or clients, who consent to be contacted and attest to the applicant's work experience. I Contact information should only be shared for indivuiduals that have granted consent.

5. **Types of Experience:**

- o The experience should encompass a range of tasks, including:

    - ▪ Grooming tasks: bathing, drying, brushing, clipping, and trimming.

    - ▪ Handling and behavior management of dogs, including different breeds, sizes, and temperaments.

    - ▪ Equipment handling and maintenance.

    - ▪ Customer interaction, including consultation and aftercare advice.

6. **Completion Requirement:**

- o Candidates must complete a minimum of 360 hours of professional grooming experience before becoming eligible to apply for the Professional Grooming Credential Exam.

7. **Safety and Professionalism:**

- o Throughout the work experience, candidates must adhere to all safety guidelines for both the animals and the groomer, including proper handling techniques and sanitation protocols. It is essential that candidates continue to develop their professional skills, including time management, communication, and customer service.

Disclaimer:
Completion of the required work experience does not guarantee the candidate's ability to handle all situations safely or to perform all tasks to the highest standard. Grooming is an inherently skill-based profession, and candidates are encouraged to continue their education and training to maintain and expand their professional competencies.

Relevant Practical Experience Defined

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Purpose:
The Relevant Practical Experience Guidelines outline the minimum experience required for candidates seeking to demonstrate practical grooming skills for credentialing or certification. This ensures that candidates have hands-on, verifiable experience in grooming practices within the last five years, contributing to their competence and professionalism.

Minimum Experience Requirement:
To meet the relevant experience requirement, candidates must complete at least 240 hours of verifiable grooming experience within the past five years. This experience must be directly related to grooming tasks such as bathing, trimming, and handling dogs or cats, in any setting including competition, shows, or professional grooming environments.

Scope:
These guidelines apply to all individuals seeking to prove practical grooming experience, which includes but is not limited to the handling and grooming of dogs and cats in various professional or competitive environments.

Implementation Guidelines:
1. **Definition of Relevant Experience:**

    o Relevant experience includes any activities related to grooming or working with dogs and cats. This could be through direct grooming tasks (such as bathing, brushing, and trimming) or other activities that contribute to a groomer's skillset and knowledge, such as competitive events or grooming shows.

    o The experience must be documented and verifiable to demonstrate the candidate's skill level and involvement in grooming tasks.

2. **Examples of Relevant Experience:**

    o **Grooming Competitions:** Experience participating in dog/cat grooming competitions, including placements and wins.

    o **Dog/Cat Shows:** Participation as a handler, assistant handler, or breeder. Include relevant details such as the type of event and role in the competition.

    o **Other Relevant Experience:**

        ▪ Grooming tasks performed as part of a professional grooming business or in a similar grooming-related setting. Acceptable tasks includes: bathing , brushing, nail trimming, proper kennel maintenance,

        professional client interactions, safety protocols involving canine care, etc.

- Published work in industry publications, or serving as a speaker, educator, or judge at grooming-related events. A copy of the publication or event link must be provided for verification.

3. **Documentation:**

   o Documentation may include badge scans, receipts, certificates of attendance, or any other verifiable evidence of participation and completion of relevant tasks.

   o If applicable, provide references or supporting documents from employers, mentors, or event organizers that can verify the experience.

4. **Completion Requirement:**

   o Candidates must complete a minimum of 240 hours of verifiable relevant grooming experience within the past five years.

   o This experience must be supported by documentation that verifies the time spent and the nature of the tasks performed.

5. **Safety and Professionalism:**

   o Throughout all relevant experience, candidates must follow safety protocols for both animals and groomers, ensuring a high standard of care and professionalism.

Review and Updates:
These Eligibility Pathways will be reviewed periodically to ensure they align with current industry standards. Updates may be made as grooming practices evolve and industry expectations and requirements change.

CEU's Continuing Education Unit Requirement Checklist

To meet the CEU requirement, participants must ensure that their classes cover content from all 6 AKC Core Standards. Participants must provide 5 CEU's from each domain. Domains 1 & 2 share a single submission requirement. it's essential for the classes to offer a comprehensive understanding across various areas of expertise, ensuring a well-rounded education that aligns with the AKC standards. This ensures that participants gain proficiency in all aspects of dog care and handling, rather than focusing solely on one domain.

1) **Professional Dog Groomer Safety**
   a) (3 CEU)   Core Standard One - Professional Dog Groomer Safety (PDGS)

2) **Pet Safety and Humane Treatment**
   a) (3 CEU) Core Standard Two - Pet Safety Professional Practices (PSPP)
   b) (3 CEU) Core Standard Three - Safe and Humane Handling of Pets (SHHP)
   c) (3 CEU) Core Standard Four - Safe and Humane Behavior Management (SHBM)

3) **Dog Grooming Sanitation Procedures**
   a) (3 CEU)   Core Standard Five - Dog Grooming Sanitation Procedures (DGSP)

4) **Description and Physical Characteristics of Dogs**
   a) (4 CEU)   Core Standard Six - Description and Physical Characteristics of Dogs (DPCD)

5) **Professional Pet Grooming Practices**
   a) (3 CEU) Core Standard Seven - Professional Pet Grooming Practices (PPGP)

6) **Professionalism and Business Soft Skills**
   a) (3 CEU) Core Standard Eight - Professionalism and Business Soft Skills (PBSS)

Each hour of coursework equals one Continuing Education Unit (CEU).

Therefore, a 2-hour course equals 2 CEUs, a 3-hour course equals 3 CEUs, and so forth.

Resources

Example of CEU Tracking Sheet

Needed CEU	6 American Kennel Club Core Standards	Location	Date of Class	CEU Earned	Instructor Name	Instructor Signature
5 CEU	Core Standard One: Professional Dog Groomer Safety Core Standard Two: Pet Safety and Humane Treatment					
5 CEU	Core Standard Three: Dog Grooming Sanitation Procedures					
5 CEU	Core Standard Four: Description and Physical Characteristics Dogs					
5 CEU	Core Standard Five: Professional Pet Grooming Practices					
5 CEU	Core Standard Six: Professionalism and Business Soft Skills					
	CEU TOTAL: 25				**Total Earned CEU:**	

Example of How to Match Seminar Listings with AKC Core Standards

Example One:
Course Title: Understanding the AKC Standards
Course Description: Taking this course by Erin Myers, will guide you in the decoding of the AKC National Core Professional Dog Grooming Standards and answer the following questions. What are educational standards? Why are standards important? What does it mean by Best Practices?
What are the benefits of following educational standards?

    1 Hour - 1 CEU (Continuing Education Unit)
    AKC National Core Professional Dog Grooming Standard:
    Core Standard Six – Professionalism and Business Skills

Example Two:
Course Title: AKC Safe Handling
Course Description: The AKC Safe Handling Course is designed to educate dog handlers, groomers, and pet care professionals on safe and effective techniques for managing and caring for dogs. The course covers essential topics such as proper handling techniques, understanding canine behavior, safety protocols, and emergency procedures. By promoting best practices in dog handling, the course aims to enhance safety for both the dogs and the handlers, ultimately fostering a more positive environment in grooming and care settings.

    1 Hour - 1 CEU (Continuing Education Unit)
    AKC National Core Professional Dog Grooming Standard:
    Core Standard One & Two: - Professional Dog Groomer Safety & Pet Safety and Humane Treatment

Resources