European Society for Animal Assisted Therapy
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**Minimum requirements for professional training as a
"Professionell in Animal-Assisted Therapy"
according to the criteria
of the European Society of Animal-Assisted Therapy (ESAAT)**

I. Introduction

Specialists in animal-assisted therapy should receive professional training in line with the criteria of the European Society for Animal-Assisted Therapy (ESAAT).

Within their fundamental field of activity or through professional integration, professionals in animal-assisted therapy support a client's need for the alleviation of their complaints, increased autonomy, as well as personal and social integration through the use of an animal. The specialist plans the measures on the basis of the most varied of concepts and approaches for differing target groups, carries out goal-oriented implementation, and maintains documentation. Professional interventions are based on the triangular relationship between the therapist, the animal and the client, must be carried out in a process- and topic-oriented manner, and are examined with well-founded critical reflection. Whereby, when elaborating the goals and considering the progress of individual clients, the specialist refers to the client's social situation and consults other specialists involved.

II. The accreditation procedure

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

III. Prerequisites for accreditation

1. Organisational structure
A clear description of the organisational structure must be provided.

1.1 Body responsible for professional training
The body responsible for professional training must be unambiguously named.

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

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

The professional manager(s) must have undergone educational, therapeutic or medical training and hold academic qualifications. Specialists in animal-assisted therapy must also provide proof of professional training. Two professional managers may provide proof of one of the above-mentioned qualifications each.

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

The spatial and technical facilities must be sufficient to permit appropriate professional training.

2. Information on professional training
Provide proof that information material is available for interested parties.
Provide proof that applications for professional training can be made via the Internet or using printed media.

3. Structure of professional training

3.1 Length of course
Professional training must amount to a total of 60 ECTS.
Please note: The length of individual teaching events is quoted in academic hours, whereby one academic hour lasts 45 minutes. The European Credit Transfer System (ECTS) simplifies inter-university and cross-European calculations of courses, whereby 1 ECTS point corresponds to a work input of 25 hours. This includes both actual attendance and independent learning periods.

The following content must be completed during professional training

Teaching units	Content	ECTS
At least 300 hours	Compulsory training events Of which at least 225 hours of attended events 75 h can be offered for independent learning	30
At least 120 hours	Practical work experience Of which 60 hours may be a student's own practical project	12
30 hours	Free teaching and learning forms For example: a longer practical work experience period or more detailed content beyond the compulsory content	3
	Thesis	15

3.2 The curriculum and work materials

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

Unambiguous learning goals (outcomes) must be defined in the curriculum. The use of further training documentation (e.g. lecture notes, teaching and learning materials, etc.) must be described in writing.

The learning materials used for independent learning periods and the software used must be clearly described and documented.

3.3 Content of professional training

The defined content can be taken from the particular curriculum. Special emphasis can, however, be placed on certain subject matter. At least two-thirds of the ECTS points must be achieved per topic area. One-third of the ECTS points can be distributed according to professional subject matter.

Content	ECTS
Principles of the human-animal relationship	3
Models of human-animal relationships	
Cultural history of the development of the human-animal relationship	
Effects of animals on human physical, mental and cognitive aspects as well as social skills	
Principles and deeper knowledge of animal-assisted therapy (AAT)	9
The history of animal-assisted therapy	
Delimitations – definitions	
Scientific investigations	
Relationship and process structures	
Methods of animal-assisted therapy	
Fields of application of animal-assisted therapy	
Examples of best practice in animal-assisted therapy	
Aspects of project and organisational structure	3
Project management	
Organisation of animal-assisted therapy	
Hygiene and risk management	
Legal principles	
Psychology & pedagogy	3
Development psychology	
Schools of psychological thought and their contribution to animal-assisted therapy	

Human-human communication: communication skills	
Remedial and special aspects	
Teaching/learning theory, methodology and didactics	
Human medical principles	3
Physical and cognitive problems	
Mental disturbances	
First aid for humans	
Ethical principles	3
Ethics in the human-animal relationship	
Aspects of animal welfare and animal rights	
Selecting and training animals in AAT	3
Selection criteria for animals in animal-assisted therapy	
The training of animals for therapeutic use	
Veterinary medical and biological aspects	3
Ethological principles / behavioural research	
Professional animal welfare in animal-assisted therapy	
Animal learning behaviour	
First aid for animals	
Other topics (facultative)	
Principles of scientific work	
Presentation and communication forms	
Conflict management – group dynamics	
Mental hygiene	
Starting up business / self-employment	
Further topics regarding animal-assisted therapy	
Total	**30**

3.4 Teaching and learning forms
The teaching and learning forms employed must be defined in the curriculum.

The teaching forms used for particular content are to be described (e.g. lecture, seminar, practice, practical project, e-learning, etc.).

4. Performance records
Performance records on the active participation in compulsory teaching events, examinations, the completion of practical work experience, and theses.

4.1. Active participation in compulsory teaching events
Proof that presence at compulsory teaching events is documented. Active participation must be proven by at least 80% attendance of the events. Attendance is to be documented.

4.2 Examinations

The examination regulations must be documented in writing.

1. Varying types of examination may be used.
2. Overall, the scope of examinations must correspond to a written exam with at least 80 questions.
3. Written exams with a range of at least 40 questions must be implemented.
4. Equivalent exam structures (e.g. oral examinations, learning journals, portfolios) are permissible. These must be documented in writing. They must correspond to the scope of a written exam with 40 questions.

The examination regulations must include the number and types of exams carried out, the scoring key, details on those setting the exams and the composition of the Examination Commission, the admission requirements for exams, and the possibilities for repeating exams.

4.3 Practical work experience

There must be a list of available posts offering practical work experience, as well as written regulations on carrying out practical work experience and its documentation.

4.4 Scientific theses

The list of theses completed up to now (topics, authors) must be documented in writing, updated at least annually, and supplied to ESAAT annually.

There must be written regulations regarding theses. These must include:

1. the scope of the thesis (50 - 60 pages, excl. photos)
2. criteria for the composition of the written thesis
3. evaluation criteria and the examiners' names

5. Lecturers

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

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

6. Target groups

The target groups for the professional training must be described in sufficient detail. Selection criteria and the selection process are to be described.

Only those who have completed studying a pedagogic, social, medical or biological field or persons who have completed professional training in an appropriate field. A maximum of 20% of those accepted may be persons with considerable practical experience in an appropriate future professional field. These persons must be able to prove their knowledge of dealing with persons exhibiting disturbed behaviour or with behavioural disorders, mental, physical or speaking disabilities, as well as their experience with animals.

7. The application and acceptance process

The application and acceptance process must be documented in writing.

It must be shown who decides about acceptance and what criteria are used. The specific criteria and selection process by which applicants without a subject-specific basic training, in particular, are selected are to be documented. Strict criteria (e.g. a selection interview) are to be applied here.

8. Costs

The cost of training the participants is to be documented.

9. Quality assurance and evaluation

The quality assurance measures and methods for evaluating the professional training are to be provided.

Participation in compulsory events and practical work experience is to be documented. A participant survey is to be carried out, at least on completion of the professional training. An overview of grades must be documented for every professional training course. The topics and authors of theses must be documented. It is necessary to show how current scientific knowledge is included in the professional training course (e.g. via a Scientific Committee).