



BOARD OF CANINE BEHAVIORISTS



CANDIDATE HANDBOOK

Canine Behavior Consultant (CBC) Certification

Professional Certification — Board Certification Pathway

- Version 1.0

www.caninebehaviorists.org

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Welcome

Congratulations on taking the next step in your professional journey by pursuing the Canine Behavior Consultant (CBC) credential.

The Canine Behavior Consultant certification represents the second level within the Board of Canine Behaviorists' professional certification pathway. Building upon foundational canine behavior knowledge, the CBC recognizes professionals who have developed practical experience working with dogs and are capable of independently assessing, evaluating, and managing the majority of common companion dog behavior concerns using ethical, evidence-informed practices.

This Candidate Handbook has been developed to guide candidates through every stage of the certification process. It outlines eligibility requirements, examination procedures, candidate responsibilities, Board policies, and what you can expect before, during, and after certification.

The Candidate Handbook is not intended to serve as a textbook. Rather, it is the official guide governing the Canine Behavior Consultant certification program. Candidates are responsible for reading and understanding the contents of this handbook before submitting an application or scheduling a certification examination.

On behalf of the Board, we thank you for your commitment to advancing the canine behavior profession and wish you every success throughout your certification journey.

Board of Canine Behaviorists

Scientia. Ethica. Compassio.

Section 1 About the Board of Canine Behaviorists

The Board of Canine Behaviorists was established to bring structure, consistency, and credibility to a profession that had long lacked a unified standard. As demand grew for qualified canine behavior professionals, so did the need for an independent body capable of setting benchmarks that the public, veterinary community, and profession itself could trust.

Our Mission

The Board's mission is to advance the canine behavior profession by establishing internationally recognized certifications that reflect scientific knowledge, ethical practice, and professional excellence.

Our Vision

The Board envisions a global profession in which every certified individual, regardless of geography or specialty, is held to the same rigorous, evidence-informed, and welfare-centered standard — and in which certification is a meaningful signal of competence to clients, employers, and veterinary partners alike.

An Independent Certification Body

The Board of Canine Behaviorists is an independent professional certification body. It is not affiliated with, nor does it endorse, any single training school, methodology, product line, or commercial organization. Certification decisions are made solely on the basis of published eligibility requirements and examination performance.

Science, Ethics, and Compassion

Every standard the Board sets is built on three pillars: scientific rigor, ethical accountability, and compassion for the animals and people that certified professionals serve. This commitment is reflected in the Board's motto, *Scientia. Ethica. Compassio.*, and is woven throughout the certification requirements, examination content, and Code of Ethics.

Evidence-Informed Practice

The Board's certification standards are grounded in contemporary behavioral science and are reviewed periodically to ensure they remain aligned with current research and professional best practice. Candidates are expected to demonstrate an understanding of evidence-informed principles rather than any single training philosophy.

Why Certification Matters

Professional certification provides a consistent, independently verified benchmark of knowledge and ethical commitment. For candidates, it offers a structured path toward professional growth. For the public, employers, and veterinary professionals, it provides confidence that a certified individual has met defined standards. For the profession as a whole, certification strengthens public trust and helps raise the standard of care provided to dogs and their families.

Methodological Neutrality

The Board does not endorse a single training methodology, tool, or equipment philosophy. Certification standards instead focus on the underlying science of how dogs learn, communicate, and respond to their environment, and on the humane, welfare-focused application of that knowledge in professional practice.

The Certification Pathway

The Board offers four progressive certification levels, allowing professionals to grow and formally recognize their expertise as their careers advance:

- Canine Behavior Assistant (CBA) — the foundation credential for those beginning their professional journey.
- Canine Behavior Consultant (CBC) — for professionals working independently and applying evidence-based practices.
- Senior Canine Behavior Consultant (SCBC) — recognizing experienced professionals with advanced knowledge and proven results.
- Board Certified Canine Behaviorist (B.C.C.B.) — the Board's highest credential, recognizing exceptional knowledge, ethics, leadership, and experience.

This handbook addresses the Canine Behavior Consultant (CBC) certification specifically. Requirements for the CBA, SCBC, and B.C.C.B. credentials are described in their respective candidate handbooks.

Section 2 About the Canine Behavior Consultant (CBC)

The Canine Behavior Consultant (CBC) certification is the second level within the Board's certification pathway. It recognizes professionals who have moved beyond foundational knowledge and developed the practical experience needed to work independently with companion dog behavior concerns.

Purpose of the Certification

The CBC exists to identify professionals capable of independently assessing, evaluating, and managing the majority of common companion dog behavior concerns using ethical, evidence-informed practices. It represents a meaningful step beyond general training competency into applied behavior consulting.

Who This Certification Is For

The CBC is designed for professionals who already have practical, hands-on experience working with dogs and are ready to formalize that experience through independent assessment, including:

- Professional dog trainers seeking formal recognition of their behavioral knowledge and consulting competency.
- Behavior consultants providing behavior assessment and modification services for companion animals.
- Experienced canine professionals ready to demonstrate professional competency through Board certification.
- Veterinary professionals wishing to strengthen their behavioral knowledge and client education.

A Professional-Level, Independent Credential

The CBC is a professional-level certification built on a minimum of one year of practical experience working with dogs. It certifies readiness to practice as an independent behavior consultant — someone who understands behavior beyond obedience training, and who can assess and evaluate behavior while recognizing the emotional states that influence it.

What the Certification Represents

Successful CBC certification represents demonstrated competency in behavior assessment, learning theory, behavior modification planning, and ethical practice, along with the professional judgment required to manage the majority of common companion dog behavior concerns independently.

What the Certification Does Not Represent

CBC certification does not represent the most advanced tier of clinical competency the Board recognizes. Complex, high-risk, or treatment-resistant cases may still fall within the scope of the Board's higher-level certifications or require veterinary referral, as described in Section 14 (Scope of Practice).

Relationship to SCBC and B.C.C.B.

The CBC builds directly on the foundation established by the CBA and, in turn, establishes the professional competency upon which the Senior Canine Behavior Consultant (SCBC) and Board Certified Canine Behaviorist (B.C.C.B.) credentials build. Certified CBCs are encouraged to pursue continued education and professional experience toward these higher credentials as their careers progress.

Professional Expectations of a CBC

Individuals holding CBC certification are expected to practice independently and within the defined scope of the credential, uphold the Board's Code of Ethics, represent their qualifications honestly, and refer clients to more advanced professionals or veterinary care when a case exceeds their competency.

Section 3 Eligibility Requirements

Unlike the entry-level CBA, the CBC certification requires demonstrated practical experience. Eligibility is based on age, hands-on experience, integrity, and a commitment to ethical practice.

To be eligible to apply for CBC certification, applicants must meet the following requirements:

- Be at least 18 years of age at the time of application.
- Have a minimum of one year of practical experience working with dogs.
- Complete the official application in full.
- Submit a Professional Experience Declaration.
- Provide a written description of practical experience.
- Agree to abide by the Board's Code of Ethics throughout the duration of certification.
- Provide accurate and truthful information on all application materials.

The Board reserves the right to request additional supporting documentation from an applicant where necessary to verify eligibility. Eligibility requirements are established by the Board and are subject to change; the version published on the Board's website at the time of application shall govern.

Section 4 The Certification Process

Certification is earned through a straightforward, two-step process: submitting an application, and, once approved, completing payment to schedule the certification examination.

Step 1 — Submit Your Application

Applicants begin by submitting the online application, Professional Experience Declaration, and written description of practical experience, together with the non-refundable application fee. The Board's team reviews each application against the eligibility requirements described in Section 3.

- The application fee is \$100 USD and is non-refundable.
- If approved, the application fee is credited toward the total certification fee.
- Application review is generally completed within 72 business hours.
- Applicants are notified of approval or denial by email.

Step 2 — Schedule Your Examination

Approved applicants receive payment instructions for the remaining examination fee. Once payment is received, the candidate is granted access to the Official CBC textbook and Candidate Handbook, along with instructions for scheduling the examination.

- The examination fee is \$895 USD.
- The examination fee, combined with the application fee, brings the total certification cost to \$995 USD.
- The Official CBC textbook becomes available for download once the examination fee has been paid.
- Upon payment, the candidate receives a scheduling code to book the remote certification examination.

Item	Amount	Notes
Application Fee	\$100 USD	Non-refundable; paid at Step 1
Examination Fee	\$895 USD	Paid at Step 2, following approval
Total Certification Cost	\$995 USD	Application fee credited toward total

The examination must be scheduled within six months of payment. Extension requests are considered by the Board on a case-by-case basis; see Section 8 for full scheduling policy. Successful completion of the certification examination results in the award of CBC certification.

Section 5 The CBC Certification Examination

The certification examination provides an independent, standardized assessment of a candidate's professional competency against the Board's published examination blueprint. It exists to verify — objectively and consistently — that every certified individual can apply behavioral science and professional judgment to real consulting situations, regardless of their prior training background.

Key examination details:

- The examination is closed-book.
- It consists of 250 multiple-choice questions.
- It also includes three randomized Professional Competency Assessment cases (see Section 6).
- Candidates are given a four-hour time limit to complete the full examination.
- A passing score of 80% is required to earn certification.
- Each examination fee payment covers one examination attempt.
- The multiple-choice component and the Professional Competency Assessment are scored together as a single, integrated assessment.

The Board reserves the right to revise examination content, format, and procedures over time to ensure the examination continues to reflect current knowledge and professional practice. The version of the examination blueprint in effect at the time of scheduling shall govern.

Section 6 Professional Competency Assessment

The Professional Competency Assessment (PCA) is the applied component of the CBC examination. Where the multiple-choice portion tests knowledge, the PCA tests professional reasoning — a candidate's ability to bring that knowledge to bear on a realistic client case.

Each candidate is presented with three randomized client cases. For each case, candidates are assessed on their ability to demonstrate:

- Interpretation of case history.
- Functional behavior assessment.
- Differential considerations.
- Risk assessment.
- Determining the appropriate scope of practice for the case.
- Veterinary referral decisions, where warranted.
- Immediate management recommendations.
- Sound, practical decision-making.

Each case is evaluated against standardized marking criteria to ensure consistency across candidates. Cases are assessed by trained Board Assessors, who apply the same published criteria to every submission.

Why the PCA Matters

- A CBC practices independently. The Professional Competency Assessment exists because behavior consulting is judgment work, not just knowledge recall — the Board certifies candidates who can demonstrate that judgment under realistic conditions, not only candidates who can answer questions correctly.

Section 7 Remote Examination & Proctoring

The CBC certification examination is completed remotely under live proctoring. This allows candidates to test from a location of their choosing while preserving the integrity and consistency of the examination process.

Technical Requirements

- A functioning webcam is required for the duration of the examination.
- A functioning microphone is required for the duration of the examination.
- A stable, reliable internet connection is required.
- The candidate's camera must remain on and visible to the proctor throughout the entire examination.

Before the Examination Begins

- Candidates will be asked to complete a workspace scan showing the full testing area.
- Candidates must present valid, government-issued photo identification for verification.

During the Examination

- No notes or other unauthorized materials are permitted in the testing area.
- Recording, photographing, or sharing examination content in any form is strictly prohibited.

Examination Integrity

- Cheating, attempted cheating, or examination misconduct of any kind may result in immediate termination of the examination, forfeiture of the examination fee, denial or revocation of certification, and permanent disqualification from future Board programs.

Section 8 Scheduling, Rescheduling & Retesting

Scheduling

Candidates must schedule their certification examination within six months of examination fee payment. If the examination is not scheduled within this window, the examination fee is forfeited unless an extension has been approved by the Board in advance. Extension requests are considered on a case-by-case basis.

Technical Issues

If a candidate experiences a verified technical issue that prevents completion of the examination, the matter will be reviewed by the Board. Where the Board determines that a technical failure was outside the candidate's control, the candidate may be offered the opportunity to reschedule at no additional cost.

Retesting

Candidates who do not achieve a passing score may retake the examination subject to the following conditions:

- A two-week waiting period is required before a retest may be scheduled.
- The full certification examination, including the multiple-choice component and the Professional Competency Assessment, must be retaken in its entirety.
- A retake fee of \$75 USD applies.
- The retake examination must be completed within two months of the original attempt.

Missed Examinations

Candidates who fail to attend a scheduled examination without prior notice to the Board will be treated as having used their examination attempt, subject to the retesting policy above.

Candidate Responsibilities Before Examination Day

Candidates are responsible for confirming their technical setup, reviewing proctoring requirements, and ensuring valid identification is available well in advance of their scheduled examination time.

Section 9 Preparing for the Examination

The purpose of examination preparation is to ensure candidates enter the certification examination with a solid, working command of the knowledge areas defined in the examination blueprint, and the professional judgment needed to apply that knowledge to real cases — not to memorize isolated facts.

The Official CBC textbook is included with the examination fee and becomes available for download once the examination fee has been paid. Candidates are encouraged to supplement the official textbook with additional educational resources, such as those listed in Section 10, to deepen their understanding of core concepts.

The certification examination, and the Professional Competency Assessment in particular, is designed to evaluate a candidate's understanding, reasoning, and professional judgment, rather than rote memorization. Candidates should focus their study on understanding why behavioral principles work as they do, and how to reason through realistic client scenarios.

Suggested Study Planning

Candidates are encouraged to begin studying as soon as the Official CBC textbook is available, allocate consistent study time across each examination domain in proportion to its weighting (see Section 11), and

practice working through case-style scenarios to build the reasoning skills assessed by the Professional Competency Assessment.

As noted in the introduction to this handbook, the Candidate Handbook itself is not intended to serve as study material. It governs the certification process; the Official CBC textbook and recommended reading are the appropriate resources for examination preparation.

Section 10 Recommended Reading

Required

Official Canine Behavior Consultant (CBC) Textbook — provided upon examination payment.

Recommended

- A is for Aggression — Benjamin McGill.
- Clinical Behavioral Medicine for Small Animals — Karen Overall.
- Canine Behavior: A Photo Illustrated Handbook — Barbara Handelman.
- How Dogs Learn — Mary Burch & Jon Bailey.
- Canine Behavior: Insights and Answers — Bonnie V. Beaver.
- The Other End of the Leash — Patricia B. McConnell.
- Handbook of Applied Dog Behavior and Training — Steven R. Lindsay.

Recommended reading is intended to deepen understanding and is not mandatory unless otherwise specified by the Board. Candidates may use equivalent educational resources at their discretion.

Section 11 Examination Content Outline

The certification examination is built from the following blueprint. Each domain is weighted according to its relative importance to competent, independent behavior consulting practice, and is assessed through the multiple-choice examination, the Professional Competency Assessment, or both.

Examination Domain	Weight	What It Covers
Learning Theory & Behavioral Science	15%	Advanced application of classical and operant conditioning, reinforcement, motivation, and behavioral science to lasting behavior change.
Functional Behavior Assessment	12%	Structured observation, case history interpretation, and functional analysis to identify the factors driving behavior.
Canine Communication & Body Language	8%	Advanced reading of body language and emotional signaling across a wide range of behavioral presentations.
Emotional States & Motivation	8%	The role of emotional processes and motivation in the development and maintenance of behavior.

Puppy Development & Life Stages	4%	Developmental stages and life-stage factors relevant to behavior consulting.
Welfare & Humane Training	6%	Welfare-focused, humane methods applied throughout assessment and behavior modification planning.
Behavior Problem Analysis	10%	Analysis of common companion dog behavior concerns and the reasoning behind modification strategies.
Fear, Anxiety & Reactivity	10%	Assessment and case-appropriate management of fear-, anxiety-, and reactivity-related presentations.
Equipment Selection & Handling	3%	Appropriate selection and humane use of equipment within a behavior modification plan.
Professional Ethics	5%	Application of the Board's Code of Ethics to independent consulting practice.
Working with Clients	5%	Clear, professional communication of behavioral findings and recommendations to clients and colleagues.
Differential Considerations	5%	Distinguishing between behavioral presentations with overlapping or similar signs.
Scope of Practice & Veterinary Referral	4%	Recognizing the boundaries of the CBC credential and referring appropriately to advanced professionals or veterinary care.
Professional Judgment	3%	Sound decision-making under the ambiguity typical of real consulting cases.
Risk Assessment	2%	Identifying and communicating risk factors relevant to a case.

Section 12 Certification After Passing

Candidates who achieve a passing score receive the following upon certification:

- A printable digital certificate.
- An official certification number.
- A digital certification badge for professional use.
- The official CBC certification seal.
- A listing in the Board's public certification directory.

Certification materials remain available for download for the duration of the certification period, up to renewal. Newly certified professionals should review the Certification Marks section of the Board's Terms & Conditions for guidance on the appropriate use of Board certification marks, logos, and titles.

Certification carries ongoing professional responsibilities, including adherence to the Board's Code of Ethics, accurate representation of the credential, and practice within the defined scope described in Section 14.

Section 13 **Renewal**

CBC certification is valid for three years from the date of issue.

- Renewal requires payment of a \$100 USD renewal fee.
- Renewal completed prior to expiration does not require re-examination.
- Renewal requires agreement to abide by the Board's current Code of Ethics.
- Renewal requires confirmation of current contact information on file with the Board.

Lapsed Certification

Certification not renewed prior to its expiration date is considered lapsed. Individuals with lapsed certification may not represent themselves as Board Certified until certification has been reinstated or re-earned in accordance with Board policy.

Retesting After Expiration

Depending on the length of time a certification has lapsed, the Board may require the candidate to retake the certification examination, including the Professional Competency Assessment, in order to reinstate certification. The Board reserves the right to revise renewal requirements over time; the requirements published at the time of renewal shall govern.

Section 14 **Scope of Practice**

The CBC is a professional-level certification supporting independent behavior consulting. Recognizing the boundaries of this credential — and referring appropriately when a case falls outside them — remains one of the most important professional responsibilities of a certified CBC.

Within Scope

A certified CBC is prepared to independently assess and manage the majority of common companion dog behavior concerns, including:

- Functional behavior assessment of companion dogs.
- Recognition of emotional states influencing behavior.
- Fear-related behavior.
- Anxiety-related behavior.
- Reactivity.
- Resource guarding.
- Multi-dog household behavior.
- Separation-related behavior.
- Adolescent behavior.
- Risk assessment appropriate to the case.
- Client education grounded in evidence-informed behavior consulting.

Outside Scope — Referral Required

Cases that are especially complex, high-risk, treatment-resistant, or that present possible medical or neurological contributing factors fall outside the scope of CBC certification. Certified CBCs should refer these cases to a Senior Canine Behavior Consultant (SCBC), Board Certified Canine Behaviorist (B.C.C.B.), or a licensed veterinarian, as appropriate, and should always recognize the limits of their own competence on a case-by-case basis.

A Note on Referral

- Referring a case outside one's scope of practice is not a professional shortcoming — it is a core ethical obligation. The Board's Code of Ethics requires certified professionals to practice only within the limits of their competence and to refer clients to appropriately qualified professionals when a case exceeds that competence.

Section 15 Candidate Responsibilities

Every candidate is responsible for upholding the standards of the certification process, both during the application and examination process and afterward, as a certified professional. Candidates and certified professionals agree to:

- Conduct themselves professionally throughout every stage of the certification process.
- Submit honest, accurate applications.
- Provide accurate information to the Board at all times.
- Maintain the confidentiality of examination materials.
- Comply with all published Board policies.
- Communicate respectfully with Board staff, proctors, and fellow candidates.
- Follow all examination instructions and procedures in full.
- Practice ethically, consistent with the Board's Code of Ethics.
- Help maintain the integrity of Board certifications generally.

Section 16 Appeals

Candidates who believe an error occurred during the application or examination process may submit an appeal to the Board within 30 days of the relevant decision or event.

Appeals are accepted only for the following:

- Administrative errors.
- Technical issues affecting the examination.
- Examination procedure irregularities.

Appeals are not accepted on the basis of disagreement with individual examination answers, scoring, or the perceived difficulty of the examination — including the Professional Competency Assessment.

All appeals are reviewed by the Board. The Board's determination following this review is final.

Section 17 Contacting the Board

The Board is available to assist candidates with questions at every stage of the certification process. To ensure the fastest response, please direct your enquiry to the appropriate contact below.

- General enquiries: info@caninebehaviorists.org
- Certification enquiries: certification@caninebehaviorists.org
- Technical support: support@caninebehaviorists.org
- Appeals: appeals@caninebehaviorists.org
- Website: www.caninebehaviorists.org

The Board aims to respond to all enquiries within two to three business days. As a global certification body, the Board does not maintain fixed office hours; enquiries are processed by staff across multiple time zones on an ongoing basis.

Appendix A Board Code of Ethics

All CBC candidates and certified professionals agree to uphold the Board's Code of Ethics, which governs animal welfare, professional competence, scientific integrity, honesty, respect for clients, professional responsibility, collaboration with other professionals, conflicts of interest, continuing professional development, and public trust.

The complete Code of Ethics is published as a standalone Board document and is available on the Board's website and upon request. Agreement to the Code of Ethics is a condition of both initial certification and every subsequent renewal.

Appendix B Candidate Agreement

By submitting an application for CBC certification, the candidate acknowledges and agrees to the following:

- I have read and understood the contents of this Candidate Handbook.
- All information provided in my application, including my Professional Experience Declaration, is accurate and truthful to the best of my knowledge.
- I agree to abide by the Board's Code of Ethics throughout the duration of my certification.
- I understand that application, examination, certification, and membership fees are non-refundable except as described in this handbook or as required by applicable law.
- I understand that certification is awarded solely at the discretion of the Board in accordance with its published policies and procedures.
- I agree to maintain the confidentiality of all examination materials, including Professional Competency Assessment case content, and to refrain from any form of examination misconduct.

- I understand that providing false information or engaging in examination misconduct may result in application denial, examination failure, permanent disqualification, or revocation of certification.

Appendix C Board Certification Pathway

The Board's certification pathway is designed to support professional growth over the course of a career. Candidates may progress through the following levels as their experience and expertise develop:

Canine Behavior Assistant (CBA)

The foundational credential for those beginning their journey in canine behavior.

Canine Behavior Consultant (CBC)

For professionals working independently and applying evidence-based practices to a broader range of behavioral concerns. Addressed in full by this handbook.

Senior Canine Behavior Consultant (SCBC)

Recognizes experienced professionals with advanced knowledge and a proven record of professional results.

Board Certified Canine Behaviorist (B.C.C.B.)

The Board's highest credential, recognizing exceptional knowledge, ethics, leadership, and experience within the profession.

Requirements, fees, and examination details for the CBA, SCBC, and B.C.C.B. credentials are described in their respective candidate handbooks, available on the Board's website.

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