Team Evaluator Policies and Procedures Manual

Pet Partners Therapy Animal Program
For Animal-Assisted Interventions
Special Thanks

Pet Partners would like to acknowledge the generosity of The William Wishnick Foundation for its support of the 2014 edition of the *Pet Partners Team Evaluator Policies and Procedures Manual*.

Thank you for helping Pet Partners and our licensed team evaluators provide safe and professional therapy animal teams across the country.
Purpose of This Manual

Pet Partners is recognized for its commitment to high standards. Because we’re a national organization, it’s especially important that policies and procedures be applied uniformly and consistently throughout the country. This manual is intended to support and guide the team evaluations that you conduct. Moreover, by following the policies and procedures, you’ll ensure that the Therapy Animal Program remains one that’s based on high standards and quality evaluations.

Contact and Support Information

Our goal is to set up all our volunteers for success. You’re encouraged to reach out to Pet Partners any time you need support and assistance.

- For questions about team evaluator policies and procedures, email teppi@petpartners.org.
- To proactively address a potential complaint, email operations@petpartners.org.
- To make suggestions for improving the curriculum, use the web form at www.petpartners.org/CurriculumFeedback.
- To access resources such as score sheets, please log into the Volunteer Center’s Resource Library.

For all other questions, please use the contact us link on the website.
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PART 1

Team Evaluator Policies
Expectations

As a Team Evaluator, you are in a position to create a lasting impression with a handler on behalf of Pet Partners. You are the face of Pet Partners in your community! This section reviews the guiding principles Pet Partners has identified for how we wish to be perceived. As a representative of Pet Partners, the expectation is that your actions as a team evaluator align with these values and standards of professionalism.

Core Values

The Pet Partners Therapy Animal Program identifies four core values which guide volunteer leadership as well as Pet Partners staff in their interactions with volunteers, clients, facilities and one another. As a team evaluator, the expectation is that your interactions reflect these values.

Respect

► We have respect for those pursuing therapy animal registration. We seek to support them to be successful by answering their questions promptly and without judgment, by helping them grow in the knowledge of best practices, and by giving constructive and compassionate feedback which sets them up for success.

► We have respect for animals and ask our volunteers to consistently act as advocates for their animal. We recognize that not all animals wish to participate in therapy work for different reasons, so we ‘listen’ to them and respect their needs – whether that means not registering, retiring or simply ending a visit early.

► We are committed to supporting ongoing education through respectful dialogue. We understand people make the best choices for themselves and their animals based on the information available to them and we can support them in their learning journey.
We respect we are part of a field that is constantly changing. As such, we are committed to continuous improvement as individuals and as a program. We accept that best practices are fluid and we may need to challenge ourselves to grow over time.

Empowerment

- We empower teams to access resources to answer questions and continue their education that will make them safe and effective members of the Therapy Animal Program.
- Pet Partners believes in empowering volunteer leaders, such as our team evaluators, to make sound decisions that align with the program values.
- Pet Partners considers the relationship with its volunteers a partnership and empowers all volunteers to make suggestions and share feedback with the goal of strengthening the program.

Inclusion

- We are inclusive of the nine Pet Partners species in our language and policies, so that those who choose to register with non-canines feel welcomed as a member of the Pet Partners community.
- The best way to determine who can be a therapy animal team is to invite handlers and animals to demonstrate the necessary skills and aptitude for therapy work. We welcome those wishing to pursue registration and allow them to evaluate free from assumptions and without bias.
- We strive to be inclusive of handlers and animal with disabilities, working collaboratively to identify accommodations that accomplish the same level of rigor and safety in modified ways.

Transparency

- We believe there is value in understanding the ‘why’ behind decisions and it is worth the investment in time to explain answers.
- We believe the program is at its strongest when key information is documented, consistent and readily available.
Professionalism

As representatives of a national program, Pet Partners expects all team evaluators to demonstrate professionalism when interacting with handlers, fellow evaluators and Pet Partners staff.

The following expectations are considered requirements for team evaluators.

- Stay current on Pet Partner policies and operations in order to answer questions from teams accurately
- Communicate in a manner that is consistent with Pet Partners standards
- Observe confidentiality and avoid negative public comments about handlers or teams you interact with
- Offer feedback and guidance in a balanced manner, supportive of a team’s growth and learning
- Strive to manage your emotions, even when confronted by others who are unable to do so
- Respect those with differing opinions and, when necessary, request support from Pet Partners in interpreting policy
- Be collaborative with and respectful of all volunteers regardless of group or facility affiliations
- Be willing to learn, change and grow based on your experiences and feedback

Communication Standards

As a team evaluator, there is necessary communication with handlers. Contacting those signed up for evaluations well in advance of the date of the session and providing them with necessary detail conveys respect for the team as well as the process, as does responding promptly to e-mail inquiries.

A professional, courteous tone and style in written communications is important when making contact with handlers. We want handlers to feel confident about the skill and experience of our evaluators and instructors, and writing style helps demonstrate that. Use of full sentences and punctuation, the same way you might write to a business or government agency, helps communicate the “gold standard” that Pet Partners prides itself on, and handlers can be confident that even though our evaluators and instructors are volunteers, their experience and ability are of high quality.
Best Practices

Fees: What to Charge for a Team Evaluation

The critical test for insurance coverage is whether an evaluator is a “volunteer.” To be considered a volunteer, the evaluator may not make money or charge for his or her time; however, the evaluator may charge fees to cover expenses (such as room rentals, advertising and mileage).

Pet Partners recognizes that attendance can be variable, and that you could inadvertently end up making money at an evaluation. The insurance company would look at several of your evaluations to determine whether there’s a pattern of covering more than incidental expenses. If the insurance company found that you often recovered more than you spent, your status as a volunteer, for insurance purposes, could be questioned.

You may not charge different fees based on background or qualifications of the team, for example, they type of handler training completed or species being evaluated.

If any question arises, you might be asked by Pet Partners to demonstrate how you arrive at your fees.

Publicizing Evaluations

Per the team evaluator licensing agreement, evaluators are required to list their upcoming evaluation events on the Pet Partners website. In addition to driving handlers to your evaluation sessions, many prospective handlers search the website to see what is available in their area before choosing Pet Partners. By listing your team evaluations, you are demonstrating program activity in your area. We encourage you to provide as much advance notice as possible, so that handlers have ample opportunity to discover that you’re holding an evaluation.

You will find instructions on how to post your evaluation event within the Resource Library in the Volunteer Center. If you require additional assistance, contact teppi@petpartners.org
Who to Evaluate

As a Pet Partners team evaluator, you must be willing to evaluate any prospective or renewing team, regardless of its affiliation with any group, such as a community partner, or any facility. In addition, you may not exclude teams from your evaluations based on the form of the Pet Partners handler training that they completed (in-person workshop vs. online course) or because they took the course from someone other than yourself or an instructor that you partner with.

The two tests that make up the evaluation, the Pet Partners Skills Test (PPST) and the Pet Partners Aptitude Test (PPAT), may only be conducted in order to evaluate teams for the Pet Partners Therapy Animal Program. They may not be conducted for any other purpose, such as:

- Evaluating for other therapy animal organizations or the American Kennel Club’s Canine Good Citizenship test.
- Training or pre-screening prospective Pet Partners teams.
- Certifying an animal as an assistance animal.

Checking Eligibility

For your safety and the safety of your assistants, you should check each team’s eligibility for registering as a therapy animal team before you allow it to proceed with the evaluation. Although handlers should already have all the information that they need in order to understand the requirements, the evaluation offers a good opportunity to review the team’s eligibility.

Key aspects of checking eligibility at the evaluation include:

- At check-in, visually inspecting items that the handler has brought, including proof of rabies vaccination.
- Discussing the Handler’s Questionnaire Form.
- For renewing teams, looking at their current Pet Partners ID badge.

How will I know if someone was previously scored Not Appropriate for Visiting?

A score of NA precludes a team from participating in the Therapy Animal Program. If the score was provided by the team evaluator to Pet Partners, the online registration system will prevent that team from signing up for a new evaluation.
If you ever have questions about a team you suspect may have previously received a Not Appropriate for Visiting score at an evaluation because they will not sign up for your event via the Pet Partners website, you may contact Pet Partners to inquire.

**Where to Evaluate**

It’s your responsibility to ensure that evaluation sites are suitable. Ultimately, the goal is to identify an evaluation site that simulates a facility where a visit might occur. This may be a community center, church meeting room or space within a facility where teams visit. Evaluations should not take place inside your personal home.

Evaluation sites should have at least 400 square feet of usable space, as well as a location away from the testing area, where the neutral dog team can wait until it’s needed. Sites that have strong odors, such as kennels or dog daycares, might pose a distraction for teams that are evaluated and therefore impact the evaluation.

Because evaluations are designed to simulate visiting environments, they should take place indoors. If absolutely necessary, horses and llamas/alpacas can be evaluated in a covered arena with walls.

The evaluation facility must not be a facility where the team has practiced or trained during the past 2 years. See the following section on familiarity for additional information.

**Familiarity**

An evaluator who’s familiar with either the handler or the animal in a team shouldn’t evaluate that team. An evaluator is considered “familiar” with the animal if the animal has become habituated enough to the evaluator that its behavior is influenced either positively or negatively.

You might become familiar with a team as the instructor or assistant of obedience, agility or “therapy dog” training, or through grooming, friendship or similar interactions that bring you and the team together on a regular basis. However, if you only interact with the team when it’s evaluated, you wouldn’t be considered “familiar” with the team.
It’s important that team evaluators be seen as fair and unbiased in their decisions. For this reason, don’t evaluate close friends or family members. Ultimately, you’re responsible for making the final judgment about whether you’re too close to the team to make a fair assessment. However, in situations where your relationship with the team might open you up to questions of bias, it’s best to have another evaluator conduct that team’s evaluation.

If you’re the only evaluator in your area, an experienced assistant — one who’s unfamiliar with the team — may perform those steps that require an evaluator to interact directly with the animal. The assistant can then relay the information to you to be documented. As with any type of alternative evaluation, teams that are evaluated in this manner will only be able to receive a Predictable team qualification rating.

Familiarity is also a consideration with evaluation locations. Teams should not evaluate in a facility where they have spent significant time. Examples would include facilities where an animal has taken obedience classes, regularly participates in shows or agility work, or a location where they are boarded or attend ‘daycare’. Evaluating in settings like these can be a disservice to the teams as the animal may have associations for non-therapy behavior in these setting. Teams evaluated in familiar locations will only be able to receive a Predictable team qualification rating. If an animal is evaluating in the same location every two years, that would not be considered an issue of familiarity.

**Timely Submission of Scores**

It is the responsibility of the team evaluator to submit scores to Pet Partners through the website for any evaluations conducted. In the case of two evaluators partnering on an evaluation, only one must submit scores.

- Report any Not Appropriate teams to Pet Partners within 24 hours of the evaluation event
- Submit your evaluation scores via the Pet Partners website within 2 business days.

Please note that if you do not submit your evaluation scores, this may delay the processing of that team’s registration.
Re-Evaluation

Current Pet Partners teams may be re-evaluated at any time. They might do this because the equipment that the animal uses has changed or the handler wants to try to change the team’s qualification rating from Predictable to Complex.

Re-evaluation also occurs for teams that didn’t pass their last evaluation but received a Not Ready score. While a team may not re-evaluate on the same day, they receive a Not Ready score, there’s no other minimum waiting time for re-evaluation. Evaluators are encouraged to make recommendations about when it would be appropriate for teams to try again. For example, if a team received a Not Ready score because the handler forgot to bring required materials, re-evaluation could occur very soon. However, if the Not Ready score was the result of a lack of skill, or excessive stress or fear, a longer waiting period before re-evaluation is appropriate. This allows the team time to work through its issues before trying the evaluation again. As the team evaluator, you may ask a team to wait a reasonable amount of time before they are re-evaluated with you.

Setting Teams Up for Success

In addition to maintaining the standards for excellence in the Therapy Animal Program, team evaluators also have the opportunity to create an environment that reflects the values of Pet Partners and gives teams the opportunity to do their best.

► New and experienced teams may be nervous during the evaluation. Evaluators should make an effort to be friendly and welcoming in order to put the handler at ease. Even teams who don’t pass on their first attempt can still have a positive experience.

► Evaluators should clearly and consistently explain the procedure to the handler before each exercise or scenario, as well as the expected or desired responses, and give handlers the opportunity to clarify or ask questions.
Role Playing

The goal of the team evaluation is to, as closely as possible, mirror what might occur on an actual visit. This means the evaluator and evaluation assistants must role play during the evaluation as though you are a facility staff or client, depending on the scenario.

Role playing does not have to be an Academy Award winning performance. By choosing a facility type and referring back to that facility and the clients during your explanation of exercises, this helps get the team in the proper mindset to demonstrate the skills they should have on a real visit. When you commit to role play, it makes it easier for the handler to role play back. Also using your position in an imaginary facility to explain why Pet Partners requires certain behaviors or even items, such as vaccination paperwork, helps the team connect why that is the expectation.

Take Exercise 5 “Out for a Walk” as an example. The evaluator, pretending to be the volunteer coordinator in an assisted living facility, explains the course and that they wish to see a loose leash because they have clients who walk slowly, often with balance challenges, so it’s important to the facility to know the animal won’t be straining at the leash and potentially trip or bump someone who could suffer a fall.

The PPAT is a series of individual exercises that naturally flow from one to another which may lend themselves to larger combined role play scenarios.

For example, you could combine Exercises A, B and C into a single role play where the team is visiting someone with limited motor control who’s enthusiastic about visiting with the animal.

Similarly, Exercises G, H and I could reasonably happen as the team enters the facility lobby and is approached by several people who want to interact with the animal.

Whatever role play scenarios you choose, be sure they include explanations of the procedures and desired responses for the team.
Providing Constructive Feedback to Teams

There are two different types of constructive feedback teams should receive during their team evaluation: formative and summative.

Formative feedback happens throughout the evaluation on an ongoing basis. It helps articulate what you’re seeing in that moment which can minimize surprise on the part of a handler when you give the final score.

Summative feedback occurs at the end of the team evaluation and is a summary of their overall strengths and weaknesses. This should be delivered with sensitivity and compassion. Every team, regardless of their overall evaluation score, should be able to hear positive things as well as areas they can continue to work on.

Another part of your summative feedback are the comments you enter on the score sheet. Because the handler will leave with their score sheet and hopefully review it, particularly in the case of a Not Ready, descriptive comments, both positive and negative, can help a team celebrate their achievements and give them something tangible to refer to when they consider areas in which they can improve.

Feedback is most easily ‘heard’ or internalized when it begins on a positive note with compliments for the team. You may also find the ‘sandwich’ method helpful where you surround an area of weakness with two positive comments.

Videotaping and Photographing Evaluations

You may videotape or photograph an evaluation only if each participant in the evaluation completes and signs a consent form prior to the evaluation date and then also signs a release form on the day of the evaluation. A parent or guardian must sign the consent form for any underage handler.

If any participant chooses not to sign the consent and release form, neither that person nor his or her animal may be videotaped or photographed. Videotapes and photographs may not be used for any purpose other than those that are specifically stated in the consent and release forms.

A Pet Partners photo/video release form is available in the Resource Library of the Volunteer Center.
Evaluator Renewal

To maintain active status, evaluators must renew their license every 2 years by completing the team evaluator renewal online. Any evaluations you conduct without a current license are not considered valid and those teams’ applications to the Therapy Animal Program will be unable to be completed.

Team evaluations where scores are submitted through the Pet Partners website, and events scheduled through the Pet Partners calendar, are automatically tracked as part of your renewal. You do not need to provide additional logs of these events to Pet Partners, although you may wish to keep records for yourself. If you have completed additional evaluations before the new Pet Partners website was launched in fall 2015, you have the opportunity to submit those logs as part of your online renewal process.

Minimum Activity Level
All evaluators are asked to meet a minimum level of activity at the time of their renewal, as demonstrated by the number of available evaluation dates which have been listed on the Pet Partners website. The target number of available evaluations dates is 6 over a course of two years. By listing an available date on the calendar, you are demonstrating your ability to evaluate teams, even if no one registers. Therefore, if you must cancel an evaluation date because no one has signed up, that still is considered demonstrated activity and counted towards your activity level.

If you haven’t met the minimum level of evaluation activity due to extenuating circumstances, such as an extended illness, you’ll be asked to put evaluation dates on the calendar in order to renew. Team evaluators can also take a leave of absence for up to 2 years, with no impact to their ability to renew. We do ask you let us know if you are temporarily not evaluating so we do not actively direct teams to you.

No Team Registration Requirement
Evaluators are not required to maintain a current therapy animal team registration in order to renew their license. While we believe experience as a handler is critical in order to become a team evaluator, we wish to support all our handlers to make decisions as their animal’s advocate, including retirement, when appropriate.
Registrations with Other Organizations

Pet Partners views team evaluators as ambassadors of the Therapy Animal Program. While you are not required to keep an animal registered with Pet Partners in order to maintain your evaluator status, you may not be registered as a handler with another therapy animal organization, in lieu of Pet Partners, while also acting as an evaluator for Pet Partners.

Evaluating for Other Organizations

As an evaluator, your commitment to representing Pet Partners in your community not only reinforces your role as a volunteer leader, but indicates that you are aligned with Pet Partners’ philosophy and dedicated to upholding the highest standards of safety, education and animal health and welfare. You may not be a licensed team evaluator with Pet Partners if you are also conducting evaluations for another therapy animal organization.

Quality Assurance

Evaluators are responsible for staying current on all changes to the Pet Partners Team Evaluator Policies and Procedures Manual as well as supplemental materials. Pet Partners will provide updates via email and the Pet Partners website. If Pet Partners becomes aware of an error or perceived error on your part as evaluator, we’ll contact you to clarify the relevant best practice or policy, in the spirit of assistance and support.

If a complaint is submitted against an evaluator, Pet Partners will contact the evaluator to investigate the complaint. If you believe that a complaint will be submitted against you, based on your interactions with a handler, you’re welcome to contact Pet Partners proactively to help us better address the situation. Although our goal is to support evaluators in the field, Pet Partners will, if warranted, send a letter indicating the corrective actions that you must take in response to a complaint.

When an evaluator’s license is due for renewal, Pet Partners will review the evaluator’s file to determine whether he or she is eligible for renewal. Pet Partners reserves the right to deny license renewal to any evaluator who has had repeated complaints and/or repeated errors with no improvement in performance.
Safety as a Priority

Evaluation exercises must be completed in the order in which they’re written. The exercises were designed to follow the natural progression of a visit with measured and intentional escalation of stressors for the team. While you may combine some of the PPAT exercises into scenarios, as covered in the Procedures later in this manual, if exercises are not conducted as designed you may create unintended responses from the team.

If any behavior that you observe in either member of a team during previous evaluation exercises or while the team has been on the premises makes you reluctant to conduct an exercise out of concern for your own safety, or the safety of your assistants or other animals, you aren’t required to continue the evaluation. In such cases, you must explain the reason for your reluctance to the handler and have a conversation to determine whether the overall score should be Not Appropriate for Visiting or Not Ready.

Please also practice hand hygiene between evaluations to limit the spreading of germs and keep yourself healthy.

On Pushing an Animal or Handler Too Far

Never push an animal or handler to accept an interaction that he or she doesn’t want to participate in. Doing so causes undue stress, fear or aggression, which creates an unsafe and/or inhumane environment for the team, for you and for your assistants.

For example, if an animal doesn’t want its front feet picked up during Exercise 4 of the PPST, “Appearance and Grooming,” don’t wrestle with the animal to pick up its feet. Instead, stop and score the animal Not Ready. At that point, in accordance with the scoring guidelines in this manual, the evaluation should be ended.

Likewise, if a handler expresses discomfort with any exercise and doesn’t want to participate, you don’t need to force his or her compliance but should score the exercise accordingly. For example, after you explain the procedure for Exercise G of the PPAT, “Crowded and Petted by Several People,” a handler states that he’s uncomfortable having lots of people crowding around him and would prefer to have the people come one at a time. If this handler is unwilling to try the crowd scenario, he should be scored Not Ready.
Continuing the Evaluation When an Animal Isn’t Passing

If an animal isn’t passing the evaluation, Pet Partners strongly cautions against letting the team continue the evaluation “for practice.”

Although the handlers of animals that are scored Not Ready might benefit from walking through the remaining exercises to help them prepare for a future re-evaluation, this carries some risk. If an animal that has been scored Not Ready behaves aggressively while it’s still on the testing grounds, the Not Ready score would be changed to Not Appropriate, and the animal would then be ineligible for any future participation in the Therapy Animal Program. Handlers should be made aware of this risk.

If a handler asks to walk through the remainder of the evaluation, and you’re willing to allow this, be very clear about the fact that the animal has already received a Not Ready score and won’t pass that day, regardless of its performance on the remaining exercises.

If the animal isn’t passing because it’s overly stressed, unruly or fearful, don’t continue the evaluation. Instead, stop, score the team Not Ready for the entire evaluation and offer feedback to the team about their strengths and areas for growth.

If the animal isn’t passing because it’s aggressive and therefore being scored as Not Appropriate for Visiting, under no circumstances should you continue the evaluation.

Required Documentation for Not Appropriate for Visiting Scores

Evaluators who give a Not Appropriate for Visiting score to any team must communicate the score, along with the reason for it, to the handler at the evaluation. Additionally, they must document the Not Appropriate for Visiting score and submit that information to Pet Partners within 24 hours of the evaluation.

When NA scores are submitted, Pet Partners can take steps to prevent the same team from evaluating with a different evaluator. You can find additional information in the Resource Library in the Volunteer Center.
Incident Reporting

While incident reporting is more typical in visiting situations, an injury to a person or an animal, the perception of an injury, and damage to property that occurs during an evaluation should be reported as an incident. If an incident occurs during the PPST/PPAT, document the incident by using the online Incident Report Form within 24 hours. Pet Partners will follow up with all the relevant parties.

The Incident Report Form can be found on in the Resource Library, at www.petpartners.org/resource/incident-report/

Insurance

As Pet Partners volunteers, evaluators are covered by Pet Partners’ commercial general liability insurance (CGLI) policy for its employees, subject to policy limits. If an evaluator is conducting the PPST/PPAT on behalf of Pet Partners, this coverage extends to the evaluator’s assistants and other Pet Partners volunteers.

Pet Partners’ CGLI policy covers only those acts on the part of an evaluator that are within the scope of Pet Partners policies and procedures for volunteers, subject to exclusions. These exclusions include, but aren’t limited to, acts that occur between Pet Partners team members, acts of gross negligence and intentional acts.

As long as they follow Pet Partners procedures and are volunteers as described in Pet Partners policies, evaluators are also covered for decisions that they make about a team’s qualifications and readiness. Nevertheless, if you’re unsure about a team, you’re encouraged to err on the side of caution. Don’t pass an animal that you wouldn’t want around your own family.

So what does all this mean for you as an evaluator? When you’re acting in the capacity of an evaluator within Pet Partners guidelines, you’ll have coverage if you’re sued for damages to third parties (for example, those who participate in your evaluations and those who interact with teams that you pass). If you or someone else sustains an injury during an evaluation, the person who was responsible for the injury would be liable. However, under certain circumstances, Pet Partners’ CGLI policy includes coverage for medical services.
Pet Partners’ CGLI policy doesn’t cover facilities where evaluations take place. Some facilities might ask for an indemnification form that exempts them from liability to be signed by handlers before their evaluation.

**Evaluating Multiple Handlers With One Animal**

More than one person (for example, a pair of family members or a group of friends) may register with the same animal. Each handler must be evaluated with the animal separately. These evaluations may not be conducted back to back; the animal must be allowed to rest at least 30 minutes between them.

**Evaluating a Handler With Multiple Animals**

Handlers may register with more than one animal. Each animal must have its own evaluation. These evaluations may be conducted back to back, provided that the handler has a safe place to keep any animals that aren’t currently being evaluated, so that they won’t be a distraction to the ongoing evaluation. If a handler wants to complete multiple evaluations with you on the same day, discuss ahead of time his or her plans for the animals that will be waiting.

**Evaluating Handlers Who Aren’t Animal Owners**

Handlers may register with an animal that they don’t own, provided that they obtain consent from the owner to register with the animal as a Pet Partners therapy animal team. This process is managed through the online registration process. Handlers are not required to furnish this consent to the evaluator. While the owner is responsible for determining whether the handler knows the animal well enough to be evaluated with it, the requirement that the handler know the animals for 6 months (1 year for birds) still applies.
Procedural Errors

If you or your assistants make a procedural error or forget an exercise, you must decide whether to repeat the exercise or conduct it later, out of order. You must consider the welfare of the team when making the decision. Make sure that your decision won’t cause the team to exhibit escalating stress or fear.

► If the error is minor (for example, some members of the crowd in Exercise 6 of the PPST, “Walk Through a Crowd,” don’t follow the prescribed paths), but you’ve observed enough to score the team, or a subsequent exercise evaluates similar responses, you may decide not to repeat the exercise.

► If the error is minor, but you haven’t observed enough to score the team, and no subsequent exercise evaluates similar responses, you may repeat the section of the exercise in which the error occurred.

► If the error was major (for example, either the visual or auditory distraction from Exercise 7 of the PPST, “Reaction to Distractions,” wasn’t produced), or if an exercise was forgotten, you must either repeat the exercise or conduct it after the current exercise or scenario is completed.

Evaluating Very Small Dogs

For the purposes of the Pet Partners Skills Test (PPST) and the Pet Partners Aptitude Test (PPAT), a dog is considered a “very small dog” if it’s about 10 inches tall at the shoulder and 10 to 15 pounds in weight, regardless of its breed or mix of breeds. However, you aren’t expected to weigh and measure the dog. Practically speaking, a dog qualifies as a very small dog if an average person can easily pick it up with one hand, and if the dog might be in danger of being stepped on and severely injured if it walks on the ground in a crowd; therefore, if a handler wants to have his or her dog evaluated as a very small dog, just make sure that the dog is small enough to be picked up and carried in one arm.

A very small dog that’s carried during one evaluation exercise isn’t required to be carried during all exercises. It’s the handler’s decision whether to carry a very small dog for a particular exercise. The exceptions are Exercise 5 of the PPST, “Out for a Walk,” Exercise 11 of the PPST, “Come When Called,” and Exercise H of the PPAT, “Leave It”; for these exercises, all dogs must walk on the ground.
On the team’s evaluation score sheet, indicate each individual exercise where the dog was carried. Be sure to remind the handler that, if the dog is carried during any evaluation exercises, it must be carried under similar circumstances during visits.

In the case of a small breed dog who is too large to be comfortably carried, the handler may pick up or position the animal to facilitate an interaction with the client during the evaluation, as they would on a visit. This is not equivalent to being carried for the exercise and would not be marked as such on the score sheet. For example, consider a handler with a corgi: in Exercise D, the staggering, gesturing person using a walker cannot reasonably reach down to pet this size dog once it has approached. The handler may pick up their animal to present it to the client and facilitate petting. This would be considered guiding interactions on the part of the handler.

**Evaluating Animals Other Than Dogs and Cats**

Pet Partners registers nine species, so we encourage evaluators to be open to learning and evaluating animals beyond dogs. Pet Partners has resources, staff and other volunteers willing to assist you to expand your knowledge and evaluate a new species. Please check the Resource Library for species specific materials and contact teppi@petpartners.org for additional assistance.
Roles at the Team Evaluation

Multiple Evaluators

If multiple evaluators are present for an evaluation, a maximum of two may be identified as the evaluators of record. If you partner with a second evaluator, one of you should conduct both the PPST and the PPAT, while the other acts as scribe. This approach maintains consistency in technique. In such cases, the two evaluators (the primary evaluator and the scribe) may collaborate on the scoring, and both receive credit for the evaluation.

Scribes

You may choose to collaborate with another team evaluator or experienced evaluation assistant, giving an evaluation an extra set of eyes, ears and hands. When two people collaborate on a single evaluation, one fulfills the role of a scribe and the other is considered the primary evaluator.

Definition of Roles

The primary evaluator will conduct all hands on portions of the evaluation including giving instructions to the team as though they were on a real visit and interacting with the team during exercises. They will make verbal descriptions of the behaviors they see from the animal and handler for the scribe to record, and make eye contact with the scribe on occasion for emphasis or to check for understanding or validation. Because they have the opportunity to be closest to the team, the primary evaluator has the final word and responsibility for the team evaluation score which may be informed by observations by the scribe.

The scribe should be recording information relayed by the primary evaluator in addition to any observations they make as well on the evaluation score sheet. It’s useful for the scribe to position him or herself at a different angle than the primary evaluator in order to augment observations.
The role of primary evaluator and scribe can alternate with each evaluation during the course of the day, but only a licensed team evaluator may act as the primary evaluator.

**Collaboration**

At the end of the evaluation, the primary evaluator should check in with the scribe and discuss any areas where the scribe may have had an observation not verbally noted by the primary evaluator. After discussion, the primary evaluator is responsible for identifying and recording in the final qualification rating on the score sheet that will go to the handler and the evaluator’s records. It’s appropriate to do this collaborative discussion both quickly and quietly to minimize unnecessary stress or awkwardness for the team who will be waiting for their final score.

Either the primary evaluator or both the primary evaluator and scribe can discuss the results of the evaluation with handler. There are advantages to having both individuals speak with the handler about the evaluation outcome together, including another voice to confirm the evaluation decision by sharing what they personally observed, as well as assist in articulating both ideas for improvement as well as the achievements of the team.

**Teamwork**

Successful partnerships between a primary evaluator and scribe requires practice, but is a great opportunity for teamwork and cooperation, since there is a large volume of observations to recognize, analyze, interpret, and record. If there are no other team evaluators in your area, consider working to train an experienced assistant to be your scribe. This is a great way to encourage a strong handler to consider becoming an evaluator in your area by giving them exposure to evaluations and an opportunity to enhance their skills.

**Volunteer Evaluation Assistants**

- All evaluations require a minimum of three volunteer assistants.
- At least one adult male volunteer is strongly preferred; but if an adult male isn’t available, it does not impact the team’s score.
- All assistants should be provided with an Evaluator Assistant Volunteer Orientation Packet, which is available in the Resource Library. It’s your responsibility to ensure that all volunteers understand their role and can perform it to standard.
Children under the age of 16 may act as members of the crowd during the evaluation with parental permission, but there may be no active interaction, such as petting, between any child and the animal that’s being evaluated.

Neutral Dog Teams

A neutral dog team is a requirement of all evaluations. By definition, they are neutral to the extent they can walk past an evaluating animal without the need to approach, investigate or communicate. They should also be able to walk on either side of their handler in order to accommodate the preference of the evaluating team.

Our preference is for registered or retired Pet Partners therapy animal teams to serve as neutral dog teams. However, if no experienced teams are available, another dog may be used. It’s your responsibility to determine the neutral dog’s appropriateness in advance of the evaluation. This extends to ensuring appropriateness with other species you may be evaluating which could be novel to the dog, such as birds, horses or llamas.

A volunteer should be used to handle the neutral dog during the evaluation. You may not handle the neutral dog yourself during an exercise, because this would limit your ability to observe the interaction fully.

Neutral dog teams wait outside the testing area, are brought in when the specific exercise that they’re needed for is conducted and are then directed to leave. This is to limit the potential for distraction during other parts of the evaluation. If it is logistically impossible for the neutral dog to wait outside the testing room and the testing room is large, the neutral dog may wait in the testing space in a corner or area as far away from the testing team as possible and preferably behind a visual barrier. If you must do this, it is your responsibility to ensure that the neutral dog is able to be truly neutral while waiting.

Depending on the number of animals being evaluated on a particular day, you might need multiple neutral dog teams to help protect any one dog from overwork or stress. If multiple neutral dog teams are used, they should be as similar as possible, especially in terms of how they’d be perceived by the teams that are being evaluated.
Experienced Assistants

In some cases, you might need or choose to have an experienced assistant perform some portions of the evaluation that require physical contact with the animal. The following are some situations where this is acceptable:

- You’re familiar with the team.
- You’re unfamiliar with the species.
- You’re physically unable to perform the hands-on portions of the evaluation due to a temporarily illness or injury.

To be considered an experienced assistant who can perform the hands-on portions of the evaluations under your direction, the assistant must meet all the following requirements:

- The assistant is a registered Therapy Animal Program volunteer
- The assistant has participated as one of the three assistants for the evaluation of at least 20 teams.
- The assistant has experience handling a variety of the animal species being evaluated. This experience might come from experience as a veterinarian, veterinary technician, groomer, obedience instructor or similar background.
- The assistant has demonstrated the ability to follow an evaluator’s directions.

It’s your responsibility to determine whether the assistant meets the requirements for an experienced assistant and to ensure that the assistant follows the team evaluator policies and procedures. You also have final responsibility for the team’s score and the safety of all handlers, animals and assistants during the evaluation.

You must be prepared to step in for the experienced assistant if situations such as the following occur:

- The assistant becomes uncomfortable during the evaluation of a particular team.
- You anticipate a threat to the safety of the assistant, handler, animal or other participant in the evaluation.
- You observe the assistant deviating from the team evaluator policies and procedures.
It should be noted that experienced assistants conducting hands-on portions of the evaluation are meant to be temporary or occasional in nature, as they have not completed Pet Partners Evaluator Training. If you wish to move away from hands-on portion of evaluations entirely, encourage another handler to become and evaluator and offer to partner with them. They will benefit from your previous experience and you will be able to adjust your participation as you wish.

As with any type of alternative evaluation, teams that are evaluated by an experienced assistant will only be able to receive a Predictable team qualification rating.

Alternate Evaluators

Team evaluations are a critical component to the Pet Partners Therapy Animal Program and licensed team evaluators are strongly preferred to ensure rigor and consistency. Occasionally, due to health considerations, relocation or retirement, a group of teams might be left without an available evaluator. In such situations, Pet Partners may identify an alternate evaluator to conduct evaluations, so that existing teams can continue to renew until a new evaluator can be licensed in the area if there are no potential evaluation dates within 3 months of a team’s expiration date and a two-hour drive.

Whenever possible, Pet Partners prefers to take advantage of the experience of experienced assistants as alternate evaluators.
PART 2

Team Evaluation Procedures
Team Requirements

Handler Requirements

- Handlers must be at least 10 years old to be evaluated.
  - For handlers under the age of 16, a parent or guardian must accompany the handler at the evaluation but shouldn’t participate in the evaluation itself.
  - All handlers under 18 years old must have a parent’s or guardian’s consent to participate, collected through the online registration process.
- Handlers should be dressed appropriately and must wear closed-toe shoes.

Keep in mind that appropriate dress varies somewhat by geography. Before the evaluation date, you should clearly articulate your expectations to handlers who are planning to attend your evaluation. The *Pet Partners Handler Guide* states only that handlers should dress professionally but comfortably for the work that they’ll be doing during visits. Don’t assume that all handlers have the same definition of professional dress that you do.

Items to Be Provided by the Handler

As detailed in Lesson 3.2 of the *Pet Partners Handler Guide* and in the Resource Library, the handler should bring the following items:

- A completed Handler’s Questionnaire Form for you to review, available in the Resource Library.
- Proof of current rabies vaccination, such as a certificate, vaccination records from the veterinarian or a completed and signed Animal Health Screening Form.
  
  **Note**: The following species are exempted from rabies vaccinations: rabbits, guinea pigs, rats and birds.
- A towel, small blanket or basket if the animal will be carried.
- An acceptable collar/harness and leash.
For new teams, a course completion certificate for either the in-person or online Pet Partners Handler Course.

**Note:** Although we encourage handlers to take their evaluation within 1 year of completing the course, completed registration materials must be received by Pet Partners within 2 years of the date on the certificate.

- A brush that’s appropriate for visiting, to be used in Exercise 4 of the Pet Partners Skills Test (PPAT), “Appearance and Grooming”.
- Treats to be used for during Exercise I of the Pet Partners Aptitude Test (PPAT), “Offered a Treat.”
- For handlers under the age of 16, a parent or guardian to accompany them.
- For handlers requesting modifications to evaluation exercises or atypical equipment, a letter of accommodation provided by Pet Partners indicating pre-approval.

**What happens if a handler fails to bring all the necessary materials to the evaluation event?**

Cancelling an evaluation due to missing materials is an unfortunate experience for everyone. Empty evaluation spaces are not the best use of time for the team evaluator or their evaluation assistants and sometimes handlers have travelled an extended distance to participate. While some materials are mandatory in order to begin an evaluation, there may be appropriate solutions that allow the evaluation to continue if certain items have been forgotten.

1. **Handler’s Questionnaire.** This item gives you necessary information about the team you will be evaluating. If a handler forgets their completed version, it is at the discretion of the evaluator to allow the handler to complete another copy onsite prior to beginning their evaluation.

2. **Certificate of Course Completion.** While coursework should be completed prior to the evaluation in order to prepare the handler for success, if a handler forgets their certificate, it is at the discretion of the evaluator to continue the evaluation. Course completion is also confirmed by Pet Partners staff at the time the registration is submitted. For students who took the online course, it is possible to check for completion through your online roster. Requiring course completion before you assign a specific evaluation slot is not Pet Partners policy.

3. **Brush Appropriate for Visiting.** If a team forgets their brush for Exercise 4, have a backup brush available to borrow that can be cleaned easily. If a team brings an inappropriate brush, use this as a teachable moment to explain why the brush is not safe. Allow them to borrow a backup brush. Not having an appropriate brush does not result in an immediate Not Ready.
4. **Treats.** If a handler forgets a treat to use for Exercise I, have additional treats on hand to substitute. If the handler is concerned about the type of treat, they can always politely decline the treat giving as part of the exercise.

**Animal Requirements**

Animal suitability and eligibility is covered in detail in Lesson 3.1 of the *Pet Partners Handler Guide*. We have included rationale for the key elements of eligibility to help support you in answering questions from handlers.

- **Species.** Currently Pet Partners registers nine species of animal. Just because we are unable register a species does not mean the species is banned. Pet Partners requires appropriate documentation about a species’ reaction to stress. Without a body of supporting research and appropriate protocols, we are unable to evaluate and consequently register these animals at this time.

  Note: A dog of any breed or mix of breeds may participate, provided that its presence doesn’t violate local animal control laws.

- **Length of ownership.** Pet Partners believes that it takes a team to provide safe and effective visits, not just a great animal. Teams require strong relationships built on trust and communication, which takes time to develop. We consider 6 months (or 1 year for birds) the minimum benchmark in order to develop a relationship for a therapy animal team.

- **History of Aggression.** We take a conservative approach when it comes to animals and aggression. The first and most obvious reason is safety, but also the concept that Pet Partner teams should inspire confidence,

- **Diet.** Pet Partners recognizes that there’s concern among medical professionals that humans, especially those with compromised immune systems, might be placed at a higher risk of infection by interacting with animals that eat raw protein diets. We are committed to watching the industry and future developments and making adjustments accordingly. Current policy will always be available within the Resource Library of the Volunteer Center.

**Health Requirements**

Health requirements are covered in detail in Lesson 3.1 of the *Handler Guide*. As the team evaluator, you not only look for physical signs that an animal shouldn’t be evaluated but also listen closely to the handler, who might disclose information that will make it necessary to reschedule the evaluation.
Animals that show any signs of ill health shouldn’t be evaluated. A central tenet of the Therapy Animal Program is YAYABA™ (you are your animal’s best advocate). Asking an animal to evaluate or make therapy visits while they are unwell is not advocacy.

Even if the animal appears healthy but is taking antibiotic, antifungal or immunosuppressive medications, it should wait until the course of treatment has ended before being evaluated or visiting. In addition to this being in the animal’s best interests, there is an increased potential for the shedding of zoonotic materials with some medications which is an infection control consideration.

**A note about medications:** It isn’t your responsibility to recognize whether a specific medication would preclude an animal from participating in the Therapy Animal Program. If you learn, through discussion with the handler, that an animal is taking medication for an ongoing condition, but the handler isn’t sure whether the drug is antibiotic, antifungal or immunosuppressive, suggest that he or she contact the animal’s veterinarian or Pet Partners for confirmation before submitting their registration materials.

**Collars, Harnesses and Leashes**

For safety reasons, all animals must wear a collar or harness and be leashed while they’re at the evaluation site. Animals that are brought to the evaluation site in a carrier or crate must have the leash attached once they’re out of it. The most current list of acceptable equipment is available in Lesson 3.2 of the Pet Partners Handler Guide.

Animals that are being evaluated for Pet Partners for the first time should wear only their collar/harness and a leash. Vests and bandanas aren’t permitted. After extensive visiting, therapy animals may understand that their ‘work clothes’ are part of a therapy animal visit and it puts them in a mindset for therapy work. For animals that are renewing their registration, it’s at the discretion of the evaluator whether an animal that regularly wears a vest or bandana during visits may wear it during the evaluation.

Novelty animal clothing, such as sweaters and dresses, and therapeutic garments, such as Thundershirts and allergy suits, aren’t acceptable unless an accommodation has been approved.

All animals must wear the same equipment during visits as they wear during the evaluation. If a handler wants to change the equipment that’s used during visits, the team must be re-evaluated with the new equipment.
Equipment List

The following equipment and resources are required for Pet Partners team evaluations. Props such as toys, healthcare equipment and special clothing should be used only as specified in the exercise descriptions.

► Volunteers:
  ● The evaluator (you).
  ● A neutral dog team.
  ● Three assistants, preferably of different cultures and genders. At least one assistant should be an adult male. The evaluator may not also be an assistant.

► A grooming table or other small table with a non-skid surface for small and carried animals. The surface must be cleaned between evaluations.

► If the flooring is slippery, a mat or rug for the animal to stand on during Exercise 4 of the PPST, “Appearance and Grooming,” and the following exercises of the PPAT:
  ● Exercise A, “Overall Handling”
  ● Exercise B, “Exuberant and Clumsy Petting”
  ● Exercise C, “Restraining Hug”

► Traffic cones or painter’s tape to mark off walking paths or other areas.

► Equipment to produce the visual and auditory distractions.

► A 10-foot long light line with a clip to attach to the animal’s collar or harness. Make sure that the clip and line aren’t too heavy for very small dogs. A slightly longer line may be used to avoid pulling; however, in such cases, the line must be marked at 10 feet.

► A piece of healthcare equipment (for example, a walker, crutches, a cane or a wheelchair).

► A robe and hat that fit one of the assistants.

► A toy that’s appealing to animals. This should have a smooth surface that can be easily cleaned between animals.

► Treats to use for Exercise I of the PPAT, “Offered a Treat.” Handlers may provide treats for their own animal.

► A brush appropriate for visiting to be used in Exercise 4, “Appearance and Grooming” in case the handler does not provide one.
Special Evaluation Circumstances

Evaluation Accommodations

All accommodations discussed here must be approved by Pet Partners at least 2 weeks in advance of the evaluation. Evaluators will know an accommodation has been reviewed and approved by a personalized letter from Pet Partners provided to the handler.

Handlers With Physical Disabilities

Many individuals with disabilities can be evaluated successfully without any accommodations or changes to evaluation procedures. However, accommodations can be made for people with disabilities, if needed. As the evaluator, it isn’t your responsibility to suggest that someone seek an accommodation. If you have concerns about a handler’s ability to complete an evaluation as designed, offer to talk through the expectations of the exercises before the evaluation date. Although these are covered in the Handler Guide, a description from you might help the handler better understand all the activities.

If a handler decides to request an accommodation, you may direct them to Pet Partners. There are no predefined accommodations for different disabilities; instead, all accommodations are based on the individual handler’s needs and are individually approved by Pet Partners.

When you’re discussing accommodations, it’s important to respect the handler’s right to privacy at all times. Only ask questions that pertain to the activities that the handler needs accommodations for; and avoid asking questions of a personal nature, such as “How did this happen?” and “When were you diagnosed?”
Animals With Physical Disabilities

Handlers with animals that have physical disabilities may request accommodations for the evaluation. Again, not all animals with a disability will require accommodations. The most common disabilities include vision loss, hearing loss and impaired mobility. If the disability requires special equipment, such as a stroller, that should also be pre-approved by Pet Partners before the evaluation date.

If a handler contacts you and requests accommodations for his or her animal, first suggest that the handler have the animal’s veterinarian complete the Animal Health Screening Form, if he or she hasn’t already done so. Then direct them to Pet Partners where we will discuss the animal’s needs, and document the proposed accommodations for the evaluation.

Strollers

Under limited circumstances, Pet Partners will approve animal strollers, primarily for cats, rabbits and guinea pigs, but also for dogs with disabilities. Strollers are considered special equipment and must be approved by Pet Partners prior to the team evaluation.

If a stroller has been pre-approved, Pet Partners will create a document on letterhead that details the terms of the accommodation. This document must be presented to you and submitted with the team’s registration materials. We do ask that evaluators physically inspect the equipment during the evaluation to confirm that it couldn’t inadvertently scratch, pinch or otherwise injure a client who interacts with the animal. If you discover a safety concern, email teppi@petpartners.org so that we can determine the most appropriate course of action.

Other Accommodation Circumstances

Occasionally, a handler will request an accommodation for a reason other than physical disability on his or her part or on the part of the animal, such as a temporary limitation due to injury or personal preference. To maintain the integrity of the Therapy Animal Program, we want to use accommodations sparingly; therefore, we’ll deny all accommodation requests that aren’t necessary for the health, safety and well-being of the animal, the handler and the clients that they’ll visit.
An example of one of these reasonable accommodation scenarios could be a handler who has sustained a temporary shoulder injury that impacts how she and her rabbit visit. Although the rabbit is typically carried in a basket during visits, the handler’s doctor has said that carrying a basket isn’t advisable while she recovers and does physical therapy. Therefore, the handler requests to use a stroller to transport the rabbit through the facility during the evaluation.

Visit the Resource Library for additional information on the accommodation process. If you’re unsure whether an accommodation request is reasonable, email teppi@petpartners.org, and we’ll be happy to discuss the situation with you.

How to Submit an Accommodation Request

All accommodation requests may be submitted online through the Contact Us form in the Volunteer Center. New and renewing handlers are welcome to submit their accommodation request directly. Upon approval, Pet Partners will send a detailed letter of documentation on Pet Partners letterhead. Accommodations do need to be renewed with each future evaluation.

Evaluating Assistance Dogs

Assistance dogs are a broad category of dogs, and in some cases miniature horses, that are individually trained to do work or perform tasks for people with disabilities. There are three types of assistance dogs: guide dogs, hearing dogs and service dogs.

Guidelines for handlers with a disability interested in being evaluated with their assistance animal can be found in Lesson 3.2 of the Handler Guide. For the team evaluator this may mean some departures from typical procedures.

Equipment

The handler may use the dog’s usual assistance dog equipment, but equipment that isn’t included in the list of acceptable equipment in the Handler Guide should be pre-approved by Pet Partners and have an accommodation letter as documentation.
Trained Responses
In some instances, an assistance dog’s response during an exercise might be considered appropriate for its role as an assistance dog but undesirable for animal-assisted interventions (AAI). For example, a hearing dog might be trained to jump up on its handler to alert him or her that a loud noise has occurred, such as the auditory distraction that’s made during Exercise 7 of the Pet Partners Skills Test (PPST), “Reaction to Distractions.” Or, a service dog might be trained to use its mouth to help the handler reposition his or her arm if it falls off the armrest of a wheelchair. Typically, if a dog displayed either of these behaviors during the evaluation, it would violate the evaluation requirements and earn the animal a Not Ready score. In this instance, however, the requirement can be waived.

You and the handler will need to discuss and identify such potential responses before the evaluation, and the responses will be documented as part of an accommodation. Note that any assistance dog behavior that might be inappropriate or harmful if it’s displayed during a visiting situation will still be scored as either Not Appropriate for Visiting or Not Ready, as appropriate.

For more information on navigating evaluation accommodations for handlers with a disability, review the Resource Library.
Scoring the Team Evaluation

What Makes a Team Appropriate?

Desirable Responses From the Handler

Handlers must possess certain skills and knowledge to safely visit as a therapy animal team. In addition to an interest in visiting people, they must have good communication with their animal and the skills to set all interactions up for success.

Handlers who demonstrate all four of these key skills lead teams who will inspire confidence in the people that they interact with.

Confident and Natural Interactions

As an evaluator, you are looking for a handler who:

- Is friendly toward you and your assistants, and shows this through appropriate conversation, eye contact and smiling
- Is able to direct and support their animal while simultaneously interacting socially with “clients” (you and your assistants), just as if the team is on a visit
- Is confident, natural and relaxed in the performance of each exercise and toward you and the animal
- Is accepting of differences in people’s reactions and behavior

Knowledge of Animal Body Language

One of the first components to interpreting the handler’s level of knowledge of their animal’s body language is the Handler’s Questionnaire. By reviewing the written responses to the first set of questions, such as how a handler knows when their animal needs a break, you’ll get a sense of how well they know their
animal’s body language. Handlers who say their animal “never gets stressed” are likely not recognizing cues their animal is giving or are only thinking about their animal’s typical behavior when in familiar settings.

As the evaluator, you are welcome to ask follow up questions to the Handler Questionnaire. The tone should be conversational and inquisitive, as you want to set a welcoming and supportive tone for the evaluation. Just because someone didn’t write down a specific stress signal does not necessarily mean they don’t know their animal well.

We seek to help handlers grow in their knowledge, so giving formative feedback, which is feedback during the evaluation rather than at the end, is important to your role as evaluator. This can be a real benefit to a learning handler because comments like these help handlers see what you’re seeing and better interpret what these body language cues may mean in the context of a therapy animal visit.

Examples of formative feedback about observed body language that would be appropriate during an evaluation include:

- “Look at that relaxed face and open, smiling mouth. I can see how content Fido is being petted.”
- “Thanks for letting me say hello. I’m going to go ahead and move on because Rover has his tail between his legs, his eyes are wide and he’s panting. Looks like maybe he’d like a break.”
- “Buddy sure looks interested that wheelchair over there. Look at that tail straight up in the air and the tension in his body.”

**Proactive Handling**

Safe and effective handlers proactively anticipate their animal’s response and set the animal and client up to succeed. In contrast, reactive handlers respond to their animal’s behavior, but only after the fact. Inactive handlers don’t respond at all.

Handlers who are reactive may score 1s during evaluation exercises and inactive handlers may score Not Ready based on their lack of handling. Pet Partners equally weighs the contributions of the handler and the animal in scoring, so handlers who are not proactive are also not part of a complex rated team.
A successful handler:

- Guides the interactions that other people have with the animal at all times, in a professional and polite manner.
- Is aware of their animal’s possible responses, behavior and position, and supports, reassures or cues the animal as needed to keep the interaction positive.

**PETS™ and YAYABA™**

A successful handler understands their role as a team member with their animal and consistently applies PETS™ and YAYABA™.

**PETS™**

Pet Partners uses the acronym PETS™ to refer to the strategies that handlers can use to communicate with and actively support their therapy animals through proactive behaviors.

As an evaluator, you’re looking for the following actions in handlers:

- **Presence**: Handlers should be constantly aware of their animal’s physical and emotional condition. Handlers should be physically close to their animal, near enough to intervene if needed, at all times. Handlers should also demonstrate mental presence by paying attention to their animal and aware of their emotional state so they can respond supportively when needed.

- **Eye contact**: Handlers should make frequent eye contact with their animal throughout an interaction with another person. This allows the handler to check in on how the animal is experiencing the visit.

- **Touch**: Whether as a form of praise, reassurance or encouragement, handlers should touch their animal. An affirming touch during an evaluation is slow, deliberate and confident.

- **Speech**: Handlers should talk to their animal in a tone that is positive, friendly and reassuring.
YAYABA™

YAYABA™ stands for “You Are Your Animal’s Best Advocate” and is considered another critical component of successful handling. Handlers who commit to being an advocate for their animal reduce the potential for incidents and have safer, more effective visits. They are also more effective partners to their animal, putting animal welfare first.

As an evaluator, you’re looking for actions that demonstrate the handler is aware of his or her animal’s needs and is setting it up for success. Examples of such actions include:

- Proactively guiding interactions with the animal, such as describing how to pet or hold the animal.
- Watching for signals from the animal and adjusting the interaction accordingly.
- Supporting the animal through the use of PETS™.
- Intervening if the animal becomes over-stimulated during an interaction.
- Ending the evaluation early if the animal is showing increasing signs of stress or fear.

For more information about PETS™ and YAYABA™, see Lesson 2.2 of the Pet Partners Handler Guide.

Desirable Responses From the Animal

Pet Partners therapy animals should have a basic level of training, so that they remain reliable and under control even in dynamic situations. Additionally, they should be consistently responsive to the cues of and support from their handler. Animals who are reliable, predictable and controllable project the image that they’re well-behaved and inspire confidence in the people they interact with. A detailed presentation of reliable, predictable and controllable is covered in Lesson 3.1 in the Handler Guide.

It’s also important that animals that participate in animal-assisted interventions (AAI) have the desire to participate in this work. Therapy animals should genuinely enjoy participating in visits, accepting interactions in a pleasant or welcoming manner. If an animal endures interactions with strangers, AAI may not be the best fit for that animal.

As an evaluator, you are looking for an animal who:

- Demonstrates species-appropriate non-threatening or neutral body posture
- Demonstrates species-appropriate body language that indicates interest and relaxation (for example, in the case of a dog, friendly tail wagging, a soft body and a relaxed face)
Common Situations Affecting Scoring

Bringing the Incorrect Brush

Handlers are asked to bring a variety of materials to their team evaluation, including a brush that could be used while visiting. If a team brings an inappropriate brush for Exercise 4, “Appearance and Grooming”, treat this as a learning opportunity. Discuss what makes an appropriate brush and why grooming may be an interaction the team would choose (for additional information on grooming as an interaction see the Handler Guide Lesson 6.1). Then proceed with the evaluation using a brush you provide. The team should not receive a Not Ready score for an incorrect brush.

Note: This is a change from past policy and is effective with the 2016 release of this version of the Team Evaluator Policies and Procedures Manual.

Vocalization

Animals are expected not to vocalize during the evaluation. If vocalization occurs, both the frequency and the reason (contentment, excitement, stress or aggression) determine how it should be handled.

- Vocalization that indicates contentment is allowed at appropriate points during the exercises (for example, grunting, snuffling, sighing and purring during petting).
- If the animal vocalizes once or twice out of stress or excitement, the handler acts to manage the vocalization through support of their animal, and the exercise is otherwise completed satisfactorily, the team may receive a score of 1 for the exercise.
- Excessive vocalization, such as continual barking, whining and howling, is an indicator of stress and will result in a Not Ready score.
- Any vocalization that’s aggressive in nature will result in a Not Appropriate for Visiting score, and the evaluation should be stopped.
When distinguishing between the different types of vocalization, remember to consider the animal’s overall body language and the context in which the behavior is occurring. Additionally, consider whether the behavior inspires confidence in the person that the animal is interacting with. For example, low-level growling that handlers often refer to as “rumbling” or “talking” doesn’t inspire confidence in the majority of people, but scares them. In this situation, ongoing vocalization would be scored Not Ready even if the body language was neutral or content. However, if the body language did indicate aggressive or defensive behavior Not Appropriate for Visiting would be the correct score.

**Dropping the Leash**

Per the Therapy Animal Program’s policies and procedures, the handler must hold the animal’s leash at all times. A handler who drops the leash intentionally at any time during the evaluation will be scored Not Ready.

**Jumping Up**

An animal that jumps up on a person or a piece of equipment one time, out of excitement, will be scored Not Ready for the exercise. Any animal that jumps up in a display of aggression should be scored Not Appropriate for Visiting.

**Licking and Mouthing**

Animals may lick you or your assistants once or twice without affecting the scoring for an exercise. However, if an animal frequently or excessively licks you, your assistants or the handler throughout the evaluation, it will be scored Not Ready.

An animal that gently or playfully mouths your hand or an assistant’s hand will be scored Not Ready. Otherwise, the mouthing should be considered an aggressive act on the part of the animal, and the animal should be scored Not Appropriate for Visiting. An animal that mouths equipment will be scored Not Ready for the exercise.

**Body Language Cues Indicating Stress**

If an animal displays clusters of body language cues indicating stress over more than a few exercises, and especially if the intensity of the cues increases, stop the evaluation and score the animal Not Ready. You should also do this if the
animal displays an excessive number of body language cues indicating stress during a single exercise. It’s important to explain to the handler that you’ve stopped the evaluation in the best interests of the animal. Also explain that the animal may be re-evaluated in the future but might need additional training first.

Because the evaluation is a testing situation, many handlers will arrive with some level of anxiety. As the evaluator, you have an opportunity to set handlers up for success by taking simple steps to put them at ease, such as offering to answer questions or explaining what they should expect. However, if a handler demonstrates substantial stress behaviors over several exercises, or if you perceive that the handler’s stress is escalating, you can stop the evaluation and score the handler Not Ready. Be sure to explain that the handler may be re-evaluated in the future if he or she would like to try again.

### Multiple Commands vs. Multiple Attempts

All handlers may give their animal up to three commands to demonstrate a skill. If the animal responds to the handler’s first cue, it may receive a score of 2 on that exercise. If the animal requires 2 or 3 cues, it may receive a score no higher than 1 on that exercise. If the animal requires more than three commands to demonstrate a skill, the exercise should be scored Not Ready.

If a handler uses harsh or forceful language when giving his or her animal a command, the handler should be scored Not Ready for the exercise. If the handler’s routinely gives commands in a normal speaking voice but sometimes becomes more commanding or pleading, he or she should be scored a 1 for the exercise.

Teams shouldn’t be allowed to retry exercises in order to improve their score or because of a lack of skill on the part of the animal. However, a team may be given up additional attempts to successfully demonstrate a skill during the PPST if the mistakes are due to handler error. For example, during Exercise 10 of the PPST, “Stay in Place,” the handler tangles the long line and inadvertently pulls on it, causing the dog to break the stay. In this case, you may give the handler an opportunity to correct the mistake. Similarly, if a handler misunderstood your instructions for an exercise, the exercise can be started over.
Scoring Guidelines

These guidelines help ensure consistency across the nation and among all teams. For Pet Partners’ evaluation procedure to be valid, it’s important that all teams be treated in the same way when it comes to scoring. The following guidelines apply to all exercises of the evaluation:

- The team will be scored according to the lowest ability that’s evident for each exercise, as demonstrated by either the handler or the animal.
- Select the more conservative (that is, lower) score if you’re unsure about the animal’s or handler’s response on a given exercise (for example, if you’re unsure whether the score should be a 1 or a 2, select 1).
- You should err on the side of caution and stop the evaluation if concerns arise.
- Don’t repeat an exercise to get “a better read.”
- Don’t push the animal beyond what’s specified for the exercises.
- The team doesn’t have to perform with precision to pass. For example, “Out for a Walk” does not require an obedience trial caliber heel.
- Score each exercise based on observed interactions and animal body language, not an overall feeling or impression which can be influenced by unintentional personal bias.
- Complete the score sheet accurately understanding that errors and omissions may impact and delay the registration of the team.

When to Score the Handler Not Appropriate for Visiting

Handlers who receive a score of Not Appropriate for Visiting at any time during the evaluation may not register with Pet Partners in the future. Behavior that would result in this score would include:

- Inhumane treatment toward any animal while he or she is on the testing grounds.
- Grossly inappropriate treatment of people while he or she is on the testing grounds, such as physical violence, verbal abuse or extreme irrational behavior.
- Being under the influence of drugs or alcohol.

While Pet Partners prefers to give teams feedback that will allow them to continue refining their skills as a prospective therapy animal team, the option of Not Appropriate for Visiting is an option that communicates, in your judgment, there’s a low possibility that the handler’s behavior and skills can be corrected and/or improved.
Keep in mind that a handler may react emotionally to disappointing news, such as their animal will be receiving a Not Ready score. Voices raised in emotion, while not a demonstration of professional behavior, are not necessarily grounds for a Not Appropriate score.

**When to Score the Handler Not Ready**
A score of Not Ready should mean that the handler’s skills, or lack thereof, interfere with the performance of the exercise. Examples include:

- **Inactive handling**
  - Does not notice or respond to undesirable interactions
  - Stands back and observes; does not actively participate
- **Does not support their animal through PETS™**
  - Makes no effort to help the animal recover when it displays body language cues indicating stress, fear or anxiety
  - Does not praise, reassure or encourage the animal in any way
  - Gives harsh or forceful verbal or physical commands, such as yelling or tugging the leash
- **Does not act as their animal’s best advocate (YAYABA™)**
  - Fails to guide interactions with the animal, even when asked
  - Fails to adjust interactions when animal is demonstrating overt body language cues indicating discomfort
- **Inappropriate interactions**
  - Fails to interact with the client during the exercise
  - Focuses on interactions with the client, but ignores the animal
  - Does not engage in role play

By assigning this score for an individual exercise, you indicate that, in your judgment, there’s a high possibility that the handler’s behavior and skills can be corrected and/or improved.

**When to Score the Handler a 1**
A score of 1 should mean that the handler generally supports the animal’s performance of the exercise, but there is room for improvement. Examples include:

- **Reactive handling**
  - Makes changes to an interaction only after it is no longer desirable
  - Can halt unwanted behavior in the animal, but only after it has happened already
- **Makes an effort to support their animal through PETS™**
  - Praises, encourages or reassures their animal but not consistently
• Recognizes some of their animal’s body language cues indicating stress, fear and anxiety, and is able to help the animal recover
• Gives the animal cues in a commandling or pleading voice when the animal is slow to comply
  ➔ Makes an effort to be their animal’s advocate (YAYABA™)
  • Guides client interactions when prompted through questioning such as ‘Does he like his ears scratched?’
  • Will step in to guide interactions, but with some hesitancy or alternately is forceful or unpleasant when guiding interactions

► Appropriate interactions
  • Interacts with the client through role play, but with some stress or awkwardness.
  • Is able to shift attention between the animal and the client
  • Gives unnecessary or repetitive cues to the animal

By assigning this score for an individual exercise, you indicate that the handler has demonstrated adequate skills in this type of interaction.

**When to Score the Handler a 2**

A score of 2 should mean that the handler consistently supports the animal’s performance of the exercise maximizing safety throughout the exercise. Examples include:

► Proactive handling
  • Anticipates possible reactions by their animal during the exercise and sets them up for success consistently

► Consistently uses PETS™ to support their animal
  • Regularly praises, encourages or reassures their animal throughout the exercise
  • Has a deep knowledge of the animal’s body language cues indicating stress, fear and anxiety, and is able to help the animal recover

► Consistently acts as their animal’s best advocate (YAYABA™)
  • Adeptly guides interactions between the animal and clients through words and positioning without any prompting

► Exemplary interactions
  • Embraces role play acting as though they are on a real visit
  • Appears relaxed and confident during the exercise
  • Team works together smoothly and communicates with each other so only the necessary cues are given to the animal

By assigning this score for an individual exercise, you indicate that the handler has demonstrated a high level of skill in this type of interaction.
When to Score the Animal Not Appropriate for Visiting

Animals receiving a score of Not Appropriate for Visiting at any time during the evaluation may not register with Pet Partners in the future. Behavior that would result in this score would include:

- Aggressive vocalization, such as barks or growls
- Reactive or aggressive behavior towards any person or animal such as snapping, biting, lunging, charging, attacking or attempting to attack at any time while on the testing grounds

By assigning this score, you indicate that, in your judgment, there’s a low possibility that the animal’s behavior and skills can be corrected and/or improved and a high safety risk to visiting as a therapy animal in public.

When to Score the Animal Not Ready

A score of Not Ready should mean that the animal does not demonstrate the ability to be a therapy animal in this particular exercise. Examples include:

- Does not comply with cues given by the handler
- Is more interested in the environment than the handler or the client after a reasonable period of time
- Displays clusters of body language cues indicating stress, fear or anxiety and is unable to recover
- Avoids or resists interactions and has to be cajoled into position by the handler

By assigning this score, you indicate that, in your judgment, there’s a high possibility that the animal’s behavior and skills can be corrected and/or improved for this type of interaction.

When to Score the Animal a 1

A score of 1 should mean that the animal’s behavior meets minimum performance levels for the exercise, but there is room for improvement. Examples include:

- Needs additional direction or guidance from the handler, to which the animal responds
- Temporarily loses connection with the handler amid distraction
- Demonstrates limited body language cues indicating stress, fear or anxiety, as appropriate for their species, but recovers quickly with the support of the handler.
- Willingly accepts interactions with clients

By assigning this score for an individual exercise, you indicate that the animal has demonstrated adequate skills in this type of interaction.
When to Score the Animal a 2
A score of 2 should mean that the animal’s behavior is optimum for the exercise. Examples include:

► Responds after a single word or cue from the handler
► Maintains connection with the handler as appropriate for their species, for example looking for guidance, even amid distraction
► Body language communicates a relaxed, content and confident state
► Enjoys and seeks out interactions with clients as appropriate for their species

By assigning this score for an individual exercise, you indicate that the animal has demonstrated a high level of skill and/or aptitude in this type of interaction.

When to Stop the Evaluation

The Handler
► Does not have the mandatory items required for an evaluation, see “Items to Be Provided by the Handler” section in this document
► Is scored Not Appropriate for Visiting
► Is scored Not Ready on any PPST or PPAT exercise
  Note: This is a change to past procedure
► Fails to hold the leash while the team is on the testing grounds before or after the evaluation
► Is not dressed appropriately
► Shows excessive stress behaviors during a single exercise or over multiple exercises

The Animal
► Is scored Not Appropriate for Visiting
► Is scored Not Ready on any PPST or PPAT exercise
  Note: This is a change to past procedure
► Eliminates during testing (Animals may eliminate only in the designated relief area.)
Overall Scoring for the Evaluation

The overall score also known as the team qualification rating is the culminating score based on all evaluation exercises.

Predictable Environments

A Predictable overall score qualifies the team for placement in predictable environments. To earn a Predictable score, the team must receive:

- A score of at least 1 on all exercises of the Pet Partners Skills Test (PPST).
- A score of at least 1 on the exercises of the Pet Partners Aptitude Test (PPAT)

Complex Environments

A Complex overall score qualifies the team for placement in both predictable and complex environments. To earn a Complex score, the team must receive:

- A score of at least 1 on all exercises of the PPST and PPAT.
- A score of 2 on all the following exercises (diamond exercises):
  - **PPST**
    - Exercise 5, “Out for a Walk”
    - Exercise 6, “Walk Through a Crowd”
    - Exercise 10, “Stay in Place”
    - Exercise 12, “Reaction to Neutral Dog”
  - **PPAT**
    - Exercise A, “Overall Handling”
    - Exercise B, “Exuberant and Clumsy Petting”
    - Exercise C, “Restraining Hug”
    - Exercise G, “Crowded and Petted by Several People”
    - Exercise H, “Leave It”
In general, the overall score that you give may not deviate from what’s indicated on the score sheet. However, the following circumstances would result in a Predictable overall score, even if the scoring for the individual exercises indicates a Complex overall score:

► A new team had previously trained in the facility where it was evaluated.
► You are the only evaluator in the area and already familiar to the team, so that the evaluation had to be conducted by an experienced assistant.

Communicating the Score

It’s your responsibility to share the team’s overall score with the handler. A single score is provided: Predictable, Complex, Not Ready or Not Appropriate for Visiting. For teams that score a Predictable or even a Not Ready, besides sharing areas where there’s room for improvement, highlight the team’s successes by discussing which exercises went smoothly or were performed above standard.

Handlers Who Dispute Evaluation Scores

Occasionally, a handler will disagree with the overall score that his or her team received for its evaluation. This often occurs with currently registered teams that are being re-evaluated for their renewal, particularly if they went from a Complex team qualification rating to a Predictable rating.

Pet Partners acknowledges that an evaluation is a snapshot of a given team’s skills and aptitude at a particular moment in time. Historical performance and previous qualification ratings don’t influence the outcome of any evaluation. Pet Partners doesn’t change ratings based on previous evaluation scores: we stand by the observations and decisions of our evaluators.

If a handler is unhappy with the score that his or her team received, the team may try to earn a different qualification rating by retaking the evaluation. However, the re-evaluation must occur on a different day, and the qualification rating of the most recent evaluation remains in effect until a new rating is earned.
Qualification Recommendations

Team Qualification Matrix

The Team Qualification Matrix helps determine the types of environments that are most appropriate for each team that’s evaluated. When discussing the evaluation outcome with handlers, you have an opportunity to help them identify appropriate settings for their team to visit. You can also direct handlers to the Pet Partners Handler Guide for a more detailed explanation of the matrix and suggested facilities.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Quiet Facility</th>
<th>Moderate Facility</th>
<th>Active Facility</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>High Staff Involvement</strong></td>
<td>Predictable &amp; Complex</td>
<td>Predictable &amp; Complex</td>
<td>Complex</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Low Staff Involvement</strong></td>
<td>Predictable &amp; Complex</td>
<td>Complex</td>
<td>Complex</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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Identifying Special Qualifications

When you’re giving recommendations after the evaluation, handlers will need information about the kinds of interactions and facilities that they should seek out, as well as those that they should avoid. Some animals that pass the evaluation will both excel at and enjoy all elements of visiting. Other animals might pass, but the evaluator has observed areas of potential concern. In these cases, the evaluator can recommend special qualifications for the team’s participation.

Any special qualifications must be marked on the team’s evaluation form, which will be signed by the handler. If you give a team a special qualification, be sure to discuss what an appropriate visit would be like, using the following guidelines.

**One-on-One Work Only**

This qualification is appropriate for teams that passed with a Predictable rating but would benefit from additional experience in visiting situations before they expand their interactions. You might give this qualification if the animal that you’re evaluating shows insecurity or over-excitement during the interactions with a crowd of people, and the animal’s reaction isn’t well managed by the handler. This qualification may only be given to Predictable teams.
Routinely Predictable Interactions Only
This qualification is appropriate for teams that passed with a Predictable rating but are only reliable in the most routine situations. You might give this qualification if, for example, a team passed with the lowest possible score, such as all 1s. This qualification may only be given to Predictable teams.

Only Clients Who Are Not Medically Fragile
This qualification is appropriate for teams that passed with a Predictable rating, but the animal occasionally showed exuberance when it was happy or excited, which could result in accidents that have serious impact on medically fragile clients in a predictable environment. You might give this qualification if, for example, there’s an instance the animal offering a paw without being invited, or if a large animal bumps up against those who are petting it or can otherwise be physically clumsy during interactions. This qualification may only be given to Predictable teams.

Low Activity/Few Distractions Only
This qualification is appropriate for teams that passed with a Predictable rating but struggled with the visual and/or auditory distraction portions of the evaluation or were otherwise observed to be highly distractible. You might give this qualification if, for example, the animal is physically frail or elderly and would be more successful and comfortable with limited activity during visits. Because a handler’s emotions can be “telegraphed” down the leash to the animal, you might also give this qualification if the handler demonstrates shyness or stress in his or her interactions with strangers; in this case, the qualification can help better prepare the team for success as it gains experience and confidence. This qualification may only be given to Predictable teams.

Animal Will Wear Only Equipment Listed While Visiting
This qualification is used if the animal wore anything other than a flat collar during the evaluation. Per the Therapy Animal Program’s policy, animals must wear the same type of equipment during visits as they wore during the evaluation. Note the specific equipment on the score sheet, such as back-clip harness, Gentle Leader or Martingale. This qualification also covers pre-approved equipment, such as strollers. This is one of the two qualifications that both Predictable and Complex teams can receive.
Carried While Visiting
This qualification is used if the animal was carried during any of the evaluation exercises. Per Pet Partners policy, an animal that was carried during evaluation exercises must be carried under similar circumstances during visits. In addition to marking this qualification on the evaluation form, you need to mark a “C” on the score sheet to indicate every exercise where the animal was carried. This is one of the two qualifications that both a Predictable and Complex team can receive.

Common Errors to Avoid

Accurate completion of the PPST/PPAT score sheet is critical for the registration process. Incomplete or inaccurate score sheets will result in delays in the processing of a team’s paperwork. Before you give the score sheet to the handler, make sure that you’ve completed all the following commonly missed steps:

► Have you indicated an overall team score for each exercise?
► For carried cats and very small dogs, have you indicated each individual exercise where the animal was carried?
► Do the individual exercise scores support the overall team qualification? If not, it can only be because of familiarity with the facility or familiarity with the evaluator.
► Did you sign and date the evaluation form?
► If a special accommodation was requested, did the handler present you with the documentation from Pet Partners?
► If the team used something other than a flat collar, did you note it as special equipment?

Once the team leaves with their score sheet, you have two more key tasks.

► Report any Not Appropriate scores as soon as possible.
► Don’t forget to enter evaluation scores on the Pet Partners website within two business days of the event.
► Ensure that there are no handlers with open or waitlisted status on your roster, or that individual will be unable to sign up for another evaluation event.
Pet Partners Skills Test

Exercise 1: Review the Handler’s Questionnaire Form

Purpose
This exercise gives you a chance to ask questions about the team that can alert you to circumstances that might affect the evaluation. The team also has an opportunity to familiarize itself with the testing area.

Teams don’t receive a score for this exercise, but a team could be identified as Not Ready or Not Appropriate for Visiting as a result of answers on the questionnaire or observed behavior.

Resources
▶ A completed Handler’s Questionnaire Form provided by the team (This form is available at www.petpartners.org/handlersquestionnaire as well as within the online registration and in the Resource Library of the Volunteer Center.)

Procedure
1. Review the Handler’s Questionnaire Form while the team walks around the testing area to become familiar with it.
2. Verify that the team meets the requirements for being evaluated.
3. Ask questions to clarify information on the questionnaire as needed. Note any areas to watch for during the rest of the evaluation.
4. On the score sheet, indicate issues of familiarity that would limit the overall qualification to predictable as well as if the handler has provided an accommodation pre-approved by Pet Partners.
Exercise 2: Accepting a Friendly Stranger

**Purpose**
This exercise demonstrates that the team can greet strangers appropriately.

**Procedure**
1. You and the team face each other, with the animal sitting, standing or lying by the handler’s side (either side is permissible).
2. Walk up to the team, and greet the handler and animal in a friendly manner. Say hi to the handler and then the animal, making eye contact with both.
3. Shake hands with the handler, and exchange pleasantries. The conversation on your side need be nothing more than, “It’s nice to meet you. What’s your animal’s name?”

**In addition to the standard Scoring Guidelines**
- The animal may change position (for example, from sit to stand) but should remain next to the handler and not make contact with or retreat from you.

**For Carried Cats and Very Small Dogs**
- Use the same procedure with the animal either carried in the handler’s arms or a basket.
- The same scoring details apply.

Exercise 3: Accepting Petting

**Purpose**
This exercise demonstrates that the team has suitable social skills and control for visits.

**Procedure**
1. You and the team face each other, with the animal sitting, standing or lying by the handler’s side (either side is permissible).
2. Approach the animal, and pet it on the head and body only.
3. Stop petting the animal, and then circle the team to complete the exercise.
   - To make the circling of the team more natural, consider using it as an opportunity to pick up the brush for the next exercise.
In addition to the standard Scoring Guidelines

► The animal may change position (for example, from sit to stand) but should remain next to the handler and not make contact with or retreat from you.

For Carried Cats and Very Small Dogs

► Use the same procedure with the animal either carried in the handler’s arms or a basket.
► The same scoring details apply.

Exercise 4: Appearance and Grooming

Purpose
This exercise demonstrates 1) that the team’s appearance is suitable for visits and 2) that the animal welcomes being groomed and handled, and permits a stranger to do so.

Resources

► A grooming table or other small table with a non-skid surface
► If the flooring is slippery, a mat or rug for the animal to stand on
► A brush that’s appropriate for visiting, ideally supplied by the handler, but you should have a backup available
► For carried cats and very small dogs, a clean towel or blanket supplied by the handler

Procedure

1. You and the team face each other, with the animal standing on the floor or a grooming table. (The handler should place the animal on the table, if used.)
2. Assess the handler’s appearance.
3. Determine whether the animal is clean and groomed by feeling its coat.
4. Brush the animal once lightly and in a natural manner.
5. Look at the animal’s eyes and ears for cleanliness.
6. Gently pick up each front foot individually and feel toenails for length/smoothness.
In addition to the standard Scoring Guidelines

- The handler should be dressed in clean clothing that’s appropriate for a visit, including closed toe shoes.
- The animal should appear healthy with no broken skin or other potential medical concerns.
- The animal may change position (for example, from sit to stand), including rolling over to expose its stomach, but shouldn’t retreat from you.

For Carried Cats and Very Small Dogs

- Use the same procedure with the animal on a towel that’s laid down either on a table or on your lap or an assistant’s lap (handler’s choice).
- **Note:** This exercise may not take place with the animal in the handler’s arms or on his or her lap.
- The same scoring details apply.

Exercise 5: Out for a Walk

**Purpose**
This exercise demonstrates that 1) the handler is in control of the animal and 2) the animal is comfortable moving with the handler.

**Resources**
- Traffic cones, tape or similar markers to indicate the path (optional)

**Notes**
- All dogs must walk on the ground for this exercise, even if they are carried during other exercises.
- Many evaluators find that a pre-plotted path on the floor using tape or cones reduces confusion and makes it easier for the team to complete the exercise.
- The following illustration shows a possible path for teams where the animal walks on the left side of the handler. Reverse the direction for teams where the animal walks on the handler’s right. The exercise is meant to simulate situations where the team is walking along a wall, with the animal next to the wall and the handler on the outside.
**Procedure**

1. Direct the team to the start of the path. Use everyday language, not obedience commands.
2. Ask the team to walk forward for 20 feet and then turn left or right, as appropriate, and then continue walking for 15 feet before turning around.
3. As the team returns to the starting point by following the same path, direct them to stop when the team is about halfway back to the starting point.
4. After the stop, invite the team to finish walking back to the starting point.

**In addition to the standard Scoring Guidelines**

- The handler should not hold the lead unnecessarily tight.
- The animal:
  - Should walk on a loose lead.
  - May have an occasional tight lead if the handler needs to direct it, or if it’s slightly out of position, and still pass the exercise.
  - May be on either side of the handler, according to the handler’s preference.
  - Doesn’t need to be in the “heel” position, perfectly aligned with the handler, but must be close and next to the handler.
  - Doesn’t need to sit automatically when the handler stops.
• May move from one side of the handler to the other, provided that this is done smoothly and doesn’t interfere with the handler.

**For Carried Cats and Very Small Dogs**
- All dogs must walk on the ground for this exercise, regardless of size.
- Cats may walk on the ground for this exercise if desired by the handler. For carried cats, use the same procedure with the animal either carried in the handler’s arms or a basket.
- The same scoring details apply.

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**Exercise 6: Walk Through a Crowd**

**Purpose**
This exercise simulates a crowded corridor and demonstrates that the team can move about politely in pedestrian traffic and remain under control in public places.

**Resources**
- Three assistants to act as a crowd
- Traffic cones, tape or similar markers to indicate the path (optional)

**Notes**
- Dogs and other animals will not be included in the crowd.
- To reduce confusion and ensure consistency, some evaluators mark the starting and ending points of the path that the team will walk, as well as the starting and ending points of the path that each member of the crowd will walk.

**Procedure**
1. The assistants get into place before the exercise starts. Two assistants are on one side of the path that the team will walk, and the other assistant is on the opposite side.
2. Direct the team to walk forward for 20 feet in a straight line, through the crowd, and then stop.
3. The assistants walk three different paths that intersect the team’s path. At least one assistant passes in front of the team, and at least one assistant passes behind the team.
In addition to the standard Scoring Guidelines

► The handler should not hold the lead unnecessarily tight.

► The animal:
  ◆ Should walk on a loose lead.
  ◆ May have an occasional tight lead if the handler needs to direct it, or if it’s slightly out of position, and still pass the exercise.
  ◆ May show interest in the crowd but doesn’t approach or retreat from members of the crowd.
  ◆ May be on either side of the handler, according to the handler’s preference.
  ◆ Doesn’t need to be in the “heel” position, perfectly aligned with the handler, but must be close and next to the handler.
  ◆ Doesn’t need to sit automatically when the handler stops.
  ◆ May move from one side of the handler to the other, provided that this is done smoothly and doesn’t interfere with the handler.

For Carried Cats and Very Small Dogs

► Use the same procedure with the animal either carried in the handler’s arms or a basket.

► The same scoring details apply.
Exercise 7: Reaction to Distractions

Purpose
This exercise demonstrates that the animal remains confident when faced with common distracting situations.

Resources
- Equipment and assistants to produce the visual and auditory distractions

Notes
- Because some animals are sensitive to sound distractions and others to sight distractions, choose one auditory and one visual distraction from the list on the right.
- The same distraction may not be used as both a visual and auditory distraction.

Procedure
1. With assistants on each side of the path that the team will walk, invite the team to walk 20 feet back across the room.
2. As the team walks, you and/or your assistants produce the selected auditory and visual distractions separately, at a distance of no less than 10 feet from the team. Produce the visual distraction in front of the team (so that both members of the team can see it) and the auditory distraction behind the team.

In addition to the standard Scoring Guidelines
- The handler should not hold the lead unnecessarily tight.
- The animal:
  - May express natural interest and curiosity, and may appear slightly startled, but it recovers quickly.
  - May move from one side of the handler to the other, provided that this is done smoothly and doesn’t interfere with the handler.

For Carried Cats and Very Small Dogs
- Use the same procedure with the animal either carried in the handler’s arms or a basket.
- The same scoring details apply.

Possible Distractions

Visual
- Someone uses crutches, a wheelchair or a walker.
- Someone runs in front of the animal.
- Someone pushes a wheelchair or other medical equipment, approaching the team from the front or rear.
- Someone pushes an IV pole, going in front of, behind or next to the team.
- Someone wears a hat and robe.

Auditory
- Someone suddenly closes or opens a door.
- Someone drops a large book behind the team.
- Someone suddenly shouts (but not at the team).
- Someone knocks over a walker, crutch or chair.
- Someone drops a metal dog food/water dish or a small metal mixing bowl.
- Someone snaps open a large plastic garbage bag.
Exercise 8: Sit on Command

Purpose
This exercise demonstrates that the dog has training and will sit at the handler’s command.

Procedure
1. Ask the handler to cue the dog to sit. Once the dog is sitting, wait 3 seconds, and then allow the handler to release their dog.

In addition to the standard Scoring Guidelines
► The handler:
  ● Should use a conversational tone, if using a verbal cue.
  ● May take a reasonable amount of time and use more than one cue to position the dog.
  ● May not physically place or force the dog into position, but may softly touch it to offer gentle guidance (for example, by putting a finger on its hips, but without pushing down).

► The animal:
  ● Maintains the sitting position until you instruct the handler to release it.
  ● May be released from the front or the side.

For Carried Cats and Very Small Dogs
See the instructions that follow Exercise 9.
Exercise 9: Down on Command

Purpose
This exercise demonstrates that the dog has training and will lie down at the handler's command.

Procedure
1. Ask the handler to cue the dog to lie down. Once the dog is down, wait 3 seconds, and then allow the handler to release their dog.

In addition to the standard Scoring Guidelines
► The handler:
  ● Should use a conversational tone, if using a verbal cue.
  ● May take a reasonable amount of time and use more than one cue to position the dog.
  ● May not physically place or force the dog into position, but may softly touch it to offer gentle guidance (for example, by putting a finger on its hips, but without pushing down).

► The animal:
  ● May be placed into sit first and then cued to down. If the animal responds to both cues promptly, score as a 2.
  ● Maintains the down position until you instruct the handler to release it.
  ● May be released from the front or the side.

For Carried Cats and Very Small Dogs
See the instructions that follow.
Exercise 8/9: Pass Between Three Strangers

This exercise is for carried cats and very small dogs who did not complete exercises 8 and 9. It is the handler’s choice which exercises are completed.

**Purpose**
This exercise demonstrates that cats and very small dogs will accept being passed from one person to another, and that they’ll remain where they’re placed.

**Resources**
- Three chairs, one of which may be a wheelchair with the brakes set
- Three assistants
- A towel or small blanket supplied by the handler

**Notes**
- If the cat or very small dog will be visiting in a basket, the entire basket will be placed on the laps.

**Procedure**
1. Invite the team to approach the three assistants who are seated within an arm’s length of each other, facing the team.
2. The handler gives the towel or blanket to the first assistant, who puts it on his or her lap.
3. The handler passes the animal, as it will be handled during visits, to the first assistant. After holding and petting the animal for about 5 seconds, the first assistant passes the animal back to the handler.
4. This process is repeated for the other two assistants. One assistant may pass the towel or blanket to the next assistant. The handler may demonstrate PETS™ by petting and verbally reassuring the animal.

**In addition to the standard Scoring Guidelines**
- The handler:
  - May take a reasonable amount of time and use more than one command to position the animal.
  - May touch their animal as a way of supporting it, as needed.
Exercise 10: Stay in Place

Purpose
This exercise demonstrates that the animal will stay at the handler’s request.

Resources
 ► A 10-foot light line with a light clip to attach to the animal’s collar or harness. For very small dogs, a light version of the lead with a lightweight clip should be used.
 ► Traffic cones, tape or similar markers to indicate distances (optional)

Procedure
1. Ask the handler to replace the dog’s leash with the 10-foot line, and direct the handler to hold on to the line throughout the exercise.
   ● You may offer to assist the handler in clipping the long line to their animal. This is permitted because handlers will not be transitioning leashes during visits and the exercise is not meant to assess a handler’s manual dexterity.
2. Ask the handler to place the dog in a sit, down or stand, according to his or her preference, and then cue the dog to stay.
3. Direct the handler to leave the dog while still holding the 10-foot line. The handler walks to the end of the line, turns to face the dog, pauses for 3 seconds and then returns to the dog.
4. The 10-foot line should remain on the dog for the next exercise.

In addition to the standard Scoring Guidelines
 ► The handler:
   ● Should use a conversational tone, if using a verbal cue.
   ● May take a reasonable amount of time and use more than one command to position the dog.
   ● May not physically place or force the dog into position, but may softly touch it to offer gentle guidance (for example, by putting a finger on its hips, but without pushing down).
 ► The animal:
   ● May get up or change position but may not cross the boundaries of an imaginary box that extends a few feet around the space taken up by the animal.
For Carried Cats and Very Small Dogs

Procedure
1. Direct the handler to place the animal either on a towel or blanket on the table, or on a towel on your lap or an assistant’s lap (handler’s choice).
2. The handler places the animal on the table, or on your lap or the assistant’s lap, and cues it to stay.
3. While the animal stays in place, the handler continues to stand next to the animal, holding the animal’s lead, and may verbally reassure the animal, but not touch it.
   • If the animal is in the lap of you or your assistant, the animal is not being petted during the exercise, but you should position your hands and arms in a natural manner as might occur on a visit (i.e. not raised above your head).
4. Cue the handler to retrieve the animal after 30 seconds.

In addition to the standard Scoring Guidelines
► The handler may take a reasonable amount of time and use more than one command to position the animal.
► The animal may change positions but may not leave the table, or your lap or the assistant’s lap.

Exercise 11: Come When Called

Purpose
This exercise demonstrates that the dog will leave pleasant distractions to go to the handler and allow him or her to attach a leash.

Resources
► The 10-foot line from Exercise 10
► Traffic cones, tape or similar markers to mark the floor (optional)

Notes
► All dogs must complete this exercise, including very small dogs that have been carried during other exercises.
► Some evaluators mark a spot on the floor to show where the handler should stand while calling the dog. This spot should be 10 feet away from the dog.
Procedure

1. The dog is still attached to the 10-foot line, which is held by the handler. Direct the handler to hold the end of the 10-foot line throughout the exercise.
2. Pleasantly distract the dog by petting it and talking to it, but without holding it in place. The dog is encouraged to relax and investigate you.
3. On your cue, the handler, still holding the 10-foot line, walks 10 feet away and stops, facing the dog.
4. While the dog is distracted, direct the handler to call it. When the dog reaches the handler, the handler may reattach his or her own leash to complete the exercise. You may offer to assist with the leashes.

In addition to the standard Scoring Guidelines

▶ The handler:
  ● Should use a conversational tone, if using a verbal cue.
  ● May use more than one command, offer praise or change posture. A food or toy lure isn’t permitted.
  ● May not approach the dog.

▶ The animal:
  ● May do some sniffing while returning to it’s handler.
  ● Isn’t required to move at a rapid pace.
  ● Isn’t required to interact with you while you’re distracting it and shouldn’t be scored lower if it fails to do so. If interaction does occur, it should be friendly and otherwise appropriate.

For Carried Cats and Very Small Dogs

▶ Skip this exercise for cats.
▶ All dogs, regardless of size, must complete the exercise as described above.
Exercise 12: Reaction to a Neutral Dog

**Purpose**
This exercise demonstrates that the animal can behave politely around another dog as well as that the handler is aware of the animal’s potential response to a dog and can help it succeed.

**Resources**
- A neutral dog team
- Two evaluation assistants
- A chair or wheelchair with brakes on

**Notes**
- Please review “Neutral Dog Teams” in Section 1: Roles at the Evaluation for additional detail
- Determine which side the testing animal normally walks on and coordinate to have the neutral dog walk on the same side so the animals are on the outside and the people are on the inside.

**Procedure**
1. Invite the team to a place in the room about 20 feet away from the door where the neutral dog will enter and about 15 feet away from the seated assistant. The handler may position their animal as they prefer, either sitting, down, or standing.
2. An evaluation assistant will be standing with the team being evaluated. They should chat with the handler, but not pet the animal.
3. The neutral dog enters the room and proceeds to the seated assistant while the team being evaluated stands across the room with the other evaluation assistant. The dog being evaluated may change position and the handler may cue their animal and apply PETS™ as needed.
4. After the neutral dog team greets the assistant for no more than 10 seconds (“Hello, it’s so nice to see you again!”), they turn and walk towards the evaluating team. At this time, you can cue the evaluating team to start walking towards the assistant.
5. As the two teams pass with approximately 4 feet between them, they verbally greet each other but do not stop or shake hands.
6. The evaluating team greets the seated assistant and visits until the neutral dog team exits the room.
For Carried Cats and Very Small Dogs

Procedure

- Use the same procedure with the animal either carried in the handler’s arms or a basket.
- While some cats may be able to perform this exercise walking on the ground, cats must be carried for safety and welfare reasons.

Scoring the Neutral Dog Exercise

This evaluation exercise, more than any other, requires a clear explanation by you, the evaluator, to the evaluating team of what to expect and what to do. Emphasize that the exercise simulates a situation where two teams pass in the same facility and the importance of each team to inspire confidence. What’s important is that the animals remain under control and everyone displays good manners.

As the evaluator, it’s important that you understand the intention of the exercise, position yourself where you can clearly see each interaction and involve experienced volunteers to gain additional perspectives from other sightlines.

If, in the time between the neutral dog entering the room and the teams setting up to pass each other, you see escalating body language that indicates excessive fear or aggression, you should stop the exercise for everyone’s safety and welfare.

The following situations would result in a score of 2:

- Handler proactively positions or manages their animal through PETS™ as the neutral dog enters so there is no distraction or reaction.
- As the teams pass, the animal stays at the handler’s side with a loose leash and does not approach crossing the midline with any part of their body.

Note: The midline is an imaginary line drawn down the center of the handler’s body as he or she is facing forward (between the eyes, down the sternum and centered between the feet).
The following situations would result in a score of 1:

- Handler reactively supports their animal through the use of PETS™.
- Handler reactively corrects their animal’s behavior in response to the presence of the neutral dog.
- The animal has a tightened leash.
- The animal’s head partially crosses the midline of the handler’s body as they turn to look at the animal as they pass.

The following situations would all result in a Not Ready score:

- Handler is inactive and doesn’t make any effort to support their animal using PETS™ or redirect undesirable behavior by their dog.
- Handler uses excessive cues to which the animal does not respond.
- With the animal’s entire body in motion, the animal crosses the midline in front of and/or behind the handler in an attempt to greet or interact with the other team as they pass.
- If the animal is carried, it escapes or tries to escape from the handler’s arms or carrier.
- The handler must use physical dominance to prevent their animal from approaching the neutral dog, such as restraining the animal by the collar/harness or leash or physically blocking the animal with their legs/body.
Pet Partners Aptitude Test

Exercise A: Overall Handling

**Purpose**
This exercise demonstrates that 1) the animal will accept and is comfortable being physically handled by a stranger and 2) the handler knows how to present the animal on a visit, and how to help the animal accept and welcome being touched all over.

**Resources**
- If the flooring is slippery, a mat or rug for the animal to stand on
- A grooming table or other small table with a non-skid surface
- For carried cats and very small dogs, a clean towel or blanket supplied by the handler

**Procedure**
1. Face the team. The animal may be standing on the floor or on a table (placed by the handler).
2. For your own safety, make an initial visual assessment to determine whether the animal is ready to proceed after completing the neutral dog exercise. If they are, recall the animal’s reactions Exercise 4: Appearance and Grooming, and start with the body parts that are least stressful for the animal.
3. Approach the animal from the front, and stand next to it during handling. Begin touching the animal’s body, noting the animal’s response to being touched on each body part. Touch the animal’s ears, hold its tail, look at its teeth, and handle all its feet.
   Note: This exercise is meant to simulate how a client might touch an animal; it is not a veterinary examination.
4. If the animal is on the ground, you may kneel or sit next to it at this point, if this is comfortable for you; otherwise, continue standing next to the animal. Go over the animal’s entire body with your hands, handling sensitive areas (such as the flanks, abdomen, groin and mouth) and especially any outstanding physical features (for example, the lips, tail and ridge).
5. If the animal is on the ground and you’re still standing next to it, you may kneel or sit next to it at this point, if this is comfortable for you; otherwise, continue standing next to the animal. Stroke, poke (gently), palpate, hold, move, squeeze, and tilt the animal as needed. Make and maintain direct eye contact with the animal during this step.

6. Question the handler about any notable observations that you make.

**In addition to the standard Scoring Guidelines**

- The handler assists in positioning the animal as needed, so the interaction can be completed.
  - You wouldn’t expect a client to have to follow an animal around on the floor while petting, so the handler should present the animal so the interaction is possible.
- The handler may proactively facilitate opening the animal’s mouth or picking up feet for you if that is how they would handle the animal on a visit.
- The animal may change position (for example, from sit to stand), including rolling over to expose its stomach, but shouldn’t retreat from you.

**For Carried Cats and Very Small Dogs**

- Use the same procedure with the animal on a towel that’s laid down either on a table or on your lap or an assistant’s lap (handler’s choice).
  - **Note:** This exercise may not take place with the animal in the handler’s arms or on his or her lap.
- The same scoring details apply.

**Exercise B: Exuberant and Clumsy Petting**

**Purpose**

This exercise demonstrates that 1) the animal will maintain self-control and tolerate clumsy petting by people who have differing physical abilities or don’t know proper etiquette around it and 2) the handler can support the animal and be their animal’s advocate.
Resources
- If the flooring is slippery, a mat or rug for the animal to stand on
- A grooming table or other small table with a non-skid surface
- For carried cats and very small dogs, a clean towel or blanket supplied by the handler

Procedure
1. Kneel or sit next to the animal. Pet the animal, and speak to it and the handler in an excited, high voice. Clap and use clumsy movements while petting the animal.
2. Speak in a high-pitched, friendly, squealing voice, and continue to use clumsy petting.
3. Pet the animal using your elbows and a clenched hand, being careful not to pet it too hard or injure it in any way. Make vowel sounds in a monotone (simulating speech difficulty).
4. If the team is enjoying the interaction and handling it well, extend the exercise a few moments, increasing the level of exuberance to that of an excited child or adult. If the handler or animal shows decreased enjoyment or starts to show stress behaviors, stop the exercise and proceed to the next exercise.

In addition to the standard Scoring Guidelines
- The handler assists in positioning the animal as needed, so the interaction can be completed.
  - You wouldn’t expect a client to have to follow an animal around on the floor while petting, so the handler should present the animal so the interaction is possible.
- The animal may exhibit controlled excitement/exuberance in response to being touched.

For Carried Cats and Very Small Dogs
- Use the same procedure with the animal on a towel that’s laid down either on a table or on your lap or an assistant’s lap (handler’s choice).
  **Note:** This exercise may not take place with the animal in the handler’s arms or on his or her lap.
- The same scoring details apply.
Exercise C: Restraining Hug

**Purpose**
This exercise demonstrates that 1) the animal will accept or welcome restraint and 2) the handler can support the animal and be their animal’s advocate.

**Resources**
- If the flooring is slippery, a mat or rug for the animal to stand on
- A grooming table or other small table with a non-skid surface
- For carried cats and very small dogs, a clean towel or blanket supplied by the handler

**Procedure**
1. You and the team are in the same position as you were at the end of the previous exercise, with you petting the animal.
2. Make eye contact with the animal.
3. Lean over, and give the animal a full-body hug around the shoulders, restricting the animal’s movement. The animal’s feet should stay on the ground during the hug, unless the animal lifts them itself.
   - As a safety consideration, you may hold the collar of the dog which would allow you to separate from the dog if they were to respond aggressively to the hug.
4. Hold the hug as long as necessary to get a reading on the animal, but no longer than 15 seconds.
   - Don’t hug once and then go back and hug again or have another person hug the animal.

**In addition to the standard Scoring Guidelines**
- The animal does not need to lean in to the hug, but should not retreat.

**For Carried Cats and Very Small Dogs**
- Use the same procedure with the animal on a towel that’s laid down either on a table or on your lap or an assistant’s lap (handler’s choice).
  - **Note:** This exercise may not take place with the animal in the handler’s arms or on his or her lap.
- The same scoring details apply.
Exercise D: Staggering and Gesturing Individual

Purpose
This exercise demonstrates that 1) the animal will exhibit confidence when a person who’s acting in an unusual manner approaches and invites interaction and 2) the handler has the handling skills to interact with such a person while supporting their animal.

Resources
- One assistant
- A robe and hat
- Healthcare equipment (for example, a walker, crutch, cane or wheelchair)

Procedure
1. The team is facing the assistant. The assistant is wearing an open robe and hat, standing 20 feet from the team.
2. The assistant approaches the team, using healthcare equipment while staggering, weaving, waving the arms and moaning as if he or she is in pain, but not using an angry voice or body language. The assistant uses the equipment in a normal manner, without shaking, rattling, or otherwise abusing it. The assistant focuses his or her attention on the team.
3. The assistant stops 6 feet from the team, ceasing the staggering, gesturing and vocalization.
   Note: If the team approaches the assistant as he or she is approaching, the assistant will stop when the team gets within 6 feet of him or her. At that point, the assistant will cease the staggering, gesturing and vocalizing.
4. The assistant invites the team to approach.
5. If the animal approaches, the assistant pets it. The assistant shouldn’t pet the animal if it doesn’t approach willingly.

In addition to the standard Scoring Guidelines
- The handler may encourage the animal to approach the assistant, but without restricting its freedom of movement.
- The handler may facilitate the interaction by lifting or positioning their animal for petting after it has approached willingly.
- The animal may startle at the assistant’s behavior, but recovers.
- The animal may show interest in the assistant, but keeps a loose leash.
For Carried Cats and Very Small Dogs

- Use the same procedure with the animal either carried in the handler’s arms or a basket, with the following modification:
  - When the assistant attracts its attention and invites the team to approach. If the assistant succeeds in gaining the animal’s attention, and the animal appears comfortable, the assistant pets it.
- The same scoring details apply.

Exercise E: Angry Yelling

Purpose
This exercise demonstrates that 1) the animal won’t become over stressed when someone exhibits angry emotions and 2) the handler can support the animal through such a situation.

Resources
- Two assistants, in addition to the assistant from Exercise D

Procedure
1. While the team is interacting with the assistant (staggering and gesturing individual) from Exercise D, two more assistants approach, walking in a neutral posture, until they are 6 feet from the team. The team shouldn’t feel threatened by this approach.
   - If the team approaches the two new assistants as they’re approaching, the assistants will stop when the team gets within 6 feet of them. The assistants should maintain a 6-foot distance from the team throughout the exercise.
2. When the assistants are in place, they begin angrily yelling at each other and waving their arms, as if they’re having an argument. The assistants do not move closer to the team, and the yelling shouldn’t be directed at the handler or the animal. The assistants start at a lower level of yelling and build up, for a total of no more than 10 seconds, as the assistant from Exercise D continues to interact with the team.
3. When you cue the assistants to stop yelling, they return to neutral or positive postures. One of them then calls to the team and invites them to approach.
In addition to the standard Scoring Guidelines
► The handler may encourage the animal to approach the assistant, but without restricting its freedom of movement.
► The animal:
  ● May startle at the assistants’ behavior, but recovers.
  ● May show interest in the people yelling, but keeps a loose leash.

For Carried Cats and Very Small Dogs
► Use the same procedure with the animal either carried in the handler’s arms or a basket.
► The same scoring details apply.

Exercise F: Two-Fingered Tap

Purpose
This exercise demonstrates that 1) the animal is able to recover when a person bumps or taps it unexpectedly and 2) the handler can not only tolerate having his or her animal bumped but also help the animal recover.

Procedure
1. Once the previous interaction has concluded, direct the team to move to a different place in the room. While the team is moving, walk past them and tap the animal with 2 fingers on its back or side.
   ● This is an updated procedure that allows evaluators to use the same technique for walking and carried dogs. By not having the animal being petted during this exercise, evaluators are better able to observe any startle behavior and subsequent recovery.
2. It’s appropriate for the evaluator to turn and apologize (as part of the role play) after tapping the animal. This allows you to see animal behavior and handler advocacy, as well as the handler’s ability to respond to the interaction.

In addition to the standard Scoring Guidelines
► The animal may startle at being tapped, but recovers.

For Carried Cats and Very Small Dogs
► Use the same procedure with the animals carried in the handler’s arms or a basket. You will still tap the animal on the back or side with two fingers.
► The same scoring details apply.
Exercise G: Crowded and Petted by Several People

**Purpose**
This exercise demonstrates that 1) the animal will tolerate crowding and petting by several people at once and 2) the handler has the skills to visit with a group of people while practicing PETS™ and YAYABA™.

**Resources**
- Three assistants
- Healthcare equipment (for example, a walker, crutch, cane or wheelchair)

**Procedure**
1. The exercise begins with the animal sitting, standing or lying by its handler 20 feet away from and facing the three assistants.
2. The assistants approach the team, one at a time, and begin to touch the animal, until all three are gathered closely around the animal. One assistant uses healthcare equipment in a normal manner, without shaking, rattling, dragging or otherwise abusing it.
3. All three assistants talk and try to gain the animal’s attention. Each assistant should be at a different level: one standing, one kneeling and one sitting next to the animal. The assistant with the healthcare equipment continues to use it normally as he or she moves around.

**In addition to the standard Scoring Guidelines**
- The animal:
  - May startle at being approached but recovers.
  - May show controlled excitement/exuberance.

**For Carried Cats and Very Small Dogs**
- Use the same procedure with the animal either carried in the handler’s arms or a basket.
- The same scoring details apply.
Exercise H: Leave It

Purpose
This exercise demonstrates that the animal will ignore a toy when directed.

Resources
► A toy with a smooth surface that can be easily cleaned between animals

Notes
► The toy should appeal to animals. Ideally, you should have one toy that’s appropriate for dogs, one for very small dogs and one for cats.
► All dogs must walk on the ground during this exercise, even if they’ve been carried during other exercises.

Procedure
1. While the team is participating in the Crowded Petting exercise, the evaluator or one of the assistants, places a toy on the ground behind the group at least 10 feet away. In this way you aren’t intentionally drawing attention to the placement of the toy.
2. As the previous exercise ends, the evaluator directs the team to cross the room, walking past the toy in such a way that it’s on the same side as the animal at a distance of approximately 2 feet.
3. When completed, you or an assistant picks up the toy. Clean the toy after the exercise if the animal touches it.

In addition to the standard Scoring Guidelines
► The handler may take steps to calm animal if it becomes over-stimulated.
► The animal:
  ● May shows casual interest in the toy; looking and sniffing acceptable.
  ● May have an occasional tight lead if the handler needs to direct it, or if it’s slightly out of position and still pass the exercise.

For Carried Cats and Very Small Dogs
► All dogs must walk on the ground for this exercise, regardless of size.
► Use the same procedure with the cats that are either carried in the handler’s arms or a basket with the following modifications:
  ● You or an assistant approaches the team, holding a toy that’s of interest to cats. Observe the cat’s reaction as the team walks by.
► The same scoring details apply.
Exercise I: Offered a Treat

Purpose
This exercise demonstrates that 1) when permitted, the animal will either politely take a treat and 2) when not permitted, the animal will remain calm and under control in the presence of treats.

Resources
- Treats for dogs and cats, may be provided by the handler

Notes
- If the handler declines to have their animal offered a treat, then they must visit as they were evaluated and not accept treats while visiting.

Procedure
1. Ask the team to wait as you go pick up a treat. The animal sits or stands by its handler, about 6 feet away from you.
2. Walk at least 6 feet away from the team and pick up the treat that will be offered.
3. Walk toward the team with the treat in your hand. When you’re within arm’s reach of the team, ask the handler, “May I offer your dog a treat?”
   - At this point in the exercise you are not yet placing the treat at the dog’s level.
4. If the handler agrees, offer the treat to the animal. If the handler declines, pocket the treat.

In addition to the standard Scoring Guidelines
- The handler:
  - May politely decline the treat on behalf of their animal.
  - Should directs you in the best way to offer the treat to the animal.
- The animal:
  - May refuse to take the treat.
  - Shouldn’t grab or attempt to grab the treat from your hand.
  - Shouldn’t approach the treat until it has been offered.

For Carried Cats and Very Small Dogs
- Use the same procedure with the animal either carried in the handler’s arms or a basket.
- The same scoring details apply.
Summary of Changes
Throughout

- References to AAA/AAT have been adjusted to AAI, where appropriate
- References to relevant portions of the Handler Guide updated and added
- URLs and emails have been updated, as needed
- Minor changes in formatting, wording, titling, grammar and punctuation have been made as needed to improve clarity and/or fix errors
- There has been significant reorganization of existing content into new sections. Movement of content has not been noted below. Additions, expansions and deletions of content are listed.

Part 1: Policies

- New - Expectations Section added, including Core Values, Professionalism and Communication Standards (p3-5)
- Fees section updated (p7)
- Publicizing Evaluations section updated (p7)
- Where to Evaluate section updated (p8)
- New - How will I know if someone was previously scored Not Appropriate for Visiting? (p8)
- Familiarity section expanded to address evaluation locations (p9-10)
- New - Setting Teams Up for Success (p11)
- New - Role Playing (p12)
- New - Providing Constructive Feedback to Teams (p13)
- Evaluator Renewal section updated (p14)
- New - Registrations with Other Organizations (p15)
- New - Evaluating for Other Organizations (p15)
- Evaluating Very Small Dogs updated (p20-21)
- Evaluating Animals Other than Dogs section updated (p21)
- New - Scribes (p23)
- Neutral Dog details expanded (p25)
- Experienced Assistants section expanded (p26)

Part 2: Procedures

- Items to Be Provided by the Handler updated (p31-32)
- New - What happens if a handler fails to bring necessary materials (p32-33)
- New - Policy on when teams bring the incorrect brush (p32, 45)
- Animal requirements expanded to provide rationale (p33)
- Health requirements expanded to provide rationale and YAYABA™ (p33-34)
- Evaluation Equipment List updated to include a brush (p35)
Summary of Changes

**Pet Partners Aptitude Test**

- Handlers with Physical Disabilities updated (p36)
- Animals with Disabilities updated (p37)
- How to Submit an Accommodation Request updated (p38)
- Evaluating Assistance Dogs section clarified (p38-39)
- New - Description and examples of formative feedback (p42)
- New - Proactive handling in Desirable Responses from the Handler (p42-43)
- PETS™ discussion expanded (p43)
- Discussion of Reliable, Predictable, Controllable updated (p44)
- Dropping the Leash policy updated (p46)
- Multiple Commands vs. Multiple Attempts updated (p47)
- New - Scoring Guidelines (p48-52)
- New - A minimum score of 1 on all exercises in order to pass (p53)
- New - Diamond exercises in order to earn a complex rating changed (p53)

**Pet Partners Skills Test (PPST)**

- Desirable Responses for each exercise now refer back to Scoring Guidelines and list only the additional items unique to an exercise
- Exercise 12: Neutral Dog Exercise updated (p73)

**Pet Partners Aptitude Test (PPAT)**

- Desirable Responses for each exercise now refer back to Scoring Guidelines and list only the additional items unique to an exercise
- Exercise A: Renamed Overall Handling (p76)
- Exercise F: Updated so bump becomes a tap with two fingers (p83)
- Exercise I: Updated to include if handler declines to have animal offered a treat, then they must visit as they were evaluated. (p85)
- Exercise J: removed from evaluation

**Appendices**

- Volunteer Assistant Exercise Descriptions moved online to Resource Library
- Assistance Dog Etiquette moved online to Resource Library