



AAAIP

Association of Animal-Assisted
Intervention Professionals

ANIMAL-ASSISTED INTERVENTION SPECIALIST



CANDIDATE HANDBOOK

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AAIIP reserves the right to make changes to this Handbook.

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Introduction

Background

There has long been a practical and empirically validated need within the field of animal-assisted interventions (AAI) for an assessment of professional knowledge in integrating therapy animals within an existing scope of practice. Researchers and practitioners have often made this suggestion in published literature on the topic, and this gap in services has been continuously named throughout organizational research projects conducted by Pet Partners.

This credentialing opportunity not only provides a foundation for professionalizing and standardizing AAI as a complementary treatment modality within an existing professional practice, but it also allows for the demonstration of awareness of best practices in AAI that protect client safety and animal welfare.

Benefits of Certification

Earning the C-AAIS credential distinguishes you as a professional who is qualified to integrate therapy animals into practice, positioning you as an advocate for the welfare of both the humans and the animals involved in AAI. Investing in AAIS certification is an investment in yourself and your long-term career.

AAIS certification can help you do the following:

- Demonstrate your credibility to clients, employers, and other key stakeholders.
- Be seen as a leader in the field.
- Advance the standardization and professionalization of the intervention.
- Provide a foundational understanding of the many aspects of successful AAI.

AAI participants benefit from these elements of certification:

- Objective, independent, third-party evaluation and assessment of professional competence.
- Commitment to client safety and/or consumer protection.
- Accountability through ethical conduct standards and/or a disciplinary process.
- Recertification requirements for continued or enhanced competence.

For employers, AAIS certification represents a high level of achievement and demonstrates proficiency and a broad base of knowledge in AAI. C-AAIS professionals pass a rigorous exam and commit to ongoing professional development and recertification.

Hiring C-AAIS individuals or investing in AAIS certification for your current employees can help achieve the following:

- Increase the competence level of your staff.
- Build a strong, dedicated team that is committed to high standards of AAI.
- Promote ongoing enhancement of knowledge and skills.
- Improve the quality of information and care.
- Minimize risks associated with the intervention.

About the AAIS Certification Commission

The AAIS Certification Commission is a standing committee of the Association of Animal-Assisted Intervention Professionals (AAAIP). The Commission is empowered by the AAAIP Board of Directors and Bylaws to provide oversight and governance for the AAIS certification program and to establish policies related to the certification program. The Certification Commission is solely responsible for all essential decisions related to the development, administration, and ongoing maintenance of the certification program.

The Certification Commission does not develop, approve, recommend, or endorse certificate programs, courses of study, education, or training leading to certification. The Certification Commission does not require that candidates for certification complete education or training programs offered by AAAIP.

Contact Information

The Association of Animal-Assisted Intervention Professionals makes the C-AAIS credential available to students, practitioners, researchers, trainers, behaviorists, or any professional with an interest in AAI. To learn more about AAAIP, visit www.aaaiponline.org or contact us at support@aaaiponline.org.

Prolydian supports the AAIS certification process through their Candidate Management system, Item Banking framework, and CE Manager. Many questions about Prolydian can be answered by visiting <https://www.prolydian.com/test-taker-faqs>. Find information and videos on remote proctored exams, technical requirements, an overview of exam-day experience, and more. For specific questions, contact support+aaaip@prolydian.com.

Examity is a secure and reliable online proctoring solution that gives candidates the flexibility and safety to take the exam remotely. It provides certifying bodies like AAAIP with robust security features to prevent cheating and preserve the integrity of the credential.

For technical support for proctor connections or your Examity profile: call 855-EXAMITY (select option 1), email support@examity.com, or chat directly through the Live Chat feature on the Examity dashboard.

Applying for Certification

Candidacy Requirements

Participation in the C-AAIS program is voluntary and open to anyone meeting candidacy requirements at the time of application:

- Be at least 18 years old.
- Agree to abide by the Code of Conduct for Animal-Assisted Intervention Specialists.
- Pay the examination fee.

Code of Conduct for Animal-Assisted Intervention Specialists

Certificants and applicants for certification shall act in a manner that justifies public trust and confidence, enhances the reputation of animal-assisted interventions (AAI), and safeguards the welfare of individual clients and participating animals.

Animals

- Prioritize the welfare of animals engaged in AAI, not only during sessions, but at home as well. Their welfare and well-being are to be placed above all other business considerations.
- Structure interactions in such a way that therapy animals thrive; not simply tolerating, but actively enjoying their role.
- Engage in training methodologies and interactions with animals that are based on positive, relationship-building methodologies that do not intentionally cause fear or discomfort to the animal.
- Be aware of, and comply with, applicable laws regarding animal licensure, vaccination, and restrictions based on species or breed.
- Never falsely represent a therapy animal as a service animal.
- Never abuse, neglect, or mistreat animals, whether your own or someone else's.

Clients

- Incorporate AAI only where there is reasonable expectation that it will be advantageous to the client. Refrain from providing guarantees regarding the specific outcomes of AAI sessions.
- Respect the client's right to treatment with informed and voluntary consent. Respect the client's right to refuse, modify, or terminate interactions regardless of prior consent given.
- Take all reasonable steps to ensure safety and prevent harm to clients.
- Be aware of, and comply with, applicable laws regarding the reporting of injuries caused by animals (e.g., bites).

The Field of AAI

- Support the implementation of and compliance with standards and best practices in AAI.
- Represent your qualifications honestly, including education, competencies, and professional affiliations, and provide only those services you are qualified to perform.
- Never provide advice or recommendations in areas of veterinary medicine, animal behavior, or human and/or mental health services unless qualified to do so.
- Maintain adequate liability insurance coverage inclusive of AAI activities.
- Never display acts of discrimination, acts of hate, acts of violence, bullying, sexual harassment, coercion, intimidation, or any act of that impedes or interferes with anyone's civil rights.

Fee Schedule

Exam Fees

- Member of the public: **\$375**
- AAAIP all-access member: **\$275**
- Retest fee: **\$200** (up to two retakes for failure to pass)
The retest fee is applicable to candidates who have previously taken the C-AAIS exam but did not receive a passing score or individuals who did not arrive for their scheduled exam time.

Recertification Fee

- Member of the public: **\$275**
- AAAIP all-access member: **\$175**

Fees are non-transferrable from one candidate to another.

Making Payment

Payments are made online by credit card at the time of the application. Visa, Mastercard, or American Express are accepted. For questions related to the payment processes, contact AAAIP at support@aaaiponline.org.

Submitting the Application

Applicants for C-AAIS are required to complete and submit the online application within AAAIP's certification management system operated by AAAIP's partner, Prolydian, at <https://app.prolydian.com/>. If you do not already have a profile in the system, you will be prompted to create one. Applicants with a disability who require assistance in completing the application should contact AAAIP.

Candidates must complete the application in full, using their name exactly as it appears on a current approved government-issued photo ID.

Approved government-issued photo identification includes the following:

- Government-issued driver's license.
- Passport.
- Non-U.S. Military issued identification card.
- Any physical government-issued identification card (must include photo).

After your application and fees have been submitted and processed, you will receive a verification email with instructions on how to register for the examination. If you have not received a receipt within two business days following online application submission, you should contact Prolydian at 850-739-8992 or by email at support+aaaip@prolydian.com to confirm the status of the application.

Application and Testing Deadlines

Since the examinations are offered year-round, there are no deadlines for applications. However, candidates must register and take the examination within six months of submitting their application.

Scheduling an Examination

After completing the application, you will receive an email with instructions on how to schedule your examination. Once the examination has been scheduled, you will receive a confirmation email listing the date and time of the examination. The email will also contain instructions on how to prepare for a live remote proctored exam session. If you do not receive an email with instructions, please check your Junk or Spam email folders before contacting us.

Testing Accommodations for Candidates with Disabilities

AAAIP complies with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and strives to ensure that no individual with a documented disability is deprived of the opportunity to take the certification exam solely by reason of that disability provided that reasonable special accommodations can be made. Applicants requesting accommodations must notify AAAIP prior to scheduling the exam. Please see the **Policies** section later in this Candidate Handbook for more information.

Rescheduling

To reschedule, log into your Prolydian account and go to the "My Exams" page. You may reschedule the exam, as long as you do so at least 24 hours in advance of the scheduled test time and if it is within your allowed six-month exam window. If, however, you cancel your appointment with less than 24 hours' notice, or if you miss your appointment, show up late, or provide inadequate identification, you will not be able to make a new appointment without paying an additional testing fee.

Cancellation Policy

No fees will be refunded in the event a candidate fails to report at the scheduled time or fails to register for an exam within the allowed six-month exam window.

Preparing to Take the Examination

Examination Content Outline

The C-AAIS credential is a computer-based exam composed of 125 multiple-choice questions administered in one session, with a single, 15-minute, candidate-initiated break. Candidates have three (3) hours to complete the exam. All questions will be included in calculating the candidate's scores. The exam questions cover the topic areas detailed in the examination content outline included below. The exam is offered in English only.

Exam content covers five domains:

- Animal Welfare and Well-being.
- Zoonosis and Infection Prevention.
- Animal Behavior Awareness.
- AAI Foundations.
- Professional Best Practices.

Candidates are encouraged to develop a study plan based on review of the content outline, which is available at <https://aaajp.memberclicks.net/assets/docs/AAI-S-Practice-Analysis.pdf>.

Certifications offered by AAAIP are developed using nationally recognized industry standards. The C-AAIS examination conforms to a content outline based on a practice analysis of AAI professionals. The initial AAIS practice analysis study was conducted in 2020 with participation from a diverse panel of subject matter experts (SMEs). The practice analysis study focused on identifying the professional knowledge needed for integrating AAI as a complementary treatment modality within an existing scope of practice. Exam questions are based on this analysis, and it is an essential process in identifying required expertise and performance standards.

The AAAIP Certification Commission provides oversight for the development and ongoing maintenance of the certification examination(s). The Commission and AAAIP staff work in partnership with the selected psychometrician to ensure the examination is developed and maintained in a manner consistent with generally accepted principles for professional certification programs.

Before the Exam

The examination is delivered through Prolydian and proctored by Examity. Prior to beginning the exam candidates must complete an Examity profile setup, including the upload of a government issued photo ID. **Candidates MUST complete the profile setup and computer requirements check prior to beginning an exam.**

Follow the steps below to complete your profile setup:

1. Log into your Prolydian account at <https://app.prolydian.com> (provided by AAAIP in the application approval email).
2. From your Prolydian exams dashboard, click the **Access my Examity account** button.
3. Click the **My profile** button.
4. In the **Account Information** section, click the **Edit** button, add your phone number, and then click **Save**.
5. In the **examiSHOW** section, upload a photo of your government-issued ID, and then click the **Upload** button.
6. In the **examiKNOW** section, click the **Edit** button. Select your security questions, provide your responses, and then click **Save**.
7. In the **examiKEY** section, click the **Edit** button. Provide the required typed input and then click **Save**.
8. When you are on the computer you will be testing with, check your computer readiness by clicking **Computer Requirements Check** or by clicking the following link:
<https://prod.examity.com/systemcheck/check.aspx>

IMPORTANT NOTE:

Be sure that your computer and the location where you intend to take the examination meet the requirements specified in your confirmation email **BEFORE** examination day. If they do not meet the requirements, you will not be able to complete the test, and you will not receive a refund.

We strongly encourage you to review these helpful resources to ensure a successful testing experience:

- Online Test Taker FAQ: <https://www.prolydian.com/test-taker-faqs>
- 5 Tips to Boost Test Taker Success: <https://www.examity.com/5-tips-to-boost-test-taker-success/>
- Online Proctoring Troubleshooting Guide: <https://examity.com/online-proctoring-troubleshooting-guide-for-test-takers-v4/>
- Examity Check-In Process: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1J7Fm8fXyo0c>

Technical Requirements

Be sure that the computer and the location where you intend to take the examination meet the requirements specified in your confirmation email **BEFORE** examination day. If they do not meet the requirements, you will not be able to complete the test and you will not receive a refund. Additional instructions will be provided to applicants in their confirmation email.

Here are the technical requirements for the examination:

- Desktop computer or laptop.
Tablets, Chromebooks, and cell phones do not meet the proctoring requirements.
- Browser: Google Chrome or Mozilla Firefox **with popup blocker disabled**.
Other browsers are not supported and may not work as expected.
- A working built-in or external webcam and microphone.
- Operating system:
 - macOS X 10.5 or higher.
 - Windows Vista or higher.
 Examity does not support Linux or Chrome OS.
- Internet speed must be at least 2 Mbps download and 2 Mbps upload. Hot spots are not recommended.
- Laptops must remain connected to a power source for the duration of the exam.

How to Disable Pop-Up Blockers

Follow these steps to disable Pop-Up Blocker if you are using Chrome (Desktop):

1. Open your Chrome browser.
2. In the upper right-hand corner, click the three vertical dots, and then select **Settings**.
3. At the bottom of the menu, click **Advanced**.
4. Scroll down to **Privacy and security**, and select **Site Settings**.
5. Select **Pop-ups and redirects**.
6. At the top of the menu, toggle the setting to **Allowed** to disable the pop-up blocker.

Follow these steps to disable Pop-Up Blocker if you are using Firefox (Desktop):

1. Open your Firefox browser.
2. Click the **Menu** button, and then select **Options**.
3. Select **Privacy & Security**.
4. Under **Permissions**, uncheck **Block pop-up windows** to disable the pop-up blocker.

Power Failure or Loss of Internet

Computer-based tests are delivered via secure Internet connections. Internet connections are subject to local Internet providers. While it is not the norm, Internet connections can on occasion be lost momentarily, requiring the proctor to log you back into your exam. If you lose your Internet connection, inform the proctor, who will assist you in logging back into your exam. Upon logging back into your exam, you will resume at the first unanswered question. Your exam time remaining will be the same as it was when the Internet connection was lost.

On Exam Day

Log in at least 10 to 15 minutes prior to the exam to do the secure verification process.

Follow the steps below to access your exam:

1. Log into your Prolydian account at <https://app.prolydian.com>.
2. From your Prolydian exams dashboard, click the **Access my Examity account** button.
3. Click the **Start exam** button.
4. Install the Examity extension by following the instructions on the exam start page.
5. Click the **Connect to proctor** button. A proctor will do the following:
 - Confirm candidate identification (see Identification Requirements below).
 - Direct the candidate to pan the examination room with their webcam.
 - Release the exam for the candidate to start testing.

Identification Requirements

Candidates are required to present a valid, government-issued photo identification to the proctor to gain access to the exam. Acceptable forms of identification (photograph and signature required) include the following:

- Government-issued driver's license.
- Passport.
- Non-U.S. Military issued identification card.
- Any physical government-issued identification card (must include photo).

The name and photo on the identification presented must match the examinee as identified at the time of registration. Candidates will not be permitted to test without proper identification and all fees will be forfeited.

Candidate Statement of Understanding

Before beginning the online examination, each candidate will see onscreen the Candidate Statement of Understanding. Candidates will not be able to begin the examination without reading and agreeing to the statement containing the following items:

1. I agree that all information provided in my application is complete and accurate.
2. I agree to comply with all policies and provisions of the certification program including the Code of Conduct for Animal Assisted Intervention Specialists.
3. I agree to provide any information needed to determine my eligibility for initial and/or continued certification and to cooperate fully with any disciplinary investigations.
4. I agree to make claims regarding certification only with respect to the scope for which certification has been granted. I further agree not to misuse the credential, certification mark, and/or certificate, and not to use them in a misleading manner.
5. I agree to immediately discontinue all claims to certification, discontinue use of the credential/ certification mark, and destroy any certificates issued, if certification is suspended, revoked, or expired.
6. I agree that the C-AAIS examination is highly confidential and that the examination questions are the property of AAAIP. I further agree that unauthorized disclosure of the examination questions is prohibited under copyright laws.
7. I agree to comply with all stated rules of the C-AAIS exam.
8. I agree to not copy, release, share, or otherwise disclose confidential examination materials or participate in fraudulent test-taking practices.
9. I understand that:
 - a. Candidates will be observed by a proctor through a web cam at all times while they are taking the C-AAIS examination. Proctors may not necessarily inform candidates of their observations, but they are required to report behavior that may violate the terms and regulations of AAAIP or other forms of irregular behavior.
 - b. Any cheating and/or breach of confidentiality/security or any attempt to subvert the examination process by any candidate violates the purpose and principles of the examination. Any candidate who carries out, takes part in, or witnesses such behavior must report it to the proctor and/or AAAIP as soon as possible.
 - c. AAAIP reserves the right to cancel or withhold any examination results when, in the sole opinion of AAAIP, a testing irregularity occurs; cheating has occurred; there is an apparent discrepancy in, or falsification of, a candidate's identification; a candidate engages in misconduct or plagiarism; aberrancies in performance are detected for which there is no reasonable and satisfactory explanation; or the results are believed to be invalid for any other reason.
 - d. Conduct occurring before, during, or after testing that violates principles detailed in this Statement of Understanding may result in invalidation of examination results and/or other penalties and will be reported to AAAIP.

Remote Proctored Exam Rules

To provide a fair and consistent environment for all candidates, exams are delivered using standardized procedures following strict security protocols. Candidates are required to follow all testing rules at all times. Failure to follow these rules may result in termination of a candidate's testing session, invalidation of the candidate's exam score, and/or disciplinary action. To ensure the security of the C-AAIS examination, the following rules will apply:

- Candidates arriving more than 15 minutes late will be required to reschedule the examination.
- Candidates are permitted a beverage in a clear, spill-proof container.
- No other individuals are permitted in the testing location with the candidate.
- No watches, cell phones, or other electronic devices are permitted.
- No resources, notes, books, or references of any type are allowed.
- Exam room lighting should be adequate for the proctor to view the candidate and surrounding area.
- The candidate must remain in view of the proctor, except during the pre-scheduled break.
- Reading out loud or any attempts to capture exam content (e.g., taking photos, copying questions, etc.) are prohibited.
- Attempts to remotely control the computer, resize browsers, or print the screen are prohibited.

The only materials candidates should have within reach as they check in are their ID and phone or mirror (to show their monitor). These must be placed out of reach once the check-in process is over. A beverage as described above may be kept on the desk.

Violating Rules

Any candidate who is observed engaging in any misconduct will be subject to dismissal from the examination, may be barred from future examinations for a period ranging from one year to permanent dismissal, and may be required to forfeit their current examination fee and/or period of eligibility. Proctors are authorized to take immediate, appropriate measures against candidates who are caught violating testing rules. The candidate is entitled to appeal the dismissal determination.

After the Examination

Typically within 72 hours of completing your exam, you will receive a score report via email. The score report will contain an indication of “pass” or “fail” for the overall examination, based on the passing standard set by the Certification Commission.

Additionally, each score report will contain subscores identifying your performance by domain. These subscores can help passing candidates identify areas for future continuing education, as well as inform a study plan for failing candidates who wish to retake the exam.

Retesting

Candidates who fail the exam must wait 14 days from the initial exam date before retaking the exam. A retest fee must be submitted during the rescheduling process. If the candidate fails the second attempt, they must wait at least 90 days before retaking the exam for a third time.

If the candidate fails the third attempt, they must wait at least six (6) months from the original test date before reattempting the exam. A new application must be submitted at that time and regular testing fees will apply.

Appeals

All candidates have the right to file an appeal of an adverse decision resulting in a denial of certification or recertification based on a failure to satisfy application requirements, payment of fees required by AAAIP, or failure of the certification examination caused by conditions beyond the candidate’s control. See the Appeals Policy later in this Candidate Handbook.

Certificates

A certificate will be available for download for candidates that are successful in passing the C-AAIS examination. Go to <https://app.prolydian.com/Organizations/AAAIP> and click on your **My Achievements** section to download. Successful candidates will also receive information on maintaining certified status.

The certification credential certificate may only be displayed during the time period for which the credential is valid.

Maintaining Certification

Purpose

Those holding a C-AAIS credential demonstrate their commitment to stay abreast of best practices by ensuring their knowledge and expertise remain current via recertification.

Recertification Process

Certificants must recertify every two years to maintain active C-AAIS status. Recertification requires the following:

- Continued agreement and compliance with the [*Code of Conduct for Animal-Assisted Intervention Specialists*](#).
- Submission of 12 hours of approved continuing education. All activities must take place following the date of certification to be eligible for credit.
- Payment of recertification fee.

Candidates may also choose to recertify by taking the current version of the C-AAIS exam.

A candidate who does not recertify within 45 days of their C-AAIS expiration date is considered expired and must retake the applicable exam.

Extension Requests

An extension of the recertification deadline for extenuating circumstances may be granted for up to two (2) months beyond the expiration date. Such requests must be submitted electronically via the Contact Us form on the AAIP website before the certification expires. The request must include a statement of extenuating circumstances, the number of recertification hours completed, and a detailed plan stating how all requirements will be fulfilled by the requested extended deadline. If an extension is granted, the original expiration date will remain constant. If the extension is not granted, the individual is no longer certified and must cease promoting themselves as being AAIS certified. To earn the certification again, the individual must sit for the applicable exam.

Recertification Requirement Waiver

The recertification requirement may be temporarily waived by the Certification Commission under either of the following circumstances:

- The individual has experienced serious health or medical problems or has been caring for someone with serious health or medical problems.
- The individual has been called to active military duty.

Requests must be submitted electronically via the Contact Us form on the AAIP website. If the waiver is granted, once the conditions upon which the recertification waiver was approved no longer exist, the individual must complete the recertification process in the time that the recertification was required prior to the request for the waiver—e.g., if a waiver is granted three months prior to an individual's certification expiring, the individual will have three months to complete the recertification process or risk his or her certification lapsing.

Continuing Education Hours

Credit will be given for continuing education on an hour-for-hour basis. Credits may also be given for other activities such as instruction and reading approved texts provided they can be directly linked to one of the knowledge domains covered by the C-AAIS exam.

All CE must be entered online via the Prolydian portal. A listing of pre-approved CE credits is available via the Prolydian online portal, but other courses may be submitted for approval.

Ownership and Use of the AAIS Credential

The C-AAIS mark and logo are the property of AAAIP. Permission to use the certification mark or logo is granted to certified persons at the discretion of AAAIP for permissible uses only.

Persons Authorized to Use the Marks

Use of any AAAIP certification marks and logos is limited to those persons who have been granted the certification by AAAIP and who satisfy all maintenance and recertification requirements established by AAAIP. Use of the mark and logo by individuals who have not been granted and maintained the certification is expressly prohibited.

Non-Assignability and Non-Transferability

Permission to use the certification marks and logos is limited to the certified person and shall not be transferred to, assigned to, or otherwise used by any other individual, organization, or entity.

Mark and Logo Use

Those persons who have been granted permission to use the certification mark and logo shall do so pursuant to the rules and guidelines established by AAAIP. Persons granted permission to use the certification mark and logo must familiarize themselves with the established rules and guidelines for use and must execute approved agreements setting forth such rules and guidelines for use.

The C-AAIS marks and logos may not be revised or altered in any way. They must be displayed in the same form as produced by AAAIP, and they cannot be reproduced unless such reproduction is identical to the mark provided by AAAIP.

The initials **C-AAIS** may be used on materials, such as business cards, stationery, letterhead, and similar documents on which the name of the individual certified is prominently displayed, to promote themselves personally as an individual certified in the maintenance and reliability profession.

The mark or logo may not be used in any manner that could bring AAAIP into disrepute or in any way considered misleading or unauthorized. The mark or logo may not be used in any manner that would tend to imply a connection between any business and the certification which, in fact, may not exist. This includes any use of the mark or logo that the public might construe as an endorsement, approval, or sponsorship by AAAIP of a certificate holder's business or any product or service thereof.

Suspension or Revocation of Permission to Use Mark or Logo

AAAIP retains the right, at its sole discretion, to suspend or revoke any person's permission to use its certification mark or logo. In most circumstances, when AAAIP is informed that a person is misusing the certification mark or logo, AAAIP will provide the person notice of the misuse and a reasonable opportunity to comply with AAAIP's rules and guidelines. However, AAAIP retains the right to suspend or revoke privileges without notice and an opportunity to correct, particularly when the violation is of a gross nature and more immediate action is necessary to stop misuse.

Actions by AAAIP to suspend or revoke use of the certification mark shall be communicated in writing to the person whose privileges are being suspended or revoked and to all other persons affected by the decision. AAAIP may also publicize its actions on its website and/or any other of its publications. Should any person continue use of AAAIP's certification marks or logos after notice of suspension or revocation, AAAIP shall seek full equitable and/or legal remedies through a court of competent jurisdiction.

Proper Use of the Credential

After meeting all eligibility requirements and passing the examination, individuals may use their credential in all correspondence, on resumes/CVs, and promotional materials, such as stationery, websites, business cards, etc. The mark or logo may be used only with the name of the individual certified.

Individuals who have met the certification requirements are authorized to use the following certification mark according to the following guidelines:

- The credential may be used as **C-AAIS** or **Certified Animal-Assisted Intervention Specialist**.
- The credential is used after the certificant's name and following any academic degrees or licenses (e.g., **Mary Smith, RN, AAIS** or **John Smith, MBA, C-AAIS**)
- The credential must be clearly associated with the individual certified or be referenced in general terms:
 - Examples of **correct** use:
 - Mary Smith is a Certified Animal-Assisted Intervention Specialist.
 - John Smith, C-AAIS.
 - Three XYZ employees hold the AAIS certification.
 - Example of **incorrect** use:
 - XYZ organization employs three C-AAISs.

Verifying Certification Status

An online directory of AAAIP Certified Credentialing Professionals will be available at <https://app.prolydian.com/organizations/aaaip>. You can choose whether you wish to be listed in this directory in your Prolydian account at <https://app.prolydian.com>.

Policies

Contact Information Changes

The AAAIP (Prolydian) online portal is the primary method used for communication regarding exam confirmations, exam results, and recertification. As a candidate and certificant, you have 24/7 access to exam-profile details and are responsible for ensuring that your contact information in your profile is kept up to date. AAAIP recommends using a personal email address and phone number in the event of changes in employment.

Nondiscrimination

AAAIP does not and shall not discriminate on the basis of age, gender, gender identity, gender expression, ethnic origin, color, religion, race, disability, pregnancy, childbirth or related medical conditions, marital status, sexual orientation, or military status in any of its activities or operations. These include, but are not limited to, approval of certification/recertification applicants, staff decisions (including but not limited to hiring, discipline, promotion, and termination), selection of volunteers and vendors, and provision of services. AAAIP is committed to providing an inclusive and welcoming environment for certification candidates, certificants, volunteers, staff members, subcontractors, vendors, and clients.

Statement of Impartiality and Fairness

AAAIP's leadership and management, including its Certification Commission, endorse the principles of impartiality and fairness and commit to do the following:

1. Implement its policies and procedures impartially and fairly;
2. Not restrict certification based on undue financial or other limiting conditions; and
3. Not allow commercial, financial, or other pressures to compromise impartiality in certification activities.

Impartiality Related to Education and Training Leading to Certification

AAAIP produces comprehensive education and training materials for professionals who work with therapy animals. The AAAIP Certification Commission does not require, provide, approve, accredit, recommend, or endorse any specific educational programs, courses, study guides, review materials, or other examination preparation products.

Confidentiality and Privacy of Information

AAAIP shall hold in confidence, and in a secure manner, the information obtained in the course of certification program activities at all levels of the organization, including the activities of all personnel (paid, contracted, or volunteer) acting on its behalf. Except as required in this Policies & Procedures Manual, information about a particular individual is considered confidential information and shall not be disclosed to a third party by AAAIP staff, volunteers, or contractors without prior written consent of the individual. Where the law requires information to be disclosed to a third party and unless the law restricts it, the individual shall be notified in writing beforehand of the information disclosed.

Testing Accommodations for Candidates with Disabilities

AAAIP complies with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and is committed to providing necessary testing accommodations for examinees with documented disabilities, consistent with the requirements of the law. Accommodations may also be approved for examinees with documented qualifying medical conditions that may be temporary or are not otherwise covered by the ADA, such as pregnancy or a temporary impairment following surgery, including conditions that require the use of medical devices or medication during the examination. AAAIP will also provide testing accommodations for candidates testing in other jurisdictions, to the extent required by applicable laws in those jurisdictions.

An individual is not considered to have a disability requiring accommodation if the limitations arising from the individual's impairment do not significantly restrict the individual's major life activities when compared with the abilities of the average person. Non-specific diagnoses such as individual learning styles, learning differences, academic problems, computer phobias, slow reading, and test difficulty or anxiety in and of themselves do not constitute a disability or impairment.

The decision as to whether a medical condition that is not covered by the ADA is a “qualifying medical condition” for purposes of the C-AAIS exam accommodation is at the sole discretion of AAAIP.

Accommodations are provided on an individual basis and depend on the nature of the disability or medical condition and documentation provided. AAAIP will make reasonable efforts to provide the requested accommodations to examinees provided the functional impairment has been demonstrated through adequate documentation, and the accommodations do not fundamentally alter the measurement of the skills or knowledge the examination is intended to test, do not jeopardize examination integrity and security, are compatible with the nature and purpose of the examination or assessment program, and do not result in an undue burden to AAAIP. Accommodations cannot be made to the actual content of the examination. A range of available accommodations are considered to assist examinees with disabilities or qualifying medical conditions.

Examination Accommodations

C-AAIS examination applicants may request accommodations by completing a Request for Accommodation form upon application submission prior to scheduling their examination. In order to fulfill any accommodations, AAAIP requires at least 30 days between the approved accommodation and the testing date. The Request for Accommodation form is available online at <https://www.aaaiponline.org/request-for-accommodation>.

All requests for examination accommodations are strictly confidential, and documentation submitted in support of the request is used solely for the purpose of evaluating the request. Failure to provide AAAIP with adequate supporting documentation in a timely manner will cause a delay in the review process and the applicant's ability to schedule and take the examination.

An applicant may request more than one accommodation; however, supporting documentation is required for each requested accommodation.

Examinees cannot schedule their AAIS examination, nor can the examination be administered, until the process described above has been completed.

Common Accommodations

AAAIP will base the accommodations on the requests and required documentation received. Common accommodations include extended time for testing (1.5 time or double time), frequent or additional breaks, access to auxiliary items (food, medication, or medical devices), or provision of a reader and/or scribe. Candidates will not be charged any additional fees for approved accommodations.

Required Supporting Documentation

Adequate supporting documentation from a qualified medical professional certifying to the applicant's disability or qualifying medical condition, with specific identification of the requested accommodation and the medical basis for the request, must be submitted to AAAIP, either directly from the medical professional or by the applicant. AAAIP will verify the authenticity of any submissions sent by the applicant. A qualified professional is someone with the credentials, training, and expertise to diagnose the reported disability or qualifying medical condition. The primary relationship of the attesting professional to the individual must be that of a treating medical professional to a patient; there must be no familial, intimate, supervisory, or other close relationship between the qualified professional and the individual requesting the accommodation(s).

The documentation must meet the following requirements:

1. Be on letterhead, typed in English, dated, signed, and include the name, title, and professional credentials of the qualified medical professional.
2. Contain contact information including address, telephone number, and/or e-mail address of each professional providing documentation.
3. Include the name of the specific disability or medical condition.

AAAIP reserves the right to request further verification, if necessary, of the evaluating professional's credentials and expertise relevant to the diagnosis, to verify the authenticity of the supporting documentation, and to seek clarification of the information provided by the evaluating professional.

Review of Requested Accommodations

AAAIP will consider requests for examination accommodations following receipt of an examination application and all required documentation in support of the request. The applicant will be sent a notification of AAAIP's decision regarding the requested accommodation(s).

If accommodations have been approved, the notification will be in the form of a Testing Accommodations Agreement indicating the accommodation(s) that has/have been approved. The applicant must sign the Agreement and return it to AAAIP by the date indicated within the Agreement. The application for an applicant requesting examination accommodations will not be complete until the signed agreement is received by AAAIP.

Appeals

An appeal is a formal request for special consideration regarding a decision made by the Certification Commission or its representatives related to an individual's achievement or retention of a certification.

Appeal Submission

An appeal must be submitted electronically on the AAAIP website. The appeal must be submitted no later than 30 days after notification by AAAIP of the adverse decision. All relevant supportive documentation must be included or referenced in the appeal submission.

Initial Appeal Review and Determination

The AAAIP Executive Director or their designee will serve as the first level of appeals review. The review will occur within 10 business days of receipt, and a response will be sent to the appellant via email. Staff members will recuse themselves from the appeal consideration if there is any reason for which impartiality might reasonably be questioned or there is actual or apparent conflict of interest.

The AAAIP Executive Director or their designee will review the appeal to determine whether it meets the definition of an appeal and whether appeal submission requirements are met. If it does, the AAAIP Executive Director or their designee will investigate and consider the appeal, including but not limited to taking into account the results of previous similar appeals, and make a determination on appeal action.

The initial response will be one of the following:

- Appeal approved.
- Appeal denied.

The response will be accompanied by an explanation for the denial and/or information on an alternate course of action where applicable. The denial will include information on the appellant's further recourse if the appellant wishes to pursue the appeal.

- Appeal delayed to provide time to gather further information.

Within 30 calendar days, the appellant will be sent either an appeal denied or appeal forwarded notification.

- Appeal forwarded to the Appeals & Complaints Panel.

Written notice of the Appeals & Complaints Panel determination (appeal denied or appeal approved) or a progress notice (appeal forwarded or appeal delayed) will be provided to the appellant within 10 business days of the determination.

Second Level Appeal Review and Determination

If applicable, appeals are sent to an independent three-member team selected from the Appeals & Complaints Panel for consideration. The appeal will be considered no later than 90 days after the appeal receipt.

Members of the Appeals & Complaints Panel will recuse themselves from the appeal consideration if there is any reason for which impartiality might reasonably be questioned or there is an actual or apparent conflict of interest.

The appeal will not include a hearing or any similar trial-type proceeding.

The function of the Appeals & Complaints Panel in a given case is to review the decision being appealed based on the record that was presented at the time of the determination.

The Appeals & Complaints Panel will review the appeal, including but not limited to taking into account the results of previous similar appeals, and make a determination on appeal action.

The second level response will be one of the following:

- Appeal denied.
- Appeal approved.
- Appeal delayed to provide time to gather further information.

Written notice of the Appeals & Complaints Panel determination (appeal denied or appeal approved) or a progress notice (appeal delayed) will be provided to the appellant within 30 business days of the determination.

Procedural Appeal Review and Determination

If an appellant feels his or her appeal was handled improperly by the staff or Appeals & Complaints Panel, a procedural appeal may be filed with the Certification Commission.

Program Complaints

Individuals with concerns regarding the certification program materials, personnel, or activities are encouraged to discuss these with the individuals involved to try to resolve the matter informally. In some cases, however, informal resolution is not possible, and individuals may wish to file a formal complaint.

Submission of Formal Program Complaints

A formal complaint will be submitted electronically on the AAIP website within 90 days of the incident's occurrence. In the case of complaints related to exam administration, those must be submitted within two weeks after the applicable exam administration. The submission will include sufficient objective evidence to substantiate the claim(s) and appropriate action to be taken.

Dissatisfaction based on hearsay will not be considered as a complaint. Anonymous complaints will not be considered.

Staff Level Review

The AAAIP Executive Director or assignee will serve as the first level of complaint consideration to determine its validity. This person will investigate the circumstances of any valid complaint and take one of the following actions:

- Determine and implement corrective action.
- Refer the complaint to a different suitable staff member to determine and implement corrective action.
- Escalate the complaint to the Certification Commission for review.

If the complaint is not immediately resolvable, written notice of progress (of a referral or escalation) will be provided to the complainant within 10 business days of complaint receipt.

In all cases, the AAAIP Executive Director or assignee will communicate the proposed resolution to the complainant within a period of no longer than 30 days.

If for any reason the target deadlines in this policy are not able to be met, a progress notice will be sent to the complainant, outlining when the findings will be communicated.

Certification Commission Review

If a complaint is found to warrant escalation, the Certification Commission Chair will be notified, and the complaint will be reviewed by the Certification Commission or its designees. A decision will be communicated to the complainant within a period of no longer than 30 days.

If for any reason the target deadlines in this policy are not able to be met, a progress notice will be sent to the complainant, outlining when the findings will be communicated.

Appeal of Complaint Determinations

The determination of staff or the Certification Commission is appealable, and the Appeals policy will apply.

Complaints Against Certificants

AAIS certificants commit to adhering to the standards set out in the AAAIP **Code of Conduct for Animal-Assisted Intervention Specialists**. AAAIP shall have a process for handling complaints against certificants in a constructive, impartial, and timely manner.

Complaints

A complaint against a certificant must be submitted electronically on the AAAIP website. A complaint must meet four criteria:

- Specific to a section of the Code of Conduct.
- In writing by the individual lodging the complaint.
- Supported by definitive and specific evidence of such accusation.
- Made against a current holder of a AAAIP certification.

Complaint Handling and Communications

- The complaint and all related documentation will be dealt with in a strictly confidential manner.
- The expectation is that complainant will hold in strict confidence the filing of the complaint. Complainant will not announce or promote in any manner, or use personal or institutional communication vehicles, to announce filing of a complaint.
- If a preliminary investigation of the information/evidence reveals a valid complaint, the individual(s) named in the written complaint will be sent a **Notice of Complaint**. The Certification Commission will also request any additional information needed and a specific timeframe for providing such information. If this additional information is not received, a decision shall be rendered based on the information initially provided.
- If it is determined that no further action is warranted, the complainant will be advised in writing of the outcome of the initial assessment. The target date for this communication is within 30 days after receipt of the complaint.
- If the initial investigation supports the complaint, an independent investigation will commence, and the information shall be handed over to the Certification Commission.
- The Certification Commission will issue a written report of its findings within 60 working days of receiving all further requested supporting information.
- The final disposition will be communicated to the complainant. The target date for this communication is within 10 working days of the written report findings being accepted.
- If for any reason the target deadlines in this procedure are not able to be met, a progress notice will be sent to the complainant, outlining when the findings will be communicated.

Potential Disciplinary Actions

If a complaint is found to have valid grounds, the Certification Commission may recommend one of the following disciplinary actions depending on the severity of the infraction:

- **Warning.** A written warning could be issued that outlines the consequences if the situation occurs again, or if there is another violation.
- **Suspension.** AAIS certification or eligibility to become certified could be suspended.
- **Revocation of Certification.** AAIS certification could be revoked.

Appeals of Certification Commission Findings

The subject of the complaint may appeal the disciplinary actions. The Appeals policy will apply.



AAAIP

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