



Becoming an approved trainer or training institution

Guide, Hearing and Assistance Dogs Act 2009

The [Guide, Hearing and Assistance Dogs Act 2009](#) (the Act) assists people with disability who rely on guide, hearing or assistance dogs to have independent access to the community. It also ensures the quality and accountability of guide, hearing and assistance dog training services. Both individual trainers and training institutions can be approved to select and train guide, hearing or assistance dogs for the individual needs of a person with disability.

To become an approved individual trainer or training institution you must apply using the approved form — **Form GHA-4 Application to become an approved trainer or training institution.**

The process of assessing applications

Stage 1: Document assessment

After receiving your application, the Guide, Hearing and Assistance Dogs (GHAD) team will assess the application and additional materials, documents or information you have provided.

The GHAD team may ask you to provide more information, materials, documents or evidence. Depending on the evidence you submit, the team may ask you to clarify or explain specific details in your application.

An application is not considered to be complete until all required information is received.

Stage 2: Technical assessment

This stage involves a combination of practical assessment and document review.

Technical assessors will:

- conduct simulated Public Access Tests (PATs) on two different handler and dog teams trained by you or your institution

- assess whether you are able to train dogs that are able to perform identifiable physical tasks and behaviours for the benefit of a person with disability. You will be required to show the assessors the identifiable physical tasks and behaviours that the dog can perform and demonstrate how you taught that dog to perform these tasks
- review parts of your previously submitted evidence, such as dog selection process, training manuals and programs, and training history logs
- complete a Technical Capability Assessment Report for the GHAD team.

The PATs will be undertaken in various public places and public passenger vehicles as required, however the assessment of the ability to perform identifiable physical tasks and behaviours can be undertaken at a suitable place agreed by both you and the assessors.



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Stage 3: Final review and decision

The GHAD team will consider all of the evidence you submit and the outcome of the Technical Capability Assessment Report to make the decision. In considering an application, the department may consult with any entity it considers appropriate when reaching its decision.

The decision and review process

You will receive written notification from the GHAD team about the outcome of your application.

At any time during its assessment, the GHAD team may refuse your application. The team will provide you with the reasons for its decision.

If you are unsatisfied with the decision, you can request a review.

The Queensland Government is committed to respecting, protecting and promoting human rights. Under the [Human Rights Act 2019](#), the GHAD team has an obligation to act and make decisions in a way that is compatible with human rights.

Timeframes

Timeframes for assessment and decision making depend on several factors:

- the quality of the application and evidence submitted
- the outcome of the criminal history screening
- the availability of technical assessors
- any other factors that prevent technical assessments from being carried out, for example a pandemic or natural disaster.

Before applying

Make sure you understand the roles, rights and responsibilities of approved dog trainers. Read all information about becoming a trainer at:

- [the GHAD website](#).

Understand the legislation approved trainers need to comply with:

- the *Guide, Hearing and Assistance Dogs Act 2009*
- [the Guide, Hearing and Assistance Dogs Regulation 2019](#).

Suitability to become an approved trainer/training institution

Under the Act, an applicant is suitable to become an approved trainer if they demonstrate they can:

- train reliable guide, hearing or assistance dogs that:
 - can perform identifiable physical tasks and behaviours for the benefit of a person with disability
 - are safe and effective in public places and public passenger vehicles
- select dogs that can meet the individual needs of a person with disability
- provide ongoing and regular support to the handlers of the guide, hearing or assistance dogs they train.

Any relevant person's criminal history will be considered to the extent that it may affect their suitability to work with animals or people with disability.



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The GHAD team also considers the applicant's (or employee trainers'):

- qualifications, knowledge or experience in:
 - dog obedience training
 - working with people with disability
 - understanding the needs of people with disability
- training methods and ability to train reliable dogs
- membership of an organisation that promotes standards of dog training
- policies about:
 - management of personal information, privacy and confidentiality
 - the handling of complaints about the training service
- process for selecting dogs for people with disability
- management of records relating to dog training and certification and handler's identity cards
- public liability insurance cover of at least \$10 million.

Preparing an application

Your application must include evidence of how you intend to train guide, hearing or assistance dogs to support people with disability.

Include all steps of the dog training process you intend to follow—from the initial dog selection and handler suitability assessment to the final ongoing support you will provide after a dog has been certified.

Examples of evidence include:

- course certificates or degrees (if available)
- references from employers, clients and/or community members
- prior experience in dog obedience training
- experience supporting people with disability
- documentary information to support a handler's diagnosed disability, as defined by [section 5 of the Act](#) (e.g. eligibility criteria)
- service agreement between handlers and trainers
- assessment manual, intake list of handler requirements and any other documentary information about the specific disabilities or diagnoses for which you intend to train dogs
- dog selection manual and checklist that references temperament, breed, health and training or learning potential of dogs
- handler and dog suitability manual or guideline practices
- program or training schedule (including significant milestones and approximate certification timeframe)
- program of training methodology for a dog to:
 - perform specific tasks for its handler
 - be safe and effective in public places and passenger vehicles
- certification processes for trained dogs



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- copy of membership with any international or national organisations or peak bodies that promote dog training standards e.g. International Guide Dog Federation (IGDF) and Assistance Dogs International (ADI)
- processes and systems for recording, managing and retaining:
 - dog training and certification records (see [regulation 5](#) for the types of records required)
 - handler records including certificates or medical evidence provided by handlers regarding any disabilities (see [section 45A of the Act](#))
 - other required documents outlined in [regulation 5](#)
- policies for complaints handling and management of personal information, privacy and confidentiality
- program or schedule for providing ongoing support to a handler and their dog
- any guidelines around the responsibilities and role of the puppy carers (if relevant)
- sample logo for identifying dog coats, harnesses and badges.

Training institution applicants are encouraged to provide additional employee trainer information, such as:

- induction programs
- employment records
- manuals or guidelines.

Submitting an application

For an application to be processed, it must include:

- Form GHA-4: Application to become an approved trainer or training institution
- Form GHA-1: Consent to criminal history screening application (for all people covered in the application)
- Form GHA-2: Criminal history disclosure/change application (for all people covered in the application)
- any evidence to support your application.

Applications can be submitted by post or email via the details below.

For further information:

Phone: 13QGOV (13 74 68)
TTY: 133 677
Email: ghad@qld.gov.au

Postal: Locked Bag 3405, Brisbane QLD 4001
Website: www.qld.gov.au/ghad