KENNELWOOD ACADEMY

For Professional Dog Trainers

Course Catalog | 2026

Main Campus
162 Kennelwood Way
Union, MO 63084

Table of Contents

Academic Calendar 5

Certification Authorization 5

Academic Staff 5

Kennelwood Academy for Professional Dog Trainers 8

- Mission Statement 8
- Company History 8
- Why Choose Us 8
- Teaching Methodology 8

Academy Profile 9

- Campus Layout 9
- Academic Equipment 10
- Academic Schedule 10

Admissions 11

- Application for Admission 11
- Minimum requirements for all Applicants 11
- Education 11
- Transfer Credits 11
- Rolling Admissions 11
- Physical health and readiness 11
- Admissions Checklist 12

Student Financial Information 12

- Tuition Cost 12
- Billing of Tuition 12
- Cancellation policy 12
- Refunds and Repayment 12
- Date of Withdrawal 12

Academic Resources and Policies 13

- Academic Advising 13
- Academic Expectations and Conduct 13
- Attendance Policy 15

Holidays 15
Alcohol and Drug Policy 15
Anti-Harassment Policies 15
Grievance Policy 16
Academic Probation 17
Program Withdrawal 17
Re-Admission Policy 17
Performance Tests, Written Exams and Grading 18
Earning a Graduation Certificate 18
Performance Tests 18
Written Exams 18
Client Interaction Requirements 19
Satisfactory Academic Progress (SAP) Policy 19
Awards and Honors 19
Student Records 19
Student Transcripts 19
Student Affairs 20
Job Placement Assistance 20
Dress Code 20
Personal Pets 20
Vaccinations 20
Training Tools and Equipment 20
Programs Offered 21
Pet Dog Trainer Program 21
Tuition 21
Program Length 21
Program Schedule 21
Program Objectives and Learning Outcomes 21
Course Descriptions 22
Pet Dog Program Graduation Requirements 23
Attendance Policy 24

Professional Dog Trainer and Pet Dog 24
Tuition 24
Program Length 24
Program Schedule 24
Course Descriptions 25
Graduation Requirements 28
Training Tools & Equipment 29
Kennelwood Internship 29

Academic Calendar

2026

Professional Dog Trainer Program - January 5th - June 26th
Professional Dog Trainer Program - July 6th - December 25th
Pet Dog Trainer Program - October 5th - December 18th

2027

Professional Dog Trainer Program - January 11th - June 25th
Professional Dog Trainer Program - July 12th - December 23rd
Pet Dog Trainer Program - January 11th - March 26th
Pet Dog Trainer Program - April 12th - June 25th
Pet Dog Trainer Program - July 12th - September 24th
Pet Dog Trainer Program - October 11th - December 17th

2028

Professional Dog Trainer Program - January 10th - June 23rd
Professional Dog Trainer Program - July 10th - December 22nd
Pet Dog Trainer Program - January 10th - March 24th
Pet Dog Trainer Program - April 10th - June 23rd
Pet Dog Trainer Program - July 10th - September 22nd
Pet Dog Trainer Program - October 9th - December 22nd

Certification Authorization

The Kennelwood Academy for Professional Dog Trainers is certified to operate by the Missouri Department of Higher Education and Workforce Development (DHEWD)

Academic Staff

Dave van Garderen

Dave has been instructing dog training students since 2013 through a nationally recognized dog training school. During that time, Dave has helped hundreds of students to achieve professional dog training certifications. His graduates have gone on to work in many fields within the dog training industry including pet obedience, odor detection, personal and police protection, competitive dog sports and business ownership.

Dave realized his passion for dog training in his teenage years and enrolled in dog training school. Dave excelled and graduated with honors. After graduation, he traveled to another school in Sao Paulo, Brazil to focus on training aggressive dogs. Dave graduated with honors in canine aggression.

Before he began instructing future dog trainers, Dave worked at Kennelwood Pet Resorts for 12 years where he trained thousands of pets and instructed their owners on proper canine communication and leadership.

In addition to his remarkable professional dog training education and career, Dave is also an accomplished dog sport competitor. In 2010, Dave won the Schutzhund National Championship, earning the right to represent the United States at the World Championship in Germany. He won the Protection Sport Association's (PSA) "Highest Score of the Year" award in both 2011 and 2015 with two different dogs. Dave has also earned numerous first place finishes and "High in Trial" awards in various dog sports including AKC obedience, Schutzhund and PSA.

Jeremy Ciepluch

Jeremy is a distinguished military veteran who has committed his professional and personal life to helping and educating others.

During his years of Military Service, he was assigned to a helicopter Search and Rescue squadron where he personally conducted dozens of medical evacuation missions to save the lives of those in need. After an honorable discharge, he felt a calling to help other military veterans who suffered from PTSD and other service-related disabilities.

In 2015, this led him to attending a dog training school, where he received education on service dogs and how to cultivate the incredible bond between dogs and humans. After graduating at the top of his class, he went on to serve as Lead Trainer for the facility and eventually was promoted to Instructor, where he helped students achieve professional dog training certifications. He has dedicated himself to becoming a life-long educator and learner, and he strives to instill a similar desire in all the students with whom he teaches.

Not only does Jeremy love teaching and helping people understand dog behavior, but he also enjoys competitive protection dog sports. He is a 5x National level Protection Sports Association Senior decoy and has donated countless hours of training with local police departments.

Matt Koch: Matt has been a professional dog trainer for Kennelwood since 2001. During Matt's tenure with Kennelwood, he successfully developed and implemented dog training programs at numerous Kennelwood locations. Matt has mastered the art of cultivating relationships with veterinarians, pet professionals, and clients. Matt continues to find new ways of communicating concepts to clients in a manner that is easy to understand and implement with their pets.

In addition to training thousands of pets, Matt has competed extensively in Flyball with his dogs and has earned multiple titles in Flyball including FD, FDX, FDCH, FM. Matt has also fostered and trained over 60 rescue dogs throughout his professional career and has volunteered and helped rehabilitate hundreds of rescue dogs with behavioral problems.

Megan Hamby: Megan is a 2011 graduate from a highly regarded professional dog training school. Joining the Kennelwood training team in 2014, she has since collaborated with trainers both nationally

and internationally. Her expertise shines in the competitive dog training world, where she has consistently achieved remarkable accolades.

Megan and her Belgian Malinois, Feloyn, have earned 13 first-place wins across four different dog sports. Notable accomplishments include being a five-time PSA (Protection Sports Association) Regional Champion and PSA Level 1 National Champion in 2012, as well as the Level 2 National Vice Champion in 2013. In 2017, Megan and Feloyn became the 17th team in PSA history to earn the prestigious PSA 3 title.

She has received numerous High in Obedience and High in Protection awards, along with several Highest Score of the Year awards. Currently, Megan is focused on competing with her dog, Oui, aiming to replicate her past successes.

Leveraging her extensive experience and deep knowledge of competitive obedience and protection training, Megan is dedicated to helping families build stronger relationships with their pets. She provides expert guidance on understanding dog behavior and training, empowering owners to foster better connections with their canine companions.

Kennelwood Leadership Team

Chris Danforth: President/CEO
Jennifer van Garderen: Chief Operating Officer
Michele Grunwald: Chief Financial Officer

Kennelwood Academy for Professional Dog Trainers

Mission Statement

Kennelwood Academy for Professional Dog Trainers' mission is to create the most advanced and sought-after dog trainers in the industry. Using theories and techniques from a variety of disciplines, we create well rounded and versatile dog trainers that have the skills and knowledge to enter and quickly advance to the top of any dog training field.

Company History

Kennelwood Pet Resorts was opened in 1974, by Donald Danforth, Jr. He recognized an unfulfilled need in the pet care industry for a full-service boarding facility where pet owners could leave their companions knowing they would receive the highest level of care and attention. Mr. Danforth's vision was on the mark. Kennelwood Pet Resorts has been a success from the start.

Kennelwood was one of the first to offer dog training services to clients. Over the years, Kennelwood's training program has grown to be one of the most sought after in the industry. Partnering with nationally recognized dog training instructors with the most innovative techniques, Kennelwood is thrilled to be able to offer our expert dog training knowledge to aspiring professional dog trainers through the Kennelwood Academy for Professional Dog Trainers.

Why Choose Us

Kennelwood has spent over 50 years refining and perfecting one of the most successful dog training programs in the industry. Students of the Kennelwood Academy for Professional Dog Trainers will receive the expert knowledge that we have compiled for over four generations to utilize and implement in their own pet or working dog related business. In addition to expert dog training knowledge, Academy students receive thorough instruction on dog training sales, client relationship building, program structure and pricing for profit.

Academy students will have the privilege to learn the most advanced and innovative dog training theories and techniques from nationally recognized instructors. Upon graduation from the Kennelwood Academy for Professional Dog Trainers, students can be assured that they will have the skills and knowledge to work in most any dog training related field.

Teaching Methodology

The academy's innovative teaching method links theory, practice and real-world application, helping students to acquire the education they seek through classroom lectures, seminars, hands-on training and supervised internship. The academy believes that each person can learn regardless of one's age, life history, current circumstances, or experience. Our programs are designed to develop and enhance skills, abilities, values and knowledge, helping prepare our students for a career in the dog training industry.

Academy Profile

Campus Layout

MAIN CAMPUS:
162 Kennelwood Way
Union, MO 63084
The Kennelwood Academy Main Campus is located just 50 miles outside of St. Louis in Union, MO. The full campus design, complete with on-campus and off-campus student housing, allows students to fully focus on the dog training curriculum all from our beautiful property. Our campus is truly a dog trainer's paradise.

Campus highlights include:

- **40+ acres of field and woods**
- **10,000 square foot indoor training hall**
- **Outdoor training arena**
- **Retriever pond**
- **Walking trail**
- **On Campus & Off Campus student housing**
- **Located just minutes from shopping, restaurants and night life**

Academic Equipment

Enrolled students have access to the Academy's training facility, competition training field, tracking fields, and training pond, including weekends and holidays.

Students also have access to a wide range of professional training equipment, including agility obstacles, odor detection tools, competitive obedience equipment and service dog training equipment such as walkers, wheelchairs, and scooters.

Academic Schedule

The Professional Dog Trainer Program is offered four times per year in January, April, July and October and consists of 11 weeks.

The Pet Dog Trainer Program is offered two times per year in January and July and consists of 24 weeks.

Admissions

Application for Admission

Apply online at **www.kennelwoodacademy.com/online**-application or request a digital copy from **admissions@kennelwood.com**. Physical admission materials can be mailed to:

ATTN: Admissions Office
Kennelwood Academy
162 Kennelwood Way, Union, MO. 63084

Minimum Requirements for All Applicants

- **Must be 18 years or older**
- **Hold a high school diploma or equivalency**
- **Submit to a background check**

Education Records

Kennelwood Academy for Professional Dog Trainers reviews prior education as part of the application process.

Transfer Credits

Kennelwood Academy for Professional Dog Trainers will evaluate transfer credits on an individual basis.

Rolling Admissions

Kennelwood Academy for Professional Dog Trainers practices a rolling admissions policy. Applications are processed and reviewed as they are received. Students are notified of their admission on a continual basis, as their application becomes complete and reviewed. Please allow 1-2 weeks for processing.

Please note: Kennelwood Academy for Professional Dog Trainers reserves the right to deny a student admission based on background check results. Applicants whose background check reflects violent misdemeanor/felony conviction, animal cruelty related misdemeanor/felony conviction, felony drug charge or any sex offense misdemeanor/felony conviction will not be accepted.

Physical Health and Readiness

Working with animals can be a physically demanding occupation. Applicants should be in good physical health. There are inherent risks associated when working with animals. Students will regularly be exposed to animal hair and dander.

Admissions Checklist

- **Application completed and signed**
- **$60 non-refundable application fee (includes background check)**

Students who are accepted into the academy can secure a spot in an upcoming program by submitting their signed enrollment agreement with a $650 deposit that will be applied towards tuition.

Student Financial Information

Billing of Tuition

Tuition is due in full by the start of the program date. Payment can be made via cash, check or any major credit card. Tuition can be paid over the phone by calling 314-669-7414, or can be mailed to:

ATTN: Admissions Office
Kennelwood Academy
162 Kennelwood Way, Union, MO. 63084

Cancellation Policy

Once the academy receives the student's signed enrollment agreement and the $650 deposit, students may cancel their enrollment agreement and receive a full refund of all monies paid (excluding the $60 background check fee) if cancelled within three (3) days (excluding Saturdays, Sundays and holidays). Students are entitled to a 100% tuition refund if cancelled within three (3) days after the program has started (excluding Saturdays, Sundays and holidays). After the three (3) days, refunds will be given in accordance with the refund policy.

Refunds and Repayment

Students who withdraw or are dismissed may be refunded a portion of the tuition charged. No other charges are refundable. Refunds will be distributed within 30 days of receipt of the students written withdraw notice. Students who paid current tuition charges are eligible for refund of current term charges as follows:

Date of Withdrawal

- **Prior to the first day of instruction: 100% refund (excluding the $650 deposit)**
- **Days 1–3 of instruction: 100% refund (excluding the $650 deposit)**
- **Days 4–7 (remainder of week 1): 90% refund**
- **Weeks 2–3: 80% refund**
- **Week 4: 75% refund**

- **Weeks 5–6: 65% refund**
- **Weeks 7–8: 50% refund**
- **Weeks 9–10: 40% refund**
- **Weeks 11–12: 25% refund**
- **Week 13: 10% refund**
- **Week 14 or later: 0% refund**

Academic Resources and Policies

Academic Advising

Our academic team assists each student by guiding them on a path towards success. Kennelwood Academy for Professional Dog Trainers offers academic evaluations each month to answer program questions and will help create training plans to assist in earning a graduation certificate from one of the programs.

Academic Expectations and Conduct

Kennelwood Academy for Professional Dog Trainers expects its students to meet a high degree of professional and ethical standards. Disciplinary action will be taken in the event a student violates any rules or regulations.

The following and related types of misconduct are prohibited.

- **Mistreatment of animal(s) by any student.**
- **Fighting or using profanity, obscene, abusive, or threatening language or gestures. This includes sexual jokes and/or off-color humor aimed at any protected class or member thereof.**
- **Harassment of a fellow student based on a person's sex, race, national origin, religion, disability or any other basis.**
- **Excessive absenteeism or tardiness.**
- **Zero tolerance regarding theft from the academy, co-students, or customers of Kennelwood.**
- **Excessive, unnecessary, or unauthorized use of academy supplies, particularly for personal purposes.**
- **Reporting to school intoxicated or under the influence of non-prescribed drugs; to illegally manufacture, have possession of, use, sell, distribute or transport drugs.**

- **Bringing or using alcoholic beverages on academy property or using alcoholic beverages while engaged in school activities off academy premises, except where authorized.**
- **Possession, distribution, sale, transfer or use of alcohol or illegal drugs on campus, while on duty or while operating academy-owned vehicles or equipment.**
- **Falsifying student or other records.**
- **Unauthorized possession of dangerous or unauthorized materials, such as explosives or firearms on academy property or while on Kennelwood property.**
- **Unauthorized use of telephones, mail system or other academy-owned equipment.**
- **Disregarding safety or security regulations.**
- **Insubordination.**
- **Sexual misconduct.**
- **Failing to maintain the confidentiality of Kennelwood customer, or client information-including unauthorized disclosure of proprietary information.**
- **Signing company records indicating that services were given and failing to provide said services.**
- **Displaying disruptive behavior on campus. From the perspective of a reasonable person, characteristics of a disruptive student include:**
- **Making rude, condescending, insulting or demeaning statements to others**
- **Using angry, hostile tones**
- **Shouting, throwing things, slamming doors, etc., when displeased**
- **Berating employees and peers in front of others**
- **Showing insensitive, curt or disrespectful treatment of peers, support staff, manager(s) and clients**
- **Being physically or verbally abusive**
- **Retaliatory behavior; attacking if criticized**
- **Threatening litigation when displeased or challenged**
- **Disdaining authority and believing that rules do not apply to him/her**
- **Regularly being the source of many issues, which if taken singly, would be of limited relevance, but when taken together become highly significant**

The above are only examples of rules which experience has shown to be both necessary and most effective in maintaining sound academic relationships. They are only typical of cases, which can result in disciplinary action ranging from verbal warning to expulsion and are not to be construed as limiting or restricting disciplinary action to only the specific cases listed.

Attendance Policy

Due to the progressive structure of class, attendance is mandatory for all programs attended. Students must provide a valid excuse for any and all absences and, if requested by the instructor, provide supporting documentation. Students who miss more than 10% of the scheduled program, at the discretion of the instructor, may be subject to termination from the program. Dangerous weather, fire, flooding, power failures and other natural conditions will be determined under justifiable absences.

Holidays

We observe the following holidays: New Year's Day, Labor Day, Memorial Day, Thanksgiving Day, Independence Day, Christmas Day.

Alcohol and Drug Policy

Kennelwood Academy is strongly committed to maintaining a safe and healthy learning environment for all students. We also hold the expectation that all students will attend class at an acceptable performance level and be unimpaired by drug and/or alcohol. For these reasons Kennelwood Academy has implemented the following policy:

Drug Use, Possession, Sale, Distribution or Manufacture: The use, possession, sale, distribution or manufacturing of non-medically prescribed paraphernalia, controlled substances or of alcohol by anyone while on Kennelwood Academy property is prohibited. Further, students are prohibited from being at school under the influence of drugs or alcohol. Violation of this policy by a student while attending Kennelwood Academy may result in disciplinary action up to and including expulsion.

Depending on the circumstances, other action, including notification of appropriate law enforcement agencies, may be taken with respect to a violation of this policy.

Any illegal substances found will be confiscated and turned over to the appropriate law enforcement agency.

Students are required to notify Kennelwood Academy of any criminal drug statute conviction for a violation occurring while attending Kennelwood Academy no later than five (5) days after such a conviction.

Anti-Harassment Policies

It is the policy of Kennelwood Academy for Professional Dog Trainers, to maintain an academic environment free of unlawful discrimination for all students and employees. Harassment of any type, including bullying or sexual harassment, is unacceptable conduct that violates this policy.

A determination of whether one's conduct creates an intimidating, hostile, or offensive learning environment is assessed from the point of view of a reasonable person in the complainant's position and takes into account the totality of the circumstances, including, but not limited to:

- **the frequency of the offensive conduct;**
- **its seriousness;**
- **whether it is physically threatening or humiliating;**
- **the location of the conduct and the context in which it occurred;**
- **the degree to which the conduct affected the education environment; and**
- **the relationship between the parties**

Sexual harassment encompasses a wide range of unwanted, sexually directed behavior and has been defined in the following manner:

"Unwelcome sexual advances", and other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature constitute sexual harassment when:

- **Submission to such conduct is made, either expected or implied, a term or condition of an individual's enrollment.**
- **Submission to or rejection of such conduct by an individual is used as the basis for enrollment decisions affecting such individuals.**
- **Such conduct has the purpose or effect of unreasonable interference with an individual's work performance or creating an intimidating, hostile or offensive learning/ training environment.**

Sexual harassment applies to the conduct of students as well as Kennelwood Academy staff. Sexual harassment can apply to conduct outside Kennelwood Academy as well as on the site. Students who wish to register a complaint may do so through any appropriate member of our management team.

Allegations of sexual harassment will be investigated thoroughly. The facts will determine the response to each allegation. Substantiated acts of sexual harassment will be met with appropriate disciplinary action up to and including expulsion. All information regarding any specific incident will be kept confidential within the necessary boundaries of the fact-finding process, and no reprisals against the student reporting the allegation of sexual harassment will be tolerated.

Grievance Policy

Students who wish to file a grievance with the school must submit a written letter to a Kennelwood Academy Administrative Staff Member or by email **admissions@Kennelwood.com**, for review. Once submitted, a formal meeting will be set up with the student within two (2) business days to discuss the appropriate course of action. If the student is not satisfied with the resolution of the complaint, they may contact the **Missouri Department of Higher Education and Workforce Development (DHEWD) at (573) 751-2361** for information on filing a formal grievance against the school.

Academic Probation

Academic probation is an official warning issued when a student fails to show satisfactory academic progress or attendance. Students placed on academic probation will be closely monitored for two (2) weeks to establish improvement. Students that fail to show improvement may be subjected to expulsion from the program.

Program Withdrawal

To voluntarily withdraw from a program, students must submit a written withdrawal letter to the admissions office. Program refunds will be in accordance with the refund policy once the letter has been submitted.

Re-Admission Policy

Students may apply for re-admission for a program if termination was due to mitigating circumstance or absenteeism. Re-admission is not guaranteed and will be reviewed by a school official who will make the final decision.

Performance Tests, Written Exam and Grading

Earning a Graduation Certificate

In order to earn a graduation certificate, students must demonstrate the knowledge that they have learned and proficiency of the training they have practiced through a combination of practical performance tests and final test. Students must complete and pass Performance Tests, Written Exams and Client Interaction requirements to earn a certificate of graduation. Written Exams and Client Interaction requirements must be completed before the end of the program. Students that have not completed all Performance Test requirements at the end of their program will earn a certificate of attendance. After the program has ended, students will have a maximum of twenty-four (24) months to coordinate a test day at the academy or submit Performance Test videos to the academic staff for review. Once all requirements for graduation have been met, a graduation certificate will be awarded.

Performance Tests

Performance tests are practical applications of content taught and demonstrated throughout the course. These tests showcase the student's ability to put training theory and techniques into hands-on application. Performance tests are graded complete or incomplete and a minimum accumulative score of 70 percent is needed to pass.

PASS: 70 - 100
NON-PASSING: 0 - 69

Students may refer to the Kennelwood Academy for Professional Dog Trainer's rulebook that is given out at the start of each program for a complete list of rules, regulations and guidelines.

If a student receives a non-passing score for any given performance test or would like an opportunity to achieve a higher score, the student can re-test on the next available test day, as many times as necessary until they pass.

Written Exam

Written test questions are gathered from course content and from rules and regulations of industry standard performance tests. There is a final written exam near the end of the program. The grading scale is comparable to an academic institution.

PASSING: 70 - 100
NON-PASSING: 0 - 69

Students that receive a non-passing grade have three (3) opportunities to re-take a written test to earn a passing score. Written tests that are re-taken and passed are automatically graded at the minimum passing score of 70, regardless of the actual score they receive. If the student fails to pass the written test after the three (3) opportunities, students may be terminated from the program.

Client Interaction Requirements

Client interaction requirements are graded as complete or incomplete and are derived from; student participation, professionalism, and fluency in conveying training theory and methods to clients.

Satisfactory Academic Progress (SAP) Policy

Students have a maximum of twenty-four (24) months after the program ends to earn a graduation certificate. Students must maintain a minimum 90% attendance rate and a 70 average throughout the program. Kennelwood Academy will review student progress every month and notify students in violation of SAP. Students in violation will be placed on academic probation, as outlined in the Academic Probation Policy section.

Awards and Honors

Kennelwood Academy for Professional Dog Trainers supports academic achievement and is pleased to recognize and reward students whose performance merits special attention. Students who complete the course with a cumulative score of 96 or greater will earn a certificate with honors.

Student Records

An official file for each current and former student will be kept within the Kennelwood Academy administration department. All student documentation, such as contracts, evaluations, educational attainment records and application materials, will be kept in this file. Release of student file information would be executed only through court order, student signed release or on a “need to know” basis as determined by the Human Resources department. The Academy will maintain student records as required by law.

Student Transcripts

An official transcript listing all current grades and scores shall be issued at the end of each program or at the time of graduation. Current and prior students may request additional copies of their transcript, free of charge, by contacting the Kennelwood Academy Administration Department by email **admissions@kennelwood.com or by phone (314) 931-0962.**

Student Affairs

Job Placement Assistance

Partnering with Kennelwood Pet Resorts, students have access to potential career openings throughout an extensive company network that is spread across the world. Students have opportunities to work in areas in the pet industry, police units, TSA, search and rescue organizations, private security contracting, service dog organizations, specific odor detection trainer / handler, protection trainer / handler, hunting dog trainer.

Dress Code

Every student is expected to practice daily hygiene and good grooming habits. Students may wear what they feel is comfortable, understanding that clothes may get dirty while working with animals. However; tank tops, halter tops, muscle shirts, see-through shirts, shirts that do not cover the midriff, clothing with foul language or obscene images will not be allowed. Shoes that fully cover the foot are required. Students in violation are expected to immediately correct the issue. This may include having to leave class to change clothes. Repeated violations may result in disciplinary action being taken up to and including termination. Students enrolled in an internship or externship will adhere to Kennelwood Pet Resorts dress code policy while visiting Kennelwood Pet Resort locations. Kennelwood Pet Resorts' dress code policy is as follows: Kennelwood branded apparel (One (1) polo provided at no cost to the student), blue jeans (blue jean shorts are not allowed), black or khaki bottoms, including pants or shorts – 3 inches above the knee or longer. Clothing should be clean and in good repair with no rips, tears or frays.

Personal Pets

Students may bring up to two (2) personal pets that are not intended for program use. All pets must be up to date with the academy policy for vaccinations.

Vaccinations

Each animal on Kennelwood Academy for Professional Dog Trainer's property must be up to date on vaccinations. A list of current mandatory vaccinations will be sent out after students are accepted into a program. Records of vaccinations must be turned into a Kennelwood Academy for Professional Dog Trainers team member before the start of a program and after each vaccination is received.

Programs Offered

PET DOG TRAINER PROGRAM

The Pet Dog Trainer Program is designed to prepare students for professional work as companion dog training instructors within the pet dog industry. The program emphasizes practical training skills, client relations, and a strong foundation in canine behavior and learning theory. Through a structured combination of classroom instruction and supervised hands-on dog training, students develop the technical, instructional, and professional competencies necessary to work effectively with companion dogs and their owners.

Definition of Pet Dog

For the purposes of this program, a pet dog is defined as a domesticated dog kept primarily for companionship within a household or family environment. Companion dogs are not trained, marketed, or represented as service or working dogs. Training within this program focuses on behavior, obedience, and relationship-building skills appropriate for pet ownership and everyday living situations.

Tuition

$9,999

Program Length

11 weeks - 352 Course hours (86 classroom / 266 Lab hours)

Program Schedule

Class is held Monday - Friday, typically from 9:00 AM - 5:00 PM (end time may vary slightly by day) Scheduled breaks and a designated meal period are incorporated into each training day. Instructional time includes classroom learning and supervised, practical application.

Program Objectives and Learning Outcomes

Upon successful completion of the Pet Dog Trainer Program, graduates will be able to:

- **Demonstrate a foundational understanding of canine learning theory, behavior science, and training methodologies applicable to companion dogs.**
- **Evaluate dogs and puppies for temperament, suitability, and training needs within a companion dog context.**
- **Apply safe, ethical, and effective training techniques to teach foundational obedience, address common behavior problems, and support behavior modification plans.**
- **Communicate professionally with clients, including conducting evaluations, explaining training plans, setting realistic expectations, and providing clear instruction.**
- **Implement ethical sales and client management practices consistent with professional standards in the dog training industry.**
- **Demonstrate time management, professionalism, and collaboration skills appropriate for employment or independent practice as a companion dog trainer.**

Course Descriptions

Dog Training Techniques (10 class hours / 30 lab hours)
This course introduces students to a wide range of dog training theories, methods, and practical techniques used to teach dogs how to learn and problem-solve. Instruction emphasizes understanding canine learning processes and selecting appropriate methods for individual dogs and situations. Techniques covered include, but are not limited to, positive reinforcement, free shaping, shaping, luring, marker training, and the appropriate use of compulsion.

Dog and Puppy Selection (4 class hours / 7 lab hours)
Students learn how to evaluate and select puppies and adult dogs prior to entering a training program. The course covers assessment techniques to determine suitability for companion dog homes and family environments. Instruction includes breed identification, basic pedigree interpretation, and recognizing traits that influence future training success.

Puppy Imprinting and Socialization (4 class hours / 12 lab hours)
This course focuses on proper puppy raising, early training, and socialization practices. Students learn how early experiences impact long-term behavior in companion dogs. Common misconceptions and pitfalls in puppy development are addressed, along with strategies to avoid them and promote stable, confident dogs.

Animal Behavior Science and Theory (4 class hours / 8 lab hours)
An introduction to the scientific principles underlying modern dog training. Students explore learning theory, behavior science, and commonly applied training models, with an emphasis on understanding how theory translates into effective, ethical training practices.

Animal Health and Care (10 class hours / 5 lab hours)
This course prepares students to identify and appropriately respond to both breed-specific and general health concerns. Topics include evaluating overall canine health and condition, basic nutrition and feeding considerations, and recognizing common illnesses or injuries that require veterinary attention.

Basic Pet Obedience Training (10 class hours / 82 lab hours)
An in-depth course designed to prepare students for evaluating and training companion dogs and puppies in foundational obedience. Students apply multiple training methods across a variety of breeds and temperaments, developing practical skills that form the foundation for advanced training and behavior work.

Behavior Modification (8 class hours / 60 lab hours)
This course teaches students how to recognize and analyze canine body language and common behavior problems. Emphasis is placed on identifying root causes, developing individualized training plans, and applying creative problem-solving strategies to modify undesirable behaviors.

Canine Problem Solving (10 class hours / 10 lab hours)
Building on prior coursework, students refine their ability to troubleshoot training challenges. Through collaborative exercises, students analyze training breakdowns, evaluate techniques, and learn systematic approaches to resolving errors and improving training outcomes.

Managing Fear and Aggression (8 class hours / 10 lab hours)
Students study the principles of fear and aggression in dogs through multimedia presentations and hands-on experience when available. Instruction covers safe handling practices, counterconditioning strategies, management protocols, and the use of safety equipment to minimize risk to handlers and dogs.

Client Instruction (10 class hours / 20 lab hours)
This course develops students' professional communication and instructional skills. Students learn how to conduct client phone calls, schedule evaluations, explain training processes, and set realistic expectations from the first interaction through follow-up lessons. Instruction includes group teaching, one-on-one coaching, lesson structure, and adapting training plans based on client feedback. Emphasis is placed on clear explanations, professionalism, and effective client education.

Sales and Client Relations (8 class hours / 22 lab hours)
Students gain practical experience in building, maintaining, and retaining professional client relationships. Topics include lead generation, consultation flow, evaluation structure, ethical sales principles, pricing and package presentation, and scheduling. Students practice presenting services, handling common client questions and concerns, managing expectations, and responding appropriately to challenges such as perceived lack of progress or hesitation toward training tools. The course emphasizes decision-making, time management, collaboration with veterinary professionals, and long-term client retention strategies.

Pet Dog Program Graduation Requirements

Performance tests:

- **Stand**
- **Treadmill**
- **Wait at door**
- **1 min sit stay**
- **3 min down stay**
- **5 min climb stay**
- **Work with different dogs**
- **Pass Canine Good Citizen**

Written Exam:

- **One Written Exam, min 70%**

Client Interaction

- **Observe and conduct Pet Training evaluations**
- **Observe and conduct Private Lessons**
- **Observe and conduct difficult Dog & Client Lessons and Evaluations**

Minimum Tools Required:

- **Reward containment: pouch, apron or vest ($5 - $150)**
- **12 - 15 - foot - long line ($20 - $100)**
- **6 - foot leash ($10 - $20)**
- **Flexi ($20 - $60)**

Attendance Policy

Minimum Attendance Required
90% minimum attendance required (316 hours)

Due to the condensed nature of the Pet Dog Trainer Program, regular attendance is critical to student success. The program is designed to be completed in approximately 11 weeks. Students may miss no more than six (6) scheduled days during the program.

Absences beyond the allowable limit may result in the need for remediation, probation, or dismissal from the program, in accordance with Kennelwood Academy policies. Excessive absences may prevent a student from successfully meeting course objectives and required clock hours.

PROFESSIONAL DOG TRAINER PROGRAM

The Professional Dog Trainer Program is our core curriculum, encompassing a wider scope of training disciplines and theories than any other school in the industry. The Kennelwood Academy for Professional Dog Trainers instructional methodology starts in the classroom with knowledge-based learning through lectures, video evaluation, discussions and demonstrations, but its main teaching method is hands-on dog training supervised by experts. he Professional Dog Trainer Program is designed to prepare students to gain employment immediately upon graduation in areas such as; Pet resort trainer, Behavior modification, Specific Odor Detection trainer/ handler, Protection handler/ trainer, Hunt Dog trainer, Search and Rescue, Service and Therapy Dog trainer, just to name a few. Graduates of the Professional Dog Trainer Program earn a certificate through The Kennelwood Academy for Professional Dog Trainers and will be exceptionally qualified candidates for a career in dog training.

Tuition

$19,999

Program Length

24 weeks - 696 Course hours (134 classroom / 562 Lab hours)

Program Schedule

Class is held Monday – Friday, typically from 9:00 AM - 5:00 PM. (end time may vary slightly by day)
Periodic breaks and a meal break are factored into the program schedule.

Course Descriptions

Dog Training Techniques (6 class hours / 22 lab hours)
Due to the wide scope of the Kennelwood Academy's program we employ many different theories, methods and techniques to teach students how dogs think and learn. These techniques include but are not limited to; purely positive, free shaping, shaping, luring, marker training, and compulsion, just to name a few.

Dog and Puppy Selection (3 class hours / 8 lab hours)
This course teaches students how to test, select and determine what areas individual puppies and dogs are projected to excel in, prior to starting a training program. Selection of pets, working dogs and service dogs are covered. Students will learn breed recognition and how to read a pedigree.

Puppy Imprinting and Socialization (3 class hours / 12 lab hours)
The objective of the puppy imprinting, and socialization course is for students to learn proper puppy raising, training, socializing techniques and how they apply to pets, working, and service dogs. Students will also learn about common misperceptions and pit falls in these areas and how to avoid them.

Animal Behavior Science and Theory (4 class hours / 4 lab hours)
This course is an introduction to the science behind dog training methods, various theories, how they are applied and their effects on modern dog training.

Animal Health and Care (10 class hours / 5 lab hours)
The animal health and care course will prepare students to identify, and properly respond to breed specific and non-breed specific health issues. Students will be able to evaluate the general health and condition of a dog, determine proper feeding and recognize common ailments in time to get proper veterinary care.

Behavior Modification (8 class hours / 12 lab hours)
The behavior modification course is designed to prepare students to recognize and analyze; dog body language, common problem behaviors, determining the source of the problem, how to think outside the box and develop a training plan accordingly.

Competition Obedience Training (12 class hours / 73 lab hours)
The objective of the Competition Obedience Course is to prepare students for all aspects of competitive canine obedience training. Upon completion of the course, students will have mastered material covering canine behavior theory, training theory, and the evaluation and modification of problem behaviors as they relate to competitions. Students will be able to train dogs for competitive obedience trials, such as the AKC, PSA, IGP and understand the rules for each respective dog sport.

Trained Retrieves (5 class hours / 60 lab hours)
In this course, students gain practical knowledge of canine retrieval training. Students will learn the different theories and methods of the retrieve, how they apply differently to puppies, pets, hunting dogs, service dogs, as well as competition dogs.

Dog Agility (4 class hours / 21 lab hours)
In the dog agility course, students learn about the fundamentals of agility training. Upon completion of the course, students will have mastered the skills necessary to perform each piece of agility equipment with control. Additionally, students will learn how to teach dogs proper jump technique and timing.

Tracking and Trailing (6 class hours / 30 lab hours)
The tracking course focuses on selecting, training and handling a tracking dog. This course emphasizes on competition tracking as well as an introduction to Search and Rescue. After completing this course, students will have mastered the varied aspects of teaching tracking, including how dogs learn complex behaviors, teaching an article indication, reading a dog during tracking and how to adjust the training program to fit the needs of the dog. Additionally, students will learn how weather, vegetation and terrain affect the tracking process.

Specific Odor Detection (8 class hours / 43 lab hours)
This course is designed to prepare students for all aspects of selecting, teaching and handling a detection dog to locate specific odors and alert the trainer to the presence of those scents. The course allows students to participate in competitive odor detection sports such as AKC and real-world application with law enforcement and private contractors. Students also learn about different stages of cadaver scents and how to find buried odors.

Protection Development (6 class hours / 94 lab hours)
The protection development course is designed to prepare students to select, train and handle a protection dog. Students will gain fluency in the theories and physical techniques of decoy/helper skills needed to build dogs for protection work. Areas of study include, drive building, bite development, targeting and environmental desensitization.

Service and Therapy Dog Training (10 class hours / 25 lab hours)
The objective of the service and therapy dog course is to prepare students for selection, training and delivery of service and therapy dogs. Additionally, students will learn about ADA (Americans with Disabilities Act) law and the wide range of helping behaviors service dogs perform and how to train and maintain them.

Managing Fear and Aggression (8 class hours / 8 lab hours)
In this course, students analyze and work with fearful and aggressive dogs. The course is covered through multi-media presentation and hands-on experience when available. Students will learn the principles of aggression, safe handling techniques, counter conditioning and management techniques. Students will also work with various safety tools to prevent harm to handlers.

Canine Problem Solving (10 class hours / 10 lab hours)
This course builds upon the student's ability to problem solve specific areas of training. Students will work together to evaluate and breakdown various dog training behaviors and techniques and learn how to think outside of the box to resolve training errors.

Advanced Obedience Training (6 class hours / 34 lab hours)
In this course students will master the skills needed to compete at the highest levels of competitive obedience training. Students will have the ability to design, instruct and successfully carry out competitive obedience training programs for private or commercial use and prepare themselves to show in dog trials.

Competition Agility (2 class hours / 10 lab hours)
Upon completion of the competition agility course, students will have learned the skills necessary to select, train and compete with a dog in agility trials. Students will learn lead out techniques and how to build speed and control. Additionally, students will be able to teach others to train and successfully compete in the sport.

Hunt and Service Dog Retrieval Training (3 class hours / 22 lab hours)
This course focuses on advancing the already trained canine retriever to longer distances, water retrieves, blinds, as well as retrieving multiple items i.e. doubles and triples. Students will also learn laser guided and named item retrieves and how they apply to service dogs.

Advanced Tracking and Search and Rescue (4 class hours / 14 lab hours)
This course further develops the student's ability to work with tracking dogs. Students will increase the length, age and difficulty in their tracks, and learn how to problem solve tracking issues. Students will practice training a Search and Rescue dog, learn how to read behaviors of lost humans and how to offer services to the community.

Police Canine Odor Detection (5 class hours / 15 lab hours)
In this course, students build upon their specific odor detection knowledge. The focus of this course is to recreate typical police canine searches such as vehicle and building searches with varying amounts of substance. Students will learn about canine law and how to offer private contracting services to the public.

Police, Personal and Sport Protection (4 class hours / 28 lab hours)
This course provides in-depth experience in canine protection. Students learn how to teach police apprehension techniques, area searching and various protection sport scenarios. Students will also learn how to safely catch and drive a protection dog for specific areas of training.

Mobility/Stability Service Dog Training (3 class hours / 4 lab hours)
In this course, students are exposed to the difference between mobility and stability service dogs. Students will learn how to teach specific service dog related tasks to help disabled individuals in everyday life.

Medical Alert and Trigger Response Training (4 class hours / 8 lab hours)
This course is designed to teach students how to train service dog related tasks including; diabetic alert, migraine alert, allergy detection, seizure response, Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) trigger response and night terror response.

Graduation Requirements

Dog Requirements
A minimum of one (1) dog will need to be trained to graduate from the program but two (2) are recommended due to physical and mental workload of the course. Dogs should be un-trained in the area they plan to be utilized in. The ideal candidates are puppies between 8-16 weeks old at the start of the program.

Performance Tests Required for Graduation

- **Puppy Imprinting**
- **Tracking and Trailing Test**
- **AKC Novice Obedience**
- **AKC Novice Agility**
- **AKC Scent Work - Novice Container Division**
- **AKC Scent Work - Buried Odor**
- **Retrieval Test**
- **Send Out Test**
- **Competitive Tracking**
- **Search and Rescue Tracking**
- **Specific Odor Detection – Building Search**
- **Lost Item Search**
- **AKC Open Obedience**
- **Therapy Dog Test**
- **Service Dog Retrieval Test**
- **Hunting Retrieve Test**

Written Exam

- **One (1) Written Exam**

Minimum Attendance Requirements

- **90% minimum attendance required (626 hours)**

Training Tools & Equipment

Students are encouraged to refrain from purchasing new equipment until after arrival and the start of the program but should bring any equipment they already own. Many training items will be available for use provided through the academy. A reasonable estimate to budget for equipment is averaged at $1500. This budget does not include the cost of purchasing dogs, dog food/treats or veterinary medical bills.

Minimum required training tools and equipment:

- **Collar(s) ($20 - $80)**
- **Crate(s) ($40 - $250)**
- **Retrieval items and dumbbell(s) ($5 - $60)**
- **6 – foot leash(s) ($20 - $120)**
- **33 – foot longline ($20 - $100)**
- **Specific odor scents ($5 - $500)**
- **Dog reward toy(s) ($10 - $100)**
- **Tracking tools ($5 - $40)**
- **Agitation collar / harness ($20 - $180)**
- **Bair apron / training vest ($5 - $120)**
- **Training bench ($40 - $120)**
- **Retractable leash ($20 - $60)**

Kennelwood Academy Internship

Internships are offered to select students who exemplify excellence in professionalism and are dedicated to their continued education. Students that wish to apply for an internship position must have attended the Professional Dog Trainer Program and be in good standing with Kennelwood Academy. Interns work alongside the instructing staff and will gain experience in teaching others how to educate more complex areas of dog training theories and practices. Each intern will be assigned educational and practical requirements tailored to their goals, dogs and length of internship.

Dual Program
(Pet + Professional Combined)

For students who want the deepest level of hands-on experience, the Dual Program combines our Pet Dog Trainer and Professional Dog Trainer programs into one seamless 9-month track. More time in the program means more hands-on hours, more real-world scenarios, and more repetition of core skills — building the kind of confidence and readiness that comes only with extended, immersive training. Graduates leave with a deeper skill set and more experience under their belt, stepping into the field fully prepared from day one.

Why Go Dual

- **Earn two certifications in one continuous enrollment — no reapplying, no gap between programs**
- **1,048 total hours of hands-on training vs. 352 or 696 alone**
- **Graduate qualified for both companion training careers and specialized/working dog fields (detection, protection, service and therapy, search and rescue, and more)**
- **Save $2,999 vs. enrolling in both programs separately**

Tuition

$26,999. Tuition is due in full by the program start date.

Program Length

9 months (35 weeks) – 1,048 Course hours

Program Schedule
Class is held Monday – Friday, typically from 9:00 AM – 5:00 PM (end time may vary slightly by day). Scheduled breaks and a designated meal period are incorporated into each training day. Instructional time includes classroom learning and supervised, practical application. Held at the Main Campus in Union, MO.

Minimum Attendance Required

90% minimum attendance required (942 hours)

Admissions Fees

- **Application fee: $60 (non-refundable)**
- **Enrollment deposit: $650 (applied toward tuition)**

FoUpcoming Cohort Dates

- **2027: January 11 – June 25, 2027, and July 12 – December 23, 2027**
- **2028: January 10 – June 23, 2028, and July 10 – December 22, 2028**

Training Tools & Equipment

Students are encouraged to refrain from purchasing new equipment until after arrival and the start of the program but should bring any equipment they already own. Many training items will be available for use provided through the academy. A reasonable estimate to budget for equipment is averaged at $1,500. This budget does not include the cost of purchasing dogs, dog food/treats or veterinary medical bills.

Minimum required training tools and equipment:

- **Collar(s) ($20 - $80)**
- **Crate(s) ($40 - $250)**
- **Retrieval items and dumbbell(s) ($5 - $60)**
- **6 – foot leash(s) ($20 - $120)**
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