

CPPPS

Certified Professional Pet Sitter[®]



Handbook for Candidates

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Mission Statement for the CPPS-Certified Professional Pet Sitter® Exam and Designation

Pet Sitters International (PSI) is committed to continuous professional growth through education. We believe that our Certified Professional Pet Sitter Exam accurately assesses the skill sets needed to provide the most responsible and professional pet care.

Purpose of the CPPS-Certified Professional Pet Sitter® Exam and Designation

The CPPS-Certified Professional Pet Sitter Exam promotes responsible and professional pet care in the pet-sitting industry by:

- Recognizing those individuals who have demonstrated the knowledge and skills necessary to conduct themselves as professional pet sitters.
- Encouraging education and professional development in the pet sitting industry.
- Offering a standard of excellence in pet sitting by which the pet care industry and the public at large can more readily recognize the professionalism, care and responsibility that are the hallmarks of a true professional pet sitter.

Eligibility Requirements

Participants in the CPPS-Certified Professional Pet Sitter Exam are required to meet the following requirements:

- Must be age 18 years or older.
- Must have a high school diploma or equivalent.
- Must be an active member of Pet Sitters International (PSI).

Non-discrimination Policy

Pet Sitters International (PSI) does not and shall not discriminate against a person due to race, color, religion, sex, sexual orientation, national origin, citizenship, disability, veteran/military status, age, genetic information or any protected classification established by law, in its membership, staffing, educational programs, activities and operations. PSI is committed to providing an inclusive and welcoming environment for its members, staff, partners, advertisers, and vendors. See also [PSIs Anti-Harassment Policy](#).

Exam Candidates with Accommodation Requests

Special testing accommodations can be made for qualifying individuals. Please be encouraged to contact education@petsit.com to discuss these needs with the Education Department prior to requesting the exam.

Administration of the Exam

The CPPS-Certified Professional Pet Sitter Exam is administered online through a third-party provider, Gauge (formerly Test.com). The exam is 100 multiple choice questions in length and is to be supervised by a proctor. The proctor is chosen by the candidate and may be anyone of their choosing, with the exception of family members or significant others. This requirement is in place to protect the integrity of the CPPS-Certified Professional Pet Sitter Exam and no exceptions will be made to this policy.

Candidates will be allotted three (3) hours in which to complete the exam once the exam has been opened in Gauge.com.

Candidates must score 80 percent or higher on the CPPS-Certified Professional Pet Sitter® Exam to earn the designation of CPPS-Certified Professional Pet Sitter.

Rules for the Exam

During the course of the examination, candidates are required to:

- Complete the exam within the three (3) hour period allotted, unless a request for accommodation has been previously approved by the Education Department.
- Have the proctor present at all times during testing.
- Remove any materials or resources which might be used to assist in their answers. (Candidates may only use their previously acquired knowledge and skills to answer the exam questions.)

Examination Procedure

Upon applying for the CPPS-Certified Professional Pet Sitter® Exam, candidates are permitted six (6) months to request the exam. Candidates are encouraged to review this handbook carefully, along with the CPPS-Certified Professional Pet Sitter Study Guide.

To apply for the CPPS-Certified Professional Pet Sitter Exam, candidates must first choose a proctor. The proctor can be anyone of the candidate's choosing, with the exception of family members or significant others. Librarians, veterinarians, attorneys, clergypersons, or fellow pet sitters are all possible proctors that candidates could approach.

Once a proctor has been selected, they can then complete a brief form, which is included in the CPPS-Certified Professional Pet Sitter Handbook for Candidates. Upon completion of the proctor form, candidates may then return it to Pet Sitters International (PSI) to the attention of the Education Department by email as indicated on the form.

The Education Department will then review and approve the proctor form, provided the specified criteria for proctoring have been met. After proctor approval, the candidate will automatically be sent an email to the email address on their PSI member profile containing a link to the final exam.

PLEASE NOTE: Candidates who do not receive an email within 5-7 business days of proctor form submission should contact the Education Department, as it is the sole responsibility of the candidate to make sure that the proctor form is received prior to any deadlines.

After the proctor form has been approved and exam link emailed, each candidate is allotted thirty (30) days with which to access the exam. This thirty (30) day time period begins effective the day the proctor form is processed by the Education Department. During those thirty (30) days, candidates may access the final exam by clicking on the link contained in the email and indicating on their unique account that they are ready to start the test. Once the test has begun, each candidate has three (3) hours with which to complete it, unless an accommodation has been approved prior to requesting the exam.

Candidates may NOT use any materials or resources to aid them as they complete the exam and they are required to have their proctor present as they are testing. Violation of this policy will result in revocation of the CPPS-Certified Professional Pet Sitter designation.

The Gauge platform allows test-takers to review their answers prior to submitting the exam and candidates are encouraged to make use of this feature to be certain that no questions were left blank, as a blank answer is scored as incorrect.

Fees

One attempt to pass the CPPS-Certified Professional Pet Sitter Exam is included in the purchase of enrollment. If the exam produces a failed result, candidates have the opportunity to reapply for the exam by submitting a \$79 USD retesting fee to the Education Department. This retesting fee may only be taken advantage of once. A second failure will require candidates to repurchase the CPPS-Certified Professional Pet Sitter Exam enrollment in its entirety in order to earn the CPPS-Certified Professional Pet Sitter designation.

Refunds

There are no full or partial refunds offered for the CPPS-Certified Professional Pet Sitter Exam or for retesting. If you are unable to complete the final exam during the time allotted, you may pay a \$79 USD fee for an extension. This extension may only be taken advantage of once and only if it is applied thirty (30) days after the initial six (6) month preparation period has expired. Candidates should plan carefully, as no exceptions will be made to this policy.

Report of Results

Results of the CPPS-Certified Professional Pet Sitter Exam are delivered to the candidate immediately upon submission of their exam to Gauge.com. A passing result will allow the candidate the opportunity to review how their answers were scored, but this will only be available while the testing window remains open. Once it has closed, candidates will not be permitted to view their completed exam again. Candidates will be presented with

a digital certificate indicating their accomplishment in becoming a CPPS-Certified Professional Pet Sitter. Candidates should save a copy of this file for their records.

A failed result will not allow the candidate to review how their answers were scored, as candidates will have the opportunity to retest, if they so choose. Candidates who do not pass the CPPS-Certified Professional Pet Sitter Exam will be contacted by the Education Department within 5-7 business days to outline their options for retesting.

Examination Challenges

Candidates may challenge the overall results or specific questions on the CPPS-Certified Professional Pet Sitter Exam by contacting the Education Department at education@petsit.com within seven (7) business days of completing the exam.

All challenges must include:

- Candidates' first and last name
- Candidates' company name
- Subject line should read: CPPS Exam Challenge
- Date of exam attempt
- Whether candidate is challenging the results of the exam or challenging a specific question/answer on the exam. If the latter, candidate should provide as many details as possible as to the nature of the question(s).

All examination challenges will be carefully reviewed and considered by the Education Department for validity and responded to promptly. Candidates will be contacted once a final decision has been made and are asked to allow seven (7) business days for a response to allow for thorough deliberation.

Confidentiality

Pet Sitters International (PSI) will release a candidate's examination scores to the individual candidate only. All records maintained by PSI will be treated with the sensitivity and consideration standard of Certifications.

Candidates will have the opportunity to be listed on PSI's Pet Sitter Locator and as a result of their passing the exam, will be awarded an icon indicating their achievement to the pet owning public. Candidates who do not wish to be listed on the Pet Sitter Locator are able to opt out, if they so choose. Candidates will also be given access to the CPPS-Certified Professional Pet Sitter logo upon passing the exam, along with guidelines for its use.

Content of the Examination

The CPPS-Certified Professional Pet Sitter Exam is composed of 100 multiple choice, true/false and fill in the blank questions with a total testing time of three (3) hours. The exam questions have been developed by Pet Sitters International for the purposes of assessing the knowledge and skills of professional pet sitters. The exam questions are regularly reviewed by Pet Sitters International for content and accuracy.

The CPPS-Certified Professional Pet Sitter Exam consists of three primary skills for assessment: Pet Care, Health, Sanitation and Safety, and Business Operations. The following percentages indicate the portion of the exam that will be devoted to assessing these skills.

Domain 1: Pet Care: 40%

Domain 2: Health, Sanitation and Safety: 40%

Domain 3: Business Operations: 20%

Study Objectives

The CPPS-Certified Professional Pet Sitter Exam will assess the knowledge and skills required to be a professional pet sitter. These required skills are outlined below.

A. Domain: Pet Care

1. Pet Sitting
 - a. Able to define pet sitting.
 - b. Describe how a typical pet sitting visit is conducted.
2. Dogs
 - a. Demonstrate knowledge of canine behavior and body language.
 - b. Identify the dietary and exercise needs of canines.
 - c. Understands the basic anatomy, as well as growth and development stages of dogs.
 - d. Recognize the different styles of collars and leashes and explain the purpose of each.
 - e. Understands common diseases that affect canines and can recognize signs of illness.
3. Cats
 - a. Demonstrate knowledge of feline behavior and body language
 - b. Identify the dietary and exercise needs of felines.
 - c. Understands the basic anatomy, as well as growth and development stages of cats.
 - d. Recognize the different litter types and best technique for cleaning each.
 - e. Understands common diseases that affect felines and can recognize signs of illness.

B. Domain: Health, Sanitation and Safety

1. Animal First Aid and Health
 - a. Understands the importance of a regular physical assessments of pets and demonstrates knowledge of how to perform one.
 - b. Understands how to perform basic pet first aid functions, such as bandaging a cut, inducing vomiting, initial treatment for heatstroke, rescue breathing and chest compressions.
2. Parasites and Sanitation
 - a. Identify common pet parasites.
 - b. Demonstrate knowledge of how to sanitize pet stains and the best method to dispose of waste.
 - c. Recognize the importance of containing diseases and can follow steps to prevent their spread.
3. Pet Loss
 - a. Define the different methods of handling pet remains.
 - b. Understands the stages of grief.
4. Pet Sitter Health and Safety
 - a. Recognizes health concerns unique to pet sitting and understands methods of prevention.
 - b. Define burnout and compassion fatigue.
 - c. Demonstrates knowledge of safety procedures when in a client's home or traveling in a vehicle.

C. Domain: Business Operations

1. Client Interviews and Customer Service
 - a. Recognize appropriate/inappropriate conduct as a pet sitting professional.
 - b. Demonstrates understanding of how to diplomatically decline an assignment.
 - c. Identifies the hallmarks of excellent service and can apply them to real-life situations.
2. Disaster Planning
 - a. Identify the most common disasters, both man-made and natural.
 - b. Describe the appropriate action to take during an evacuation.
 - c. List the necessary supplies for both pets and people during a disaster.
3. Ethics, Legal Issues and Pet Sitter Liability
 - a. Understands the importance of having a legally binding contract that outlines the obligations of both pet owner and pet sitter.
 - b. Define liability insurance and bonding.
 - c. Understands licensing and business structure types as they apply to pet sitters.
 - d. Demonstrates knowledge regarding common liability issues for pet sitters.
4. Marketing, Social Media and Promotion
 - a. Identify different marketing types and how to measure their efficacy.

- b. Understands media relations and how to hold professional communications with media.
5. Office Procedures
- a. Define service area and rates as they apply to the pet sitting industry.
 - b. Demonstrates knowledge of time management skills and scheduling.
 - c. Understands the importance of proper record keeping.

Sample Exam Questions

1. Where do most fleas congregate on an animal?
 - A. The head and stomach.
 - B. Inside the ear canal.
 - C. The neck and tail areas.
 - D. On the hind legs.
2. Why should a pet-sitter be bonded and insured?
 - A. To protect the pet sitter's personal assets should an accident or mistake occur on the job
 - B. To give clients peace of mind
 - C. To indicate professionalism
 - D. All of the above
3. True/False: Should you not be able to contact the client, or if you do not hear from the client at the expected return time, continue to care for the pet until you are instructed to do otherwise.

Correct Answers: 1:C, 2:D, 3:True

Certification and Recertification

Passing the CPPS-Certified Professional Pet Sitter Exam grants the candidate the designation of CPPS-Certified Professional Pet Sitter®. This certification is in effect for a period of three (3) years, during which time the CPPS can earn continuing education units (CEUs) to recertify the credential for an additional three (3) year period.

CPPSs are required to earn thirty (30) CEUs per every three (3) year period to indicate their continued commitment to education and to be given the option of recertifying.

Once the thirty (30) required CEUs have been obtained, the CPPS must then submit the required recertification submittal fee of \$79 USD for recertification to be processed and the CPPS designation to be extended a further three (3) years.

If extenuating circumstances prevent a CPPS from earning the required number of credits during the three (3) year period, a \$79 USD fee can be submitted to award a six (6) month extension. This extension may only be awarded once per three (3) year cycle and must be submitted within thirty (30) days of certification expiring to be applied.

Failure to recertify will result in the loss of the CPPS-Certified Professional Pet Sitter designation. CPPS logo usage on websites and/or electronic communications must be removed within seven (7) days following the expiration of certification. All logo use on business cards, brochures and other promotional materials must cease within thirty (30) days. CPPS logos in directories and other subscription ads must be removed at the next renewal.

To reinstate the CPPS-Certified Professional Pet Sitter designation after it has lapsed, the CPPS would have to purchase and complete the CPPS-Certified Professional Pet Sitter Exam in its entirety again.

Certification Renewal Options

The Certification Renewal Options list contains programs and offerings that have been evaluated and preapproved by Pet Sitters International (PSI) for CEU credit. CEUs can be earned a variety of different ways and a complete and up-to-date list of preapproved options will always be available in the Members Area of www.petsit.com. You can find more information on the various opportunities available, the CEU value and any limitations associated with a specific opportunity on that list.

Documentation requirements are also outlined on the Certification Renewal Options list.

Code of Conduct and Ethics

Pet Sitters International (PSI) members, CPPS-Certified Professional Pet Sitters and candidates for the CPPS designation should deal with clients, other pet sitters and PSI with honesty, integrity and candor, and should avoid any conduct that could put clients or their animals, residences or properties at risk, in accordance with each member's voluntary agreement to abide by the [PSI Member Code of Conduct and Ethics](#).

Violation of Conduct and Ethics

Failure to comply with the Code of Conduct and Ethics, if substantiated in the opinion of Pet Sitters International (PSI), is grounds for immediate revocation of membership and CPPS status. Further, conviction of a crime against persons or property or listing as a registered sex offender is grounds for immediate termination of membership and revocation of CPPS status.

CPPSs having found to have engaged in dishonest test-taking practices (e.g. cheating) will be subject to immediate revocation of certification status with no possibility of reinstatement.

Suspected violations of the Code of Conduct and Ethics by CPPSs can be brought to the attention of the Education Committee by emailing education@petsit.com. Violations will be investigated through open disclosure, with the alleged offender being given the opportunity to contest the allegations in writing. Responses will be reviewed and appropriate action taken as determined by the Education Committee.

Revocation of CPPS-Certified Professional Pet Sitter Designation

Following membership and CPPS designation revocation, all CPPS logo usage on websites and/or electronic communications must be removed within seven (7) days. All logo use on business cards, brochures and other promotional materials must cease within 30 days. CPPS logos in directories and other subscription ads must be removed at the next renewal following revocation of CPPS status.

Proctor Form

When selecting a proctor to administer the CPPS-Certified Professional Pet Sitter Exam, you may choose any associate or friend other than a family member or significant other. Some suggestions would be an employer, teacher, businessperson, librarian or clergyperson. When you are ready to take your exam, you and your proctor will decide on a time and a place for the testing to occur.

Once you have chosen a suitable proctor, the two of you will then complete the bottom portion of this form. You may return the form to PSI's Education Department by email at education@petsit.com. This will serve as your notification to PSI that you are ready to be tested, and we will then email the online testing access code and instructions to you. **NOTE: If you fail to request the exam by the six-month deadline, you will be required to reapply for it and pay a U.S. \$79.00 late fee. Please refer to your Handbook for more information.**

The exam must be completed solely by the applicant without the use of any materials or resources. **Once your proctor form has been processed, you will have 30 days to access the exam.** Once you begin the exam, you will have **3 hours** with which to complete it. Your proctor must be present as you are testing. Please let us know if you have any additional questions about the testing process.

To the Proctor:

Thank you very much for agreeing to serve as a proctor for this CPPS-Certified Professional Pet Sitter Exam Candidate. Please complete the information below and return the form to the Candidate.

Proctor's Name _____

Mailing Address _____

City, State, Zip _____

Phone _____ Email _____

I will personally administer the CPPS-Certified Professional Pet Sitter Exam on behalf of the candidate named below. I further attest that the environment provided will be suitable for testing.

(Signature)

(Date)

(Relation)

To the Candidate:

I hereby affirm that I meet the eligibility requirements necessary to complete the CPPS-Certified Professional Pet Sitter Exam. I am age 18 years or older, have a high school diploma or equivalent and I am an active member of Pet Sitters International.

(Signature)

(Date)

(Printed First & Last Name)