

ISAAT framework curriculum

Basic qualification for animals - other species - in animal-assisted interventions (template, draft)

Necessity and scope of common guidelines

This framework curriculum provides a framework for the implementation of initial, continuing or further training that meets ISAAT's quality standards. The alignment of further training with the framework curriculum is a basic prerequisite for accreditation of the training by ISAAT.

The framework curriculum thus specifies the mandatory content areas of the training; the specific organizational or didactic implementation is defined in the **checklist basic qualification for animals - other species - in animal-assisted interventions** (current version).

Animal image - ethical and legal requirements

Animal-assisted work is based on the ISAAT definitions and the definitions of the International Association of Human-Animal Interaction Organizations (IAHAIO).

Animal-friendly husbandry and care is guaranteed for the animals used in the project.

In the event of stress or discomfort shown by the animal during the animal-assisted work, immediate measures are taken to ensure the animal's well-being; excessive demands, e.g. excessive use, are not permitted.

The encounter between animals and humans takes place with respect; the orientation of animal-assisted work is based on the ethical and professional guidelines of ISAAT, equivalent federal/state-specific legal principles for the welfare of humans and animals must be observed, e.g. the recommendations of the International Association for Human-Animal Interaction Organizations (IAHAIO), the animal protection law of the Country plus animal species-specific supplementary regulations and the "Recommendations of the Veterinary Association for Animal Welfare e.V. (TVT leaflets in Germany)", insofar as these correspond at least to the ISAAT requirements.

Understanding education

Structural framework conditions

The qualification measure is to be classified at level 3 of the European Qualifications Framework for Lifelong Learning (EQF). ¹

The following learning outcomes are intended for a qualification at this level:

1. The learner has knowledge of facts, principles, procedures and general terms in the respective field of work and application of humans for the inclusion of the respective animal species in the context of animal-assisted interventions.
2. He/she has the relevant cognitive and practical skills required to complete tasks and solve problems independently in this field of work, selecting and applying basic methods, tools, materials and information.
3. He/she assumes responsibility for the consequences resulting from these tasks and problem solutions, carries out the activities relevant to the work context independently or with the involvement of the relevant specialist personnel and is able to adapt to short-term changes.

¹ Council of the European Union (2017). Council Recommendation of May 22, 2017 on the European Qualifications Framework for lifelong learning and repealing the Recommendation of the European Parliament and of the Council of April 23, 2008 on the establishment of the European Qualifications Framework for lifelong learning. Official Journal of the European Union. C189, 15-28. https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/ALL/?uri=uriserv:OJ.C_.2017.189.01.0015.01.DEU.

Skills development and knowledge acquisition go hand in hand. Students have to learn, think and experience the specific working field in individual courses or through materials, and they develop their skills by dealing with concrete situations, important topics and social exchange. The qualification concept must take this into account.

The aim of the framework curriculum is to define the learning outcomes for the **basic qualification for animals - other species - in animal-assisted interventions**, geared towards the respective animal species specified in the curriculum; a separate basic qualification or accreditation is required for each animal species. The qualification measure comprises at least 5 ECTS (assessment according to the European Credit Transfer System), i. e. 125 teaching units; one ECTS corresponds to a workload of approx. 25 teaching units of 45 minutes each.

It recognizably includes the teaching of theoretical and subject-specific knowledge as well as practical skills and supervised and evaluated practical exercises.

Objectives & qualification profile

The aim of the corresponding qualification measure is the **basic qualification for animals - other species - in animal-assisted interventions**, in particular in the care, accompaniment, support, promotion and training of people of all age groups, with the aim of promoting health, improving quality of life and well-being, and/or achieving medical, therapeutic, educational and social goals - depending on the field of work or area of application.

The qualification measure enables students to plan, implement and evaluate animal-assisted interventions (AAI) in individual or group settings, in institutions, in mobile use or in their own practice. It takes into account the teaching of technical skills as well as methodological skills and social skills.

Summary

The qualification measure covers the following topics:

Mandatory basic qualification

1. Basics and history of animal-assisted intervention, animal/ethics, animal welfare; law, regulations, animal protection, liability
2. Hygiene/risk management, health care and first aid measures for animals and injuries caused by the respective animal species, ethology, learning behavior and training basics
3. Fields of application, functional forms, methods and impact panorama
4. Motivation, communication and mental hygiene

The content areas can be supplemented in particular by additional modules, elective areas, courses in the subject areas available to the training company, such as business administration, law, physiotherapy, scientific work, use in the school sector or similar. The supplementary content areas are not included in the prescribed minimum number of hours!

The promotion of the ability required by the EQF to work responsibly and independently in the desired occupational field is to be taken into account through work-related practical exercises and their didactically accompanied reflection.

Competence and activity-oriented examination formats ensure the transferability of the knowledge imparted. Further details can be found in the current version of the **basic qualification for animals - other species - in animal-assisted interventions**.

Learning outcomes

I. Fundamentals and history of animal-assisted intervention

Contents

- Human-animal or animal-human communication
- Cultural and religious-philosophical, sociological and cultural-historical aspects of the human-animal relationship, animal/ethical aspects of animal-assisted intervention
- Legal basics and animal welfare
- Explanatory models, mechanisms of action, functional forms
- Quality assurance, documentation and evaluation

Competencies

The learners can

- the ethological, anthropological, social and religious factors and influences on the human-animal relationship that are essential for animal-assisted interventions,
- Prerequisites for successful human-animal or animal-human communication,
- explain and critically reflect on current discussions on animal welfare and the ethics of the relationship between humans and animals.

II Health prevention, animal husbandry and specific expertise

Contents

- Animal husbandry and use criteria, taking into account the necessary legal regulations and principles of animal welfare and species-appropriate animal husbandry
- Concepts of species-specific (hedonic budget), breed-specific and individual needs
- Learning behavior of animals and the respective animal species
- Training methods for animal-assisted use
- Models and forms of expression of species-specific communication and interaction in humans and animals, special features of the respective animal species
- Animal health, allergies and zoonoses, anatomy of the respective animal species
- First aid for animals and injuries caused by the respective animal species

Competencies

Learners can name areas of application of the respective animal species for AAI and justify their use with regard to their specific abilities and dispositions as well as their position in our society.

In their approach, learners can identify breed-specific and individual needs and abilities of the respective animal species and apply these in a situation-specific manner to achieve the objectives of animal-assisted interventions. They recognize health restrictions in the animal or animal species and apply the necessary measures for health promotion and disease prevention in a situation-specific manner.

The students know the mechanisms of action of basic learning theories and can use these in a targeted manner for the behavior modification of the animals used or integrate their behavior into the respective intervention in a targeted manner.

III Areas of application and impact panorama of the AAI

Contents

- Forms, methods and fields of application
- impact dimensions, in particular medical-therapeutic, psychological, educational and social dimensions.
- Methods of anamnesis and diagnostics
- Intervention measures
- Integration of the AAI into other area-specific approaches
- Limits of the AAI
- Dealing with psychological, social-emotional, cognitive and physical impairments

Competencies

Learners know the different dimensions of the impact of animal-assisted interventions.

They can name the most relevant areas of application, particularly in the fields of psychology, education, therapy and medicine, and explain the possible positive effects of animal-assisted intervention.

Learners can describe basic methods of anamnesis, concretize them for their needs and apply them in practice. They have an appropriate repertoire of possible intervention measures and can use these - tailored to the respective problem or field of action.

Learners critically reflect on the limits of animal-assisted interventions and the necessary cooperation with specialists from other disciplines.

They can explain various explanatory models of animal-assisted interventions and their implementation in practice using examples. They can conceptualize animal-assisted intervention on the basis of their basic profession or the support of the specialist staff, taking into account legal requirements, and discuss their own concepts and those of other learners self/critically.

They are familiar with the possibilities of external support and have basic knowledge of the quality assurance of AAI.

IV. Motivation, communication and mental hygiene

Contents

- Motivation theories and their practical relevance
- Basics of communication and conflict management
- Stress management, resilience and mental hygiene
- Supervision/intervision and collegial support as quality assurance and preventive healthcare measures

Competencies

Learners have knowledge of how to deal with people with disabilities and can plan, reflect on and adapt their own behavior to specific situations in such a way that the measure remains safe and harmless to the health of both the clients and the animals used. They also have an awareness of their own self-care management and the need for individual balance between people and animals.

Practical exercises

All learners must provide evidence of at least three supervised and evaluated practical training assignments as well as practical handling of the respective animal species as part of the basic qualification. In addition, animal species-specific internships or work shadowing can be added.

Why is there a need for standardized training for the species-specific basic qualification for animals - other species - in animal-assisted interventions?

For reasons of quality assurance and the protection of people and animals, sound and professional training and further training in accordance with standardized specifications appears to be essential. This is the only way to guarantee professional animal-assisted work.

ISAAT has been working on this topic since its foundation and has continuously introduced improvements. Since then, animal-assisted work has become established in a variety of ways. Numerous empirical findings confirm the positive effect. However, it has also been shown that the use of animals by unqualified people can lead to - often lasting - harm to humans and animals. An international standard for quality assurance is therefore desirable. ISAAT therefore sees the establishment of animal-assisted interventions and high standards at an international level as a key objective for the benefit of humans and animals.

This framework curriculum **basic qualification for animals - other species - in animal-assisted interventions** serves as orientation for training institutes and is to be formulated and supplemented individually. It must always be considered in combination with the valid ISAAT standards and the checklist for the **basic qualification for animals - other species - in animal-assisted interventions**; this can be found in the application form for accreditation (current version).