Animal Hospice and Palliative Care (AHPC) Certification Program

Become a standout in your field and demonstrate dedication to your professional growth by becoming AHPC certified. Certification is the voluntary process by which a non-governmental organization grants recognition to an individual who has demonstrated a high level of knowledge, skills, and abilities. Certification means that one has met specific eligibility requirements including training, experience, and education, and passed a rigorous, comprehensive examination. Certification indicates a substantial professional commitment to the field and documents this expertise to employers, colleagues, and clients. Establish your credibility and gain the confidence of employers and clients by achieving AHPC certification.

Introduction
This handbook provides information about the application, program, and examination to become certified in Animal Hospice and Palliative Care. It outlines the design and content of the program and guides candidates through the entire process from application through examination. For your convenience, this handbook may also be downloaded from the IAAHPC website at www.iaahpc.org or http://shop.multi-versity.com/iaahpc-certificate-program.html.

About the International Association for Animal Hospice and Palliative Care (IAAHPC)
The International Association for Animal Hospice and Palliative Care (IAAHPC) is dedicated to promoting knowledge of, and developing guidelines for, comfort-oriented care to companion animals as they approach the end of life. The IAAHPC is the only national/international organization dedicated solely to the advancement of high quality AHPC services provided by interdisciplinary teams.

About AHPC Certification
The AHPC Certification Program will standardize and define the skills and knowledge required of individuals and organizations offering animal hospice and palliative care, and will establish a standard of care that will reflect a level of excellence achieved by those individuals who have obtained certification.

Eligibility Requirements
Program enrollment is limited to:
- Licensed veterinarians with 3 years of clinical experience
- Licensed veterinary technicians with 3 years of clinical experience

Applicants must be IAAHPC members in good standing.

Program Description

The AHPC CP is a 100-hour RACE-approved continuing education program that certifies its students in animal hospice and palliative care. The program begins with an overview of fundamental concepts and progresses to cover the unique challenges of veterinary medical, nursing, and caregiver care as related to the animal hospice model.

The AHPC certification program is presented in four modules; three online and one on-site, in a flexible format designed to allow students to create a curriculum timeline that best fits their busy schedule. Online modules are composed of streaming lectures and activities that students can complete and submit at their own pace, however each module has an established start and finish date. The Certification Program takes 16 months to complete.

The on-site module is offered once each year and is held in conjunction with the annual IAAHPC conference. Here students will partake in both an advanced communication skills workshop critical to animal hospice and palliative care and a laboratory that gives students the opportunity to learn advanced euthanasia techniques (cadaver use only). On-site sessions will allow for small group activities with individualized instruction from leaders in the field of animal hospice, and networking opportunities with hospice-minded colleagues will help facilitate learning well after the course is completed.

In order to be awarded the designation of Certified Hospice and Palliative Care Veterinarian (CHPV) and Certified Hospice and Palliative Care Technician (CHPT), participants must successfully complete the following:

> Module 1: *(25 hours, online)* Introductory topics pertinent to offering hospice and palliative care.
>
> Module 2: *(onsite)* Includes attendance at our annual conference, in addition to participation in a 1-day, interactive End-of-Life Communication Workshop and a half-day Euthanasia Technique Laboratory.
>
> Module 3: *(25 hours, online)* Advanced topics in hospice and palliative care.
>
> Module 4: *(25 hours, online)* Pain Management.
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> Peer Reviewed Hospice Case Reports
> Completion of two case reports will be required as part of certification requirements. Case reports should involve patient care delivered during the 4-year period preceding the date of case study submission. The cases must present different hospice scenarios and should employ a well-structured, balanced strategy. They should reflect a coherent, cogent thought process regarding patient assessment and management. The case reports should be of the caliber that they could be considered for publication in a peer-reviewed journal such as JAVMA or other peer-reviewed journals. Grammar, punctuation, and spelling should be on a level consistent with that of a professional journalist. Case reports must be submitted by May 15 to quality for

taking the exam, which is offered in October of the same year. Additional guidelines for writing Case Reports, as well as grading criteria, are included at the end of the handbook.

<u>Online Exam</u>
The AHPC certification exam is designed to test a well-defined body of knowledge representative of the current professional practice in animal hospice and palliative care. The online exam covers the breadth of current knowledge concerning animal hospice and palliative care and consists of a mix of multiple-choice and True/False questions. Participants must achieve a passing score of 80 percent. The exam will be offered once yearly during October. The exam will be an online/open book exam that must be completed in a single session and within the allowed timeframe. ***Students must have successfully completed all 4 modules and submitted their case studies to qualify for taking the certifying exam.***

Program Timeline
- MODULE 1:
  - Opens June 15
  - Closes August 15 (after this day, students will no longer be able to enroll for Module 1, and will need to wait for the next enrollment period to begin the Certification Program)
  - MUST BE COMPLETED by October 1
- MODULE 2:
  - Opens with general conference registration (typically around June 1st of every year with annual conference held in the fall)
  - Closes August 15 (after this day, students will no longer be able to enroll for Module 2, and will need to wait for the next enrollment period to begin the Certification Program)
  - Conference attendance, including the completion of the 2 required labs (Communication Workshop/Lab and Euthanasia Techniques Lab), will fulfill requirements
  - The 8-hour Communication Workshop and Euthanasia lab are mandatory for the Certification Program, even if previously taken
  - M2 is completed at conference
- MODULE 3:
  - Opens November 15
  - Closes January 15 (after this day, students will no longer be able to enroll for Module 3, and will need to wait for the next enrollment period to begin the Certification Program)
  - MUST BE COMPLETED by March 15
- MODULE 4:
  - Can be taken any time but needs to be completed by August 15 of the testing year
- TWO CASE REPORTS:
  - Must be submitted by May 15 of the testing year
- FINAL EXAMINATION:
  - Will be offered in October, 16 months after enrollment in the program
  - There will be a 2-week window of online availability for students to take the examination

- The examination must be completed during a single session, and students will be allotted a 3-hour time frame to complete their examination

Program Timeline Summary:

Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct
M1 O		M1 C		M1 D												Test
	M2 O	M2 C		M2 D												
					M3 O		M3 C		M3 D							
														M4 D		
											CS D					
															test prep	test prep

M = Module
CS = case studies

O = opens
C = closes
D = deadline for completion

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M1 opens June 15
M1 closes August 15
M1 must be completed by October 1st

M2 opens with general conference registration
M2 closes August 15
M2 is completed at conference

M3 opens November 15
M3 closes January 15
M3 must be completed by March 15

M4 can be taken any time but needs to be completed by August 15

Case studies due May 15

Exceptions to the Program Timeline:

The AHPC certification exam is designed to be completed during a 16-month timeframe, from June of any given year to October of the following year. PLEASE NOTE that there will be no extensions granted to this timeline. Exceptions may be considered on a case-by-case basis in cases of serious personal illness, loss of a family member, or a natural disaster ONLY.

Should you decide to drop out of your IAAHPC Certification Program class, or if you are unable to meet any of the module deadlines (including completion of the case studies, full conference attendance and completion of the required labs), you will have to reapply to be accepted to a future IAAHPC Certification Program class. In this case, retaking the components of the program you have already successfully completed, upon providing appropriate documentation, will be optional but not required. HOWEVER, YOU WILL HAVE TO PAY FULL TUITION FOR ALL COMPONENTS OF THE PROGRAM WHEN YOU REGISTER FOR A FUTURE CLASS, INCLUDING THOSE YOU HAVE ALREADY COMPLETED IN THE PAST.

Preparing for the Exam

Your primary objective is to pass the examination upon completion of the AHPC certification program. Learning new material and reviewing old material are critical to this objective. Develop a study plan that will allow you to learn the most while you study. Include setting goals. Review what you have learned as often as possible. The more you review, the more you will retain. Study materials include quizzes, recommended reading assignments, and group forum activities. All course material will be available online for review.

Fees

The total cost of tuition for certification will be $3,680 for both veterinarians and licensed veterinary technicians. Tuition can be paid per module or all at once. The fee structure is as follows:

Module 1- *Introductory Module*, 25 hours: $695

Module 2 - *Conference and Communication Module*: $1,095

Module 3 - *Advanced Module*, 25 hours: $1,095

Module 4 - *Pain Management Module*, 25 hours: $500

Case study review and exam administration: $295

TOTAL COST OF TUITION: $3,680.00

Application

Your completed application form and all necessary supporting documentation should be submitted to the IAAHPC and will be evaluated to confirm that you meet or exceed the program entry requirements. If your application is rejected for any reason, including, without limitation, incomplete, inaccurate or unverifiable information, your application fee minus a $200 administration fee will be refunded.

The AHPC certification program is an online course and applications are accepted on a rolling basis.

Refunds

Program fees are non-transferable. Candidates requesting to withdraw from the program after submitting an application will be charged an administrative fee of $200.00 Credit card transactions that are declined may be subject to a $25 handling fee.

Non-Discrimination Policy

The IAAHPC and Northeast Seminars do not discriminate among candidates on the basis of race, color, creed, gender, religion, national origin, ancestry, disability, military discharge status, sexual orientation, or marital status.

Restrictions

Those students who have successfully completed the AHPC Certification Program will be allowed to incorporate the credentials of CHPV or CHPT after their name in recognition of their achievement.

These credentials are unique to the field of animal hospice and palliative care and may not be used for any other medical field designation. Any person found using these credentials without successful completion of the program will be prosecuted.

Disclaimer

The field of animal hospice and palliative care is young and developing. Through research, case reviews, and collaborative analysis, we will undoubtedly continue to learn more each year. As new information comes forth, the program will be modified to share best practices with all participants. The IAAHPC encourages research in the areas of animal hospice, palliative care, and geriatric medicine to enhance the field and ever improve the AHPC certification program.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION FOR STUDENTS

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Guidelines for Case Reports

Applicants should follow the guidelines for patient criteria, technical requirements and content outlined below for preparing their case studies:

Case Report- Patient Criteria

1. Cases need to involve the care of patients within the last 4 years.
2. One case should include details on an <u>acute</u> event that resulted in hospice or palliative care (e.g., Hemangiosarcoma, CHF, pleural effusion, acute paralysis).
3. Another case should include details on a <u>chronic</u> event that resulted in hospice or palliative care (e.g., Osteoarthritis, CKD, liver disease, degenerative myelopathy).
4. Case studies should represent situations where all aspects of the philosophy of hospice and palliative care have been applied.
5. For applicants that are not in active practice, two virtual cases will be provided for a work-up.

Case Report- Technical Requirements

1. Typed in 12-font, Times New Roman
2. Double spaced
3. Any laboratory data should be in table form
4. Minimum of 7 pages and a maximum of 15 pages which includes a title page, references and appendix. Acute event case studies may be shorter in length (e.g., 7 pages) than chronic case studies (e.g., 15 pages).
5. References should be listed by number as endnotes and include page numbers. Textbooks, online reference material, conference proceedings and peer-reviewed material is acceptable.
6. Document should be submitted in Word format.

Case Report- Content Criteria

The paper should be organized following this format:

1. Abstract. An abstract is a brief review of the contents of the case study.

2. Clinical Report. It is important that the case study include all aspects of care to make sure all of the physical, emotional and behavioral needs of the caretaker and patient are managed. (Use of the 5-Step Plan for Hospice and Palliative Care may be helpful.) The following should be included in the clinical report:

      a. Signalment

  b. Clinical history

  c. Psychosocial perspectives and needs of caretakers

  d. Subjective assessments- includes observations about the patient and family interactions or relationships.

  e. Objective assessments- includes measurable physical observations and diagnostic findings.

  f. Detailed description of the hospice/palliative care management plan including how you educated or shared information with the pet's caretaker and how you set up a personalized plan. Describe the use of the team approach that was used to care for the patient. All pharmaceuticals should include dosages (mg/kg). Behavior support or modification, nutritional support, physical medicine and the use of specialized equipment should be included in this section.

  g. Emphasis should also be placed on how emotional support was provided to the caretaker(s).

3. *Clinical Outcome*. Subjective and objective observations about the details of outcome for the patient and the caretaker should be defined.

  a. If applicable, the utilization of quality of life scales and pain management scales to assess patient response should be included.

  b. Also included in the clinical outcome should be an observation on how the care affected the behavior or emotion of the caretakers. For example, noting if the family is experiencing profound anticipatory grief.

  c. Observations about the dying process for both a hospice-supported natural death or from euthanasia.

4. *Discussion*.

  a. The author's subjective critique of the case should include interactions and emotional reactions of caretakers from a veterinary professional's viewpoint.

  b. The discussion should provide reasoning around choices and plans of care with regards to why certain choices were made

  c. The discussion should include any changes the author would have made in the case based on known outcome (i.e., what would you change if you could go back in time?)

5. Summary or conclusion - provide a summary of the case.

6. References

Case Report Grading

1. The review criteria will be the same for all applicants.

2. Scoring will consist of Pass, Pass with Clarifications/Revisions, Submit New Case, or Fail.

Grading Criteria for Case Studies

Criteria	Check if completed	Comments	Potential Score	Actual Score
Abstract, clinical report, clinical outcome, discussion, summary and references have been completed			10	
Psychosocial needs identified and addressed			10	
Patient's needs addressed			10	
Caliber of medical management (good balance of care, nursing care, dosages of medications …)			20	
Use of integrative care			10	
Caliber of communication with caretaker			10	
Emotional support of caretaker addressed			10	
Well written (grammar and spelling)			10	
Adequate and accurate references			10	
Total Score			100	

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