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 for animal hospice and palliative care services that will reflect a level of excellence achieved by those individuals who have obtained certification.

Vision Statement
Certified professionals will have demonstrated their understanding and mastery of best practices for medical, emotional, spiritual, and other support services for seriously-ill animals and their human caregivers, and their commitment to practice their knowledge and skills in their clinical work on an ongoing basis.
Program Description
The AHPC CP is a proposed 115-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 care, nursing care, 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.

The on-site module is offered once each year and is held in conjunction with the 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 Animal 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: (35 hours, online)** Advanced topics in hospice and palliative care.

**Module 4: (25 hours, online)** Pain Management.

**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 5-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 studies 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 studies must be submitted by June 30th to quality for taking the exam, which is offered in October of the same year.
Online Exam
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 the LAST TWO WEEKS of 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.

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.

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**, 35 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

It is recommended students complete the Introductory Module prior to the Conference and Communication Module. Knowledge of basic AHPC concepts, information, and terminology will be expected of the interactive End-of-Life Communication workshop participants.

Anticipated Program Timeline for 2016-2017 Students
- Registration for the Introductory Module (Module 1) opened on June 15, 2016 and we are currently accepting students
- **Registration for Module 1 and Module 2 will CLOSE on August 19th** (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)
- **Module 1 will need to be completed by October 15, 2016** (prior to Conference attendance)
- Conference attendance, including the completion of the 2 required labs (Communication Workshop/Lab and Euthanasia Techniques Lab), will fulfill the requirements for the Conference and Communication Module (Module 2)
- The 8-hour Communication Workshop/Lab will be held on Thursday, October 20th. Completion of this lab is mandatory for the Certification Program.
• The 3-hour Euthanasia Techniques Lab will be held on Sunday, October 23rd, from 1-4pm. Completion of this lab is mandatory for the Certification Program (even if you have previously taken this lab)
• The Advance Hospice Module (Module 3) will be available to students January 2017; this module will need to be completed by June 30, 2017
• The Pain Management Module (Module 4) will be available after June 15th 2016, and students may complete this module at any time during the 1-year certification period (which is June 15, 2016 to June 30, 2017 for this cycle)
• 2 case studies must be submitted by June 30th, 2017; additional details will follow
• The final examination will be offered in October 2017; 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.

Eligibility Requirements
At present, 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.

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
Candidates must submit the appropriate fee with their application. Payment may be made by credit card (Visa, MasterCard or American Express) or check or money order made payable to the IAAHPC. 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 or checks 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.

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. The material presented within this program reflects comprehensive knowledge as of 2016. 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.

*Updated August, 2016.*