

International Guide Dog Federation

Summary of Standards 2026

Effective from 1st January 2026



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Standard 1: Administration, Risk Management and Business Continuity

Purpose of standard: To ensure that IGDF accredited organisations demonstrate operational stability; sound and ethical business practices; financial transparency; responsible use of resources; adequate safety and emergency procedures; adherence to applicable governmental laws and regulations; have fair and equal policies and procedures for staff and volunteers. It includes:

- General Administration
- Staff Education and Professional Development
- Client Services
- Breeding and Dog Supply
- Dog Training and Behaviour
- Dog Health and Welfare
- Facilities and Kennels
- Human Resources
- Risk Management and Business Continuity

Standard 2: Staff Education and Professional Development

Purpose of standard: To ensure that all staff and / or volunteers who train, care for, or manage dogs have sound theoretical knowledge and practical experience in dog health and welfare, humane training methods, appropriate socialisation, an understanding of the temperaments required for guide dogs, safe public interactions, and client disabilities. It includes:

- Job Descriptions
- Technical Training
- Competency Assessments / Evaluations
- Continuing Professional Development
- Records
- Educators

Standard 3: Client Services

Purpose of standard: To ensure that IGDF accredited organisations have clear and comprehensive application, screening, and matching processes for clients; clients are treated with equity, respect and dignity; clients receive a thorough and individualised educational process regarding all aspects of guide dog partnership; and organisations provide lifetime follow-up and team support. It includes:

- Client Service Procedure
- Managing Application
- Client / Guide Dog Matching Process
- Client and Guide Dog Training
- Aftercare
- Guide Dog Retirement and Bereavement Support

Standard 4: Breeding and Dog Supply

Purpose of standard: To ensure that IGDF accredited organisations produce and raise dogs with the highest likelihood of success in the role they are intended for, operate ethical breeding practices, raise puppies that are appropriately socialised to prepare them for their role as guide dogs; and ensure any alternative sources of dog supply also conform to ethical standards and demonstrate commitment to dog welfare. It includes:

- Breeding Programmes
- Acquired Puppies / Adult Dogs (Purchased or Donated)
- Puppy Raising

Standard 5: Dog Training and Behaviour

Purpose of standard: To ensure that all policies and procedures regarding selection, training, and care of dogs are in accordance with the standards for dog health and welfare; that there is a comprehensive education and training program individualised to the needs of the dog and client; and that there are detailed training records. It includes:

- Assessment
- Dog Training
- Public Access

Standard 6: Dog Health and Welfare

Purpose of standard: The intent of these standards is to ensure commitment to upholding the highest standards of animal welfare for assistance dogs, as outlined in the joint ADI/IGDF position statement. These standards ensure that all dogs receive humane care and treatment throughout their lifetime, with thorough welfare assessments and procedures in place to address any areas of welfare concerns, ensures that all dog handlers possess the necessary knowledge and skills to maintain high welfare standards and that comprehensive health care plans are created and implemented in collaboration between qualified staff and veterinarians. Emphasising the "Five Domains" model, these standards ensure dogs have opportunities for positive mental state (domain 5) through meeting their needs in the other four domains, and adhere to the Least Intrusive, Minimally Aversive (LIMA) principles. These standards reflect the organisation's lifelong commitment to the welfare of their dogs. It includes:

- Domain 1: Nutrition
- Domain 2: Environment
- Domain 3: Health
- Domain 4: Behaviour Interactions
- Domain 5: Mental State and Lifetime Wellbeing

Standard 7: Facilities and Kennels

Purpose of standard: To ensure that all facilities, kennels, and environments used to house dogs provide the care needed to meet the individual needs of each dog and client; that kennels provide a safe and enriched environment; that there are proper maintenance and cleaning procedures; that all facilities are accessible to the population served. It includes:

- Buildings
- Transport and Vehicles
- Kennel Buildings
- Kennel Management

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