

THE CANIS TESTIS PROTOCOL

Independent Assessment of Working Dogs

Version 1.0

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About this document

This document is the published assessment protocol of Canis Testis. It sets out what we assess, how we assess it, how results are recorded, and what a Canis Testis report and certificate do and do not mean.

It is published so that any buyer, seller, handler, or institution can read exactly what "Canis Testis Certified" stands for. A standard that is not public is not a standard.

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Only assessments carried out by Canis Testis assessors, documented on a signed Canis Testis report, and recorded in the Canis Testis registry are valid Canis Testis certifications. Any other use of this protocol confers no rights and may not be described as a Canis Testis assessment or certification.

1. Purpose and scope

The purpose of this protocol is to provide a defined, repeatable, and independent method for assessing working dogs. It exists so that a report describes what a dog is, rather than what a seller claims it is.

This protocol applies to the assessment of dogs used, or intended to be used, for protection work, police and security work, detection work, herding and livestock guardian work, service and assistance work, and companionship where an independent assessment is requested.

The full protocol is not applied identically to every role. The health and temperament sections are applied to every dog. The capability section is adapted to the working role, as set out later in this document, but the assessment criteria within each role are fixed.

This protocol does not guarantee the future behaviour, health, or suitability of any dog. It is a point-in-time assessment, conducted on a specific date, under specific conditions, by named assessors. The limits of the protocol are set out in full in Section 9.

2. Definitions

For the purposes of this protocol, an assessor is a veterinarian, trainer, or behaviourist named in the report and responsible for a defined section of the assessment. An assessment is the complete evaluation of a dog under this protocol on a single assessment day. A certificate is the document issued by Canis Testis confirming that a dog met the standard on the day of assessment. The registry is the public record of certified dogs maintained by Canis Testis. A report is the written, filmed, and signed record of an assessment. The standard is the criteria set out in this protocol against which a dog is scored. A version is the numbered edition of this protocol; every report states the version used.

3. Assessors and credentials

Every assessment is carried out by named, credentialed assessors. Anonymous assessors are not used.

The health section is assessed by a licensed veterinarian, whose veterinary licence and registration number are recorded in the report.

The temperament section is assessed by a certified trainer or behaviourist, whose recognised certification is recorded in the report.

The capability section is assessed by a certified trainer or a certified decoy or handler, whose recognised working-dog certification is recorded in the report.

Canis Testis does not sell, breed, or train dogs for sale. No assessor receives payment from any seller, breeder, or agent in connection with the outcome of an assessment. The fee is for the assessment itself, regardless of the result. This is set out in full in Section 8.

4. What we assess

4.1 Health

The health section is assessed by a licensed veterinarian by physical examination and review of available records.

The veterinarian records the dog's general condition and body condition, weight, teeth and mouth, eyes and ears, skin and coat, mobility and gait, and verifies the microchip.

Where the seller or owner provides hip and elbow scores, eye scheme results, heart scheme results, or DNA test results, these are verified against the issuing body. Where a score or test is claimed but cannot be verified against the issuing body, the report records the claim as unverified. Where no score or test is provided, the report notes the absence.

The health section does not include diagnosis or treatment of illness, and does not guarantee the absence of hereditary, congenital, or hidden conditions. These limits are set out in Section 9.

4.2 Temperament

The temperament section is assessed by a certified trainer or behaviourist under standardised conditions. The conditions of assessment are recorded in the report.

The assessor records the dog's nerve and composure, its drive across food, prey, play, and defence, its recovery from stress, its social behaviour toward strangers, its reaction to children, its reaction to other animals, its response to sudden noise, its response to sudden movement, and its willingness to be handled.

Each item is scored on the scale set out in Section 5.

4.3 Capability

The capability section is assessed against the purpose for which the dog is being assessed. The criteria within each role are fixed; the role determines which criteria apply.

For all working roles, the assessor records obedience under distraction, recall, off-leash control, and environmental stability around traffic, crowds, unfamiliar surfaces, and unfamiliar environments.

For protection roles, the assessor additionally records bite quality, targeting, outing on command, guarding behaviour, and control under pressure.

For detection roles, the assessor additionally records search pattern and stamina, indication behaviour, and accuracy.

For herding and livestock guardian roles, the assessor additionally records instinct and balance, and responsiveness to the handler.

Each item is scored on the scale set out in Section 5.

5. How we score

Every item is scored against a defined scale. The same scale is used for every dog. Scores are recorded on the day of assessment, not reconstructed afterwards.

Each item is scored on a five-point scale. A score of zero means the item could not be assessed, and the reason is recorded. A score of one means the dog did not meet the minimum standard. A score of two means the dog met the minimum standard with reservations, which are stated in the report. A score of three means the dog met the standard. A score of four means the dog exceeded the standard in a defined and observable way.

The overall result of an assessment is one of three outcomes. A dog is certified when it has met the standard in all applicable sections. A dog is conditional when it has met the standard with reservations, which are stated in the report. A dog is not certified when it has not met the standard in one or more sections.

The overall result is recorded in the report and, for certified dogs, in the registry.

6. The assessment day

The assessment takes place where the dog is. Assessors travel to the dog. The dog is not transported to a Canis Testis facility, because a dog behaves differently in a familiar place.

The assessment follows a fixed order. Identity and microchip are verified first. The health examination follows. The temperament assessment follows. The capability assessment follows, adapted to the dog's working role. Filmed evidence is recorded throughout.

A standard assessment takes a full day on site. Complex cases may take longer.

The client may be present but is not required to be. The report is what the client receives.

The date, location, weather, terrain, and any material conditions of assessment are recorded in the report, because results are only comparable if the conditions are known.

The assessment relies on information provided by the seller, owner, or handler. Where that information is false, incomplete, or misleading, the report may be invalid and the certificate may be revoked, as set out in Section 7.

7. The report and the certificate

Every report contains the dog's identity including breed, age, sex, and microchip number; the location, date, and conditions of assessment; the name and credentials of each assessor; the full results, section by section, with scoring; filmed evidence of every test; any known limitations or information that could not be verified; the version of this protocol used; and the signature of each named assessor.

The report does not say whether you should buy the dog. That is your decision, not ours. The report tells you what the dog is. What you do with that is yours.

Where a dog is certified, a certificate is issued bearing the dog's identity, the certification number, the assessment date, and the protocol version. The certification number is recorded in the public registry.

Canis Testis may revoke a certificate and remove a dog from the registry if new information shows the assessment was based on false or incomplete information. This protects the value of the certification for every other holder.

A report describes the dog on the day of assessment. It is a point-in-time finding, not a guarantee of future behaviour. Re-assessment is recommended if significant time passes or circumstances change.

8. Independence

Canis Testis does not sell dogs, breed dogs, or train dogs for sale.

Canis Testis does not take commission from any seller, breeder, or agent. The fee is for the assessment itself, regardless of the result.

In most cases the buyer pays. Where a seller or third party pays, the fee is fixed in advance, the report is issued in the same way, and no additional payment is linked to the outcome. Independence is structural, not a promise.

9. Limitations

This is an assessment of a dog on one day, under the conditions recorded. It is not a guarantee of future behaviour, health, or suitability.

All dogs are capable of unpredictable behaviour. A dog that passes this assessment may still bite, injure, or frighten a person or animal; may develop behavioural or health problems later; or may react differently in a new environment, with a new handler, or under new stress. No assessment, by anyone, can eliminate these risks.

The health section is a physical examination and a review of available records. It is not a diagnosis, not a treatment, and not a guarantee of the absence of hereditary, congenital, or hidden conditions. An independent veterinary examination before purchase is strongly recommended.

The capability section is adapted to the working role. A dog assessed for one role is not thereby assessed for another.

Where information provided to us is false, incomplete, or misleading, the report may be invalid.

To the maximum extent permitted by Dutch law, Canis Testis accepts no liability for the behaviour of any dog before, during, or after assessment, for decisions made by any party based on a report, or for indirect or consequential loss. Total liability is limited to the fee paid for the specific assessment. The full terms are set out at canistestis.com/disclaimer.

10. Version control

This protocol is versioned. Every report states the version used, so that a report from one year is comparable with a report from another. When the protocol changes, the version number changes and the change is recorded below.

Version 1.0, published 23 September 2026. First published version.

11. Standards referenced

This protocol sets out the Canis Testis method. It does not claim to reproduce or to be certified against any external standard, and it does not claim scientific validation.

As the organisation develops, and where our assessors test to recognised external standards, those standards will be named here and in the reports to which they apply. Until then, this protocol stands on its own: a consistent, documented, independent method, applied the same way to every dog, and signed by a named assessor.

12. Contact

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