



AMERICAN
KENNEL CLUB®

**Creating a Parent Club
Certificate of Conformation
Assessment (CCA) Program**

The AKC recently approved title recognition for the Golden Retriever Club of America's Certificate of Conformation Assessment (CCA). Other breed clubs that would like to develop a Certificate of Conformation Assessment may do so and have the title recognized, as long as the program created adheres to the following framework.

Purpose: The purpose of the Certificate of Conformation Assessment is to provide education to owners on proper breed conformation. It is a non-competitive, one-on-one evaluation where dogs are assessed against the standard, not against each other. Evaluators go over each dog individually and do not confer with each other.

Audience: Anyone may participate in the CCA program. Ideal audiences are performance enthusiasts, new conformation participants, or pet owners who want to learn more about conformation and see how their dog measures up.

Evaluators: Evaluators for the CCA should be individuals who are very knowledgeable in the breed. Conformation judges approved for the breed who have judged for many years, or those who have bred for many years are suggested. The parent clubs can establish the specifics for individuals who can act as evaluators, but these standards must be approved by the AKC. At least two of the evaluations must be earned under Conformation judges.

Verbal and Written Feedback: The evaluation must consist of both verbal and written feedback regarding the dog's conformation. Evaluations are in-depth and each should take approximately 15-20 minutes.

Score Sheet: The written score sheet must consist of ten categories, each of which can earn a potential score of ten points. Each category presents a number of physical features to be assessed. Parent clubs can choose their own ten categories based on the most important aspects of their breed, but the categories must be inclusive of all features. The score sheet should present descriptors of desirable traits in standard font and undesirable traits in italics. This allows the evaluator to circle descriptors to easily provide detailed feedback. See the score sheet template and the attached example from the Golden Retriever Club of America for guidance.

Evaluations are Confidential: Score sheets and other details of the evaluation are not to be made public. The evaluation is a confidential activity between the owner and the evaluator, and it is up to the owner whether he or she wants to share information of their experience. Any spectators should be out of earshot of the evaluators, although the owner can bring one or two guests to their evaluations if they wish.

Earning the Certificate: Scoring is to be 0 through 100, with a score of 75 or greater indicating a passing/qualifying score. Dogs with a disqualifying fault cannot be given a passing score. Dogs must receive a passing score from three different evaluators in order to earn the certificate. There is a maximum number of six attempts before a dog becomes ineligible to earn the CCA. This prevents owners from spending years seeking successful evaluations to earn a CCA on an unworthy dog. Parent clubs can choose one or more categories in which a minimum score must be achieved for the dog to pass, based on the requirements of their breed (for example: the parent club can dictate that no dog shall pass if earning less than a "5" in the temperament category, regardless of their total score).

Program Name: Parent clubs can choose to use a unique moniker for their program, but regardless of their choice of name the title granted by the AKC will be "CCA" (Certificate of Conformation Assessment).

Eligibility: The participation in conformation evaluations should be open to all dogs of that breed, both those who are fully-registered and those who are registered with the AKC as PAL/ILP dogs. There should be a minimum age established

by the parent club. The AKC recommends 18 months, but if there is a compelling reason the parent club can choose an alternate age for eligibility. Dogs can participate whether they are intact or altered. Dogs registered on Limited Registration may participate.

Hosting Events: CCA evaluations can be held in conjunction with other types of events or separately. It must be clear in the program outline as submitted to AKC what type of entity can host such events, how they apply, and what resources they are expected to provide.

Forms Completed in Triplicate: There must be three copies of each score sheet—one is retained by the evaluator, one is given to the owner, and one is sent to the parent club. Copies can be achieved by carbon paper, copier, computer entry and printout, etc.

Record-Keeping and Granting of Certificate: The parent club is responsible for keeping the records of each CCA evaluation to determine when a dog has earned the certificate, or when a dog has reached their limit of six attempts and become ineligible to continue.

Title Recognition: Once the dog has been granted the certificate by the parent club the owner can apply to have the suffix title “CCA” appended to the dog’s AKC record. To do so the owner will have to complete a title application form, include a copy of the parent club-issued certificate, and pay a processing fee.

For parent clubs interested in have their breed included in the Certificate of Conformation Assessment (CCA) Program contact, Dawn Salpeck at 919-816-3687 or dml@akc.org .