Advanced Obedience and Specialist Skills Course

Course Overview

This is the most comprehensive and technically advanced obedience and control training program available in Australasia, teaching advanced and specialised skills not available through any other program. The course is on par with the world’s leading courses, offering students detailed instruction and hands on training in a diverse range of exercises and skills.

The course has been designed for personnel in Search & Rescue, Assistance Dogs and Law Enforcement through to professional obedience instructors and Service Dog agencies. The program will develop your confidence and ability to assess and train dogs of different breeds and temperaments. Whilst this course develops highly skilled and reliable performance, it does not focus on domestic training or competitive obedience.

The course includes instruction on canine psychology and behaviour, reinforcement theory, animal learning processes, training fundamentals, canine care and welfare. Further information on course content and learning outcomes is covered below in the overview of each module.

This course offers a number of elective modules for persons wanting a higher level of knowledge and skill in these specialist areas. Students completing these elective modules will receive additional qualifications and certification recognising their achievement.

Training With TASK-9

TASK-9 training is designed to develop the skills and knowledge of handlers and trainers involved in working and service dog roles, and also those persons who require high level training in a diverse range of skills and situations.

The student instruction will be led by TASK-9’s Training Director, Boyd Hooper who has more than 30 years experience in breeding, training and working dogs. He is internationally recognised as an expert in canine behaviour and training and is supported by TASK-9 instructors who have developed numerous dogs, from foundation through to an advanced technical level. Students will greatly benefit through learning from a team of professionals that regularly work with, consults to, and provides training for a wide range of working and service dog agencies and organisations.

All TASK-9 courses are hands on, practical based training that allow students to work directly with our highly trained, working and service dogs through all aspects of their development. In addition, students will also be actively involved with Australia’s leading working dog breeding, pup and young dog development program. This unique opportunity for hands on experience with the development of young dogs and the training of advanced dogs is one of the key elements setting TASK-9 training programs apart from others.

At TASK-9 we have a holistic and immersive strategy that involves students in all aspects of dog development, training and care.

Course Content

The TASK-9 Advanced Obedience and Specialist Skills course covers the following modules and subjects;

T9-PB3: Psychology and Canine Behaviour

Module Overview

Designed to develop student understanding of the learning principles and fundamentals of animal psychology, and the mechanisms of behaviour modification essential for professionals involved in dog training and development.

Further to this, it provides the student an understanding of how dogs see the world, communicate and are motivated; the foundation on which all effective and humane training is based.
The content of this module is consistent with psychology and learning modules taught at leading Colleges and Training Organisations offering animal learning, dog training and related courses.

**Subjects Covered Include:**
- Sensory Capacities of the Dog
- Canine Communication & Body Language
- Motivation & Drive Theory
- Understanding Canine Behaviour
- Reinforcement Theory & Application
- Instrumental / Operant Learning Principles
- Habituation, Extinction & Desensitisation
- Classical / Pavlovian Conditioning & Processes
- Principles & Methods of Behaviour Modification

This module is a combination of theory and practical training.

**T9-GW3: Training Fundamentals**

**Module Overview**
Teaches the basic principles, mechanisms and processes used in behaviour modification and training. The information is universal to all forms of dog training and the knowledge gained ensures the student follows an effective, humane and systematic approach to both training design and implementation.

**Subjects Covered Include:**
- Stages of Learning
- Phases of Training
- Exercise Design & Structure
- Dog Assessment & Evaluation
- Training Procedures & Guidelines
- Safety Protocols and Procedures
- Establishment of Conditioned Reinforcers
- Training Equipment, Fitting and Use
- Psychological and Welfare Considerations

This module is a combination of theory and practical training.

**T9-GW6: Behaviour Shaping and Skill Development**

**Module Overview**
Focuses on the mechanisms of skill development and behaviour modification across all sectors of dog training. It covers a broad range of topics, designed to give the student an understanding of the methods and principles that are universal to all forms of dog training, including the optimal use of different types of rewards, reinforcement and corrective measures utilised in developing highly motivated reliable dogs, regardless of their roles and tasks.

**Subjects Covered Include:**
- Shaping Behaviour
- Dog Handling Techniques
- Mechanisms of Skill Development
- Use of Conditioned Reinforcers
- Training Attention & Focus
- Use of Rewards & Correction
- Proofing & Generalisation of Skills
- Environmental Conditioning and Confidence Development

This module is mostly practical with some theory components.
**T9-OC3: Obedience and Control**

**Module Overview**

Focuses on developing the student’s practical skills in obedience and control work. It covers a range of different methods from conventional leash work through to luring, free shaping, guiding and the use of prompts. The emphasis in this module is to develop the student’s skills and confidence to effectively handle and train dogs of all ages, sizes and temperaments across a range of fundamental skills.

**Subjects Covered Include:**
- Fundamentals of Obedience & Control
- Prompts, Guiding and Framing
- Selection of Training Mechanisms
- Free Shaping Methods and Techniques
- Sequence of Training Obedience Skills
- Basic Problem Solving in Obedience
- Safety and Welfare Considerations in Obedience

This module is mostly practical with some theory components.

**T9-OC4: Advanced Control Work**

**Module Overview**

Continues on from the Obedience and Control Work module and develops the student’s knowledge in more diverse and advanced skills. In addition, it teaches the process and mechanisms used in linking multiple skills together into sequences and behaviour chains.

The methods, techniques and skills taught in this module go well beyond conventional obedience. In addition to training distance control and off leash work, it also covers the mechanisms involved in developing high levels of reliability, even under distraction and with competing motivations.

**Subjects Covered Include:**
- Distance Control
- Out of Sight Work
- Advanced Obedience Skills
- Chaining Multiple Behaviours
- Control Under Distraction
- Food and Command Refusal
- Visual and Scent Discrimination
- Obedience with Competing Motivations
- Problem Solving in Obedience & Control Work

This module is mostly practical with some theory components.

**T9-GW5: Canine Management and Care**

**Module Overview**

Focuses on welfare, general care and management of dogs in all environments, including but not limited to; kennel, transportation, handling, and working / training environments. Covers general canine health and wellbeing with a focus on maintaining optimal physical and psychological condition.

**Subjects Covered Include:**
- Physical / Structural Assessment
- Welfare Considerations
- Health & Vet Care
- Physical Conditioning
- Nutrition, Diet & Feeding
- Management & Husbandry
- Kennelling & Housing
- Identification of Injury & Disease
- K9 First Aid & Treatment Protocols
- Transportation

This module is mostly practical with some theory components.

**Elective Modules**

Recommended for persons wanting a higher level of knowledge and skill in these specialist areas. Students completing elective modules will receive added qualifications and certification recognising their additional achievement.

**T9-OC5: Technical and Specialist Skill Development**

**Module Overview**
Continues on from the Advanced Control Work module and develops the students’ knowledge in more diverse, technical and specialist skills. At this level, students will learn the methods used to train the dog to respond to visual, auditory and touch cues, including use of tones and laser pointer directional control in addition to understanding the principles of adaptive obedience.

The information is designed for persons requiring an extremely high level of knowledge and skill in developing and proofing dogs for working and service applications. This is the most advanced and comprehensive training available in the development of technical and specialist skills and is not comparable to any other learning experience.

**Subjects Covered Include:**
- Adaptive Obedience
- Directional Control
- Training Advanced Complex Skills
- Development and use of Multiple Cues
- Training for High Performance & Precision
- Technical & Specialised Skill Development

This module is mostly practical training, with some theory components.

**T9-OC6 Agility and Obstacle Training**

**Module Overview**
Designed to develop the student’s understanding and abilities from foundation work, through to advanced and technical skills required by dogs involved in working and service dog roles and the complex environments they may encounter. The training focuses on how to develop the dog’s confidence and technical abilities to negotiate and traverse complex obstacles. The module does not cover competitive agility.

**Subjects Covered Include:**
- Foundation Work
- Categories of Obstacles and Agility Equipment
- Stages of Training - Agility and Obstacles
- Introducing the Dog to Obstacles
- Developing Control and Confidence
- Advanced and Complex Obstacle Training
- Scaling, Climbing and Traversing Barriers

This module is mostly practical training, with some theory components.
T9-PB4 Applied Psychology, Learning and Cognition

Module Overview

Continues on from the Psychology and Canine Behaviour module and is designed to broaden and deepen the student’s knowledge of applied animal psychology, learning processes and cognition. In addition to expanding on conventional learning theory, it discusses more complex mechanisms including higher order classes of behaviour and the factors that affect behaviour modification. A major focus of this module is the integration of psychology and learning theory into the training process, therefore a large percentage of the instruction will be practical.

This module caters for those persons involved in breeding, developing and/or training dogs (and other animals) to a high level and/or for specialist purposes. By gaining a deeper understanding of animal psychology and learning, the student is better prepared to develop training programs, modify behaviour and solve problems that occur.

Although it would certainly benefit any person involved with dogs in any field, this is a highly advanced and technical module and as such, we have offered it as an elective for those wanting this additional level of knowledge.

Subjects Covered Include:
 Applied Animal Psychology
 Cognition & Learning Processes
 Expectation & Cognitive Bias
 Factors Affecting Behaviour Modification
 Structuring Complex Learning
 Genetic & Epigenetic Influences on Behaviour
 Escape and Avoidance Learning Processes
 Discrimination & Generalisation of Responses
 Higher Order Classes of Behaviour
 Inhibition & Irrelevance Processes
 Motivational Conflict & Stress Adaptation

This module is a combination of theory and practical training.

GENERAL COURSE INFORMATION

Prerequisites

Due to the advanced nature of the training offered, persons who have no (or very limited) previous experience with dogs (or other animals) will require some training / education prior to commencement. This can be done via a range of options. To discuss these, please contact our Training Coordinator.

Students must be able to read, write and speak English.

Your Own Dog

In addition to working and training with TASK-9 dogs, you will be required to have your own dog to handle and train during the course. If you do not currently own a suitable dog, we can potentially arrange a candidate for you.

Student dogs are required to undergo a basic behavioural assessment, to be conducted by TASK-9 to ensure suitability for training in a working environment (reasonable levels of sociability, and general confidence, etc.).

Further details can be obtained by making an enquiry through the TASK-9 Training Coordinator.

RPL & RPQ

TASK-9 offer Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) for relevant experience and Recognition of Prior Qualifications (RPQ) for related qualifications / certification (including dog training, psychology and learning, animal training, service dog handling, dog care and welfare etc.).
Many of our students / clients receive at least some RPL or RPQ and this may significantly reduce your commitment and cost of our training programs (for example, persons with the NDTF Cert III qualification are automatically eligible for RPQ for all or some elements of several modules).

Further details can be obtained by contacting the TASK-9 Training Coordinator.

**International Students**

TASK-9 welcomes international students and can run courses in foreign languages utilising translators, either in Australia or in your home country.

**Course Delivery**

Each Module has a minimum number of hours (nominal hours) to achieve certification. The student is encouraged to do more than the minimum hours in each module (there is no additional charge for completing extra hours).

**Advanced Obedience and Specialist Skills Course:**

Nominal Hours (without RPL / RPQ and with no electives): 140  
Maximum Allowable Time Frame To Complete Course: 12 months from date of commencement

There are regular training sessions held throughout the week (as well as some weekend and evening sessions). Students will be given a copy of the TASK-9 training program (issued at least 10 days in advanced) to allow you to plan your schedule and availabilities. Our courses are designed to give the student flexibility, allowing you to train around your lifestyle and work commitments.

Although there is a minimum attendance requirement in each month (20 hours), virtually no individual sessions are compulsory. Students are welcome to attend all training sessions relating to their selected modules – depending on their availability. **There is no minimum or maximum number of sessions you can attend in any given week.**  We recommend you attend as often as your schedule allows.

Training is conducted at our professional working dog breeding and training facilities located in Melbourne’s outer Eastern Suburbs and offsite at field venues.

Our venues are equipped with the latest technology, including full audio visual training facilities and the latest in training equipment and resources. Kitchen facilities and student amenities are available on site and a shopping centre is only minutes away, however public transport access is very limited.

If you work full time business hours Monday to Friday with no flexibility, it is probably unrealistic to consider one of our training courses due to the time availability and commitment required. Having said this, we will consider any reasonable application and try to accommodate your schedule.

Further details can be obtained by making a course enquiry through the TASK-9 Training Coordinator.

**Course Resources**

Students will be provided with detailed course notes that will assist and facilitate their learning.

In addition, students will receive an extensive range of instructional videos throughout the course that you can keep and refer back to. We will also be videoing students’ training regularly, for ongoing review and evaluation which you will have access to view. This process will allow you to see yourself in training and discuss with your instructors your specific strengths and areas for development.

**Equipment**

Our facilities have an extensive range of professional training equipment, much of which has been developed by our research and development team to ensure safe effective learning for both students and dogs.

Much of our equipment is innovative and specially designed to facilitate the development and training of high-performance service dogs. Virtually all training equipment you will require throughout the course is provided.
Students may wish to purchase their own equipment from TASK-9 for use during and after the course as we are a supplier of high end professional training resources.

We also have a broad range of training equipment and resources available for sale to students.

**Course Assessments**

You will be assessed on both theory and practical elements – if any assessments are not satisfactory, you will receive further training and be given the opportunity for reassessment after an appropriate amount of time (generally not less than 2 weeks but determined by the instructor).

**Further Training**

The modules in the Advanced Obedience and Specialist Skills course can be credited to any other training program or course run by TASK-9. All modules are common to one or more other courses and would not need to be repeated if done within 5 years.

Every module in this course forms part of our Professional Working and Service Dog Trainers Course (PWSDT).

**Course Fees**

**Course Fee:** $1400 (including the non-refundable Registration Fee of $300). As previously mentioned, students are encouraged to complete additional hours, where available, to further develop and enhance their learning experience at no extra cost).

**Instalment Plan Administration Fee:** $50 (see payment options below).

**RPL / RPQ Admin Fee:** $35 per Module (whether partial or full RPL / RPQ)

Any person eligible for RPL / RPQ will have a reduced requirement of hours and a reduction in course fees based on their approved RPL / RPQ.

**Payment Options**

A non-refundable Registration Fee of $300 to be paid in full with enrolment application.

Course fees can be paid;
1. In full, no less than 30 days prior to course commencement.
2. In 3 monthly instalments; the first to be paid no less than 30 days prior to course commencement, with each instalment to be paid on the same date over the following two months (i.e. all payments to be made by your second month of training).
   **Note:** Instalment Plans incur a $50 administration fee.

If neither of these options are achievable for you, or the course you are interested in is commencing in less than 30 days, please contact our Training Coordinator to discuss other your options and possible placement on the course.

**How to Enrol**

An Enrolment Application can be completed via our online form, by emailing info@task9.com.au and requesting an enrolment pack or by calling the TASK-9 office to request an Enrolment Pack be emailed or posted to you directly.

**Refund Policy**

On application into any course, a non-refundable registration fee of $300 is required for enrolment to be accepted.

In the event of a student withdrawal, TASK-9 will refund a percentage of the course fees, based on the time remaining until course commencement.

Once course has commenced (i.e. Day 1 of course schedule), the full course fee is payable and no refund will be available. For full details, see our Withdrawal / Refund Policy.