

A Letter From The President | Danelle German

CFMG Certification

So many have asked about the CFMG certification testing process that I thought I'd take some time to address this topic in my article.

First, there is a link to the [Certification Process](#) published on our website. In it is a detailed explanation of the costs, requirements and options. There really are only two requirements for beginning the certification process: being a member of the NCGIA and purchasing the 4 Study Packets that correspond with the 4 written exams. Any training or material we that we offer is meant to be an aid to assist in the certification process. It is up to each individual groomer to determine what, if any, training and material is required to help reach that goal.

It is NOT required that a groomer attend the National Cat Groomers School to obtain certification. However, the 2-week program helps tremendously in that endeavor. (It is also NOT required that students at the school take the certification exams. This is completely optional. So far 100% of our students have elected to take the certification exams, but whenever a student is unsure about reaching for this goal, they can wait and decide during the school course. It is NOT required that this decision be made prior to beginning the school course.)

On that note, let me explain how we administer the 9 exams during the 2-week school program.

The first 2 1/2 days of school are made up of lecture and class work. The topics covered (in great detail) are some of the same topics that are covered in the 4 written exams. We go beyond what is necessary for the 4 written exams. There is a lot to cover!

At the end of the first week of class, the first written exam, Feline Temperament and Handling, is given (for those that elect to take it). At this point, we have had a detailed lecture on this topic, an instructor demonstration, and then the students have practiced this with each and every cat they groom during the first week of class. Students are also learning breeds and colors (another written exam topic) along with the temperament part, as they identify each cat at the start of the groom. Students are taught to accurately assess a particular cat's breed, color, coat type, temperament, and grooming needs before doing any actual grooming.

Week two starts out with the Breeds & Colors written exam. The previous week, each student has done a report on a particular breed and presented it orally, thus giving the entire class an opportunity to learn in-depth about a variety of cat breeds. (Yes, you need to know this stuff if you are grooming cats! If you don't know breed standards and coat types, how can you possibly do the job correctly? We learn this stuff for the dogs, but often overlook the cats.)

By the end of week two, the remaining written exams have been administered, having covered the material in-depth and presented the material orally to the class.

The 5 practical exams are administered differently. Each of the exams is broken down

into “elements” that make up various cat grooms (i.e. sanitary clip, belly shave, full coat groom, face trim, etc). Each element is treated individually, and a student is required to master each one before it is scored and checked off the list. Once all elements are mastered, a student is considered to have passed their practical exams. The elements will be mastered on a whole variety of cats as we move into the 2nd week of class, which is mostly hands-on grooming.

As we get down to the remaining day or two of class, most students have only an element or two that needs some fine-tuning. It may be that the element is mastered, but speed must be improved in order to consider the element passed. Because timing is so critical when working with cats, we consider not only neatness and precision to be a requirement, but also working in a safe and efficient manner.

We keep a list posted of what initially is mastered by each student and, later in the course, replace the mastered list with what still needs to be learned. The “needs to be mastered” list diminishes along the way until it is completely gone. Provided the 4 writtens have already been passed at this point, the student is then a CFMG!

Some students do leave the two-week course needing to still practice an element or two. Some of our students are very new to grooming, or new to feline grooming, and just need more practice and experience. These students always have the option to return to class, during a future session, to take the missing practical/s. Some have done this very thing and been rather successful. The time it takes to master the unfinished skills is entirely up to the student. The more cats they groom, the faster they will accomplish their goals.

Please visit the website to read more about the certification process. If a groomer is in doubt about whether or not they are ready to take their practical exams, I always suggest getting the DVDs (“Here Kitty Kitty” at the very least) and measure their completed grooms against those in the DVDs. If something is missing or lacking, some training or practice will be needed. It is up to each individual groomer to decide if and when training is needed. One thing I will say is that in all the years of offering a certification program, only 1 person has ever taken all 9 exams and passed them the first go-around, without any hands-on training. This person has extensive show grooming experience and had attended some lectures as well as watched the DVDs prior to testing.

No matter how each person chooses to go about obtaining their certification, we are here to assist in whatever way possible. It is our goal to help groomers become more proficient at cat grooming and build profitable businesses by providing this most rewarding service to the public.



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