



BECOMING A DOG GROOMER



QC PET STUDIES

Becoming a Dog Groomer

You've loved dogs your whole life—you probably grew up around them and odds are you live with at least one right now. You're the go-to guru for the latest dog grooming trends in your group of friends, and interacting with these furry companions is often the highlight of your day. Now you want to turn your love of dogs and passion for grooming into an exciting and rewarding career. So, where to begin?

One of the ways to break into the dog grooming industry is through education. During your dog grooming training, you'll learn the theory and practical techniques that you'll use for the rest of your career. Do you have what it takes? We'll discuss the different routes you can take to becoming a professional dog groomer and give you a brief outlook on what you can expect out of this career.





What does it mean to be a professional dog groomer?

Becoming a professional dog groomer is more than just the out-of-the-box grooming you see on televised grooming competitions. Yes, groomers do occasionally find jobs giving dogs fur or feather extensions, or dyeing their coat to look like other creatures in the animal kingdom, but professional dog groomers don't just deal with aesthetic styling.

Professional dog groomers are trained to provide a wide range of services that aid in an animal's well-being. Your grooming training can occur in a variety of settings including grooming salons, brick-and-mortar schools, and online institutions. From simple nail clipping to shaving down a completely matted dog, being a dog groomer isn't easy. It takes a lot of hard work and patience to succeed in this field. After all, every appointment has two clients you have to make happy—the dog and his/her owner!



Do you have what it takes?

Besides having the ability to tame the coats of every longhaired dog that you get your hands on, you'll need some additional skills in order to become successful.

Open-minded

First and foremost, you need to be ready and willing to learn. Whether it be via a formal learning institution or through a local experienced professional, you have to stay motivated to work hard throughout the training process. As you develop your abilities, you'll become more and more confident in your skillset.

Passion

If you love what you do, every day will be a learning experience. You'll wake up looking forward to what you do, so your preliminary training before you are able to work independently isn't a grueling task. Dogs are incredibly intuitive, so maintaining a positive energy around both the dogs and their human companions will create a great experience for all!

Patience

Being patient and, by extension, gentle and considerate will go a long way in this industry. You won't always encounter dogs that are friendly and easy to work with. You can't let your frustrations get the best of you if you're working with a difficult dog. If you find yourself becoming tense and more forceful in order to get a job done in time, you can end up harming the dog or being injured yourself! If you're easily flustered, this probably isn't the best career for you.

Problem-solving

Some dogs may not have been groomed in their earlier years, and could have unpredictable reactions to being brought to a groomer. You'll need to be able to think quickly on your feet and communicate well with their owners so that everyone is safe and comfortable during grooming appointments.

Flexibility

Being flexible makes you appealing in the eyes of a pet owner. When you're first starting out, you'll probably encounter your fair share of surprises. Being flexible is integral to the job since unforeseen circumstances could arise, leading you to spend more time than anticipated to groom a dog.

Endurance

Being physically strong is not one of the first things people really consider when they first get into dog grooming. People often overlook the fact that you need stand for long periods of time and be able to lift dogs and hold them in certain positions for grooming procedures. Giving a dog a simple bath requires you to be able to lift them several times, bend in unnatural ways, and stretch muscles you didn't even know you had, so endurance is key if you're taking on multiple clients a day.

Job Description – What is Dog Grooming?

Duties

As mentioned before, the duties of a dog groomer go beyond aesthetic styling (although you can specialize in creative grooming). You'll have to know basic grooming techniques to maintain the health of the dog. These common procedures include bathing, brushing, ear and teeth cleaning, nail trimming, and clipping.

Most groomers are also trained to help treat certain conditions such as de-skunking, de-matting, and flea treatments. Sometimes owners may bring in their pets for a basic grooming appointment, and then groomers may find the beginnings of a skin infection. Groomers have the responsibility to communicate owners to find solutions and then provide the best treatment possible for the dogs.





Work Conditions

Dog groomers can have pretty flexible working conditions depending on where they choose to work. When most people think about dog grooming, they often picture a private grooming salon, but there are many places that are often overlooked!

Where you can work:

- **Veterinarian offices:** Veterinarian clinics and hospitals often offer dog grooming by appointment. If you choose to work at a veterinarian's office, you'll have your own space to do your grooming.
- **Boarding kennels:** Boarding kennels house pets while their owners are away or are unable to care for their pets for short periods of time. Groomers are often on hand to groom the pets while they are there, at the owner's request.
- **Pet stores:** Groomers at pet stores are there to make sure that the pets look and feel their best.
- **Animal shelters:** Not all animal shelters have in-house groomers, since typically shelters are non-profit organizations, so many groomers work at shelters on a voluntary basis. Dog groomers can make a huge difference in keeping shelter dogs healthy and comfortable, and can greatly increase their chances of them getting adopted.
- **Grooming salon:** Grooming salons are great places to start your assistantship or apprenticeship. You'll be around expert groomers who have built a successful business.
- **Freelancing / private business:** This is the most flexible option for dog groomers. You get to set your own hours and prices, determine your own working conditions, and have the ability to accept or refuse clients at your discretion.



Hours

Your hours will be stable if you are working for someone else or for a company / organization. But expect your hours to be later in the day and possibly over the weekends to accommodate for owners' schedules. If you are working freelance, however, you can choose to set your own hours. At the beginning of your career, you'll likely have to be more flexible with your offered hours until you build a steady and loyal client base. If you are setting up your own hours, be sure to have plenty of in-between time to recuperate your strength and sanitize your equipment!



Space:

Unless you're working for a grooming salon that does mobile grooming, you'll likely be working in an indoor space dedicated to grooming your canine clients.

Depending on the regulations in your area, there may be room size requirements that must be adhered to for licensed grooming businesses. A larger working space is ideal to accommodate multiple groomers, multiple animals, and larger sized dogs.

Other requirements include:

- Proper ventilation
- Lots of space between stations
- Plenty of light
- Air conditioning and heating to maintain a comfortable temperature

Working Knowledge

Besides having the technical skillset to perform grooming and sanitation procedures, there are other things you need to know to become a successful dog groomer. You don't need to be a walking encyclopedia to be a great groomer, but here are some concepts that you should familiarize yourself with.

Communication: this applies to both dogs and their owners. You should be a comforting presence for dogs and be inspire confidence in their owners.

Basic animal behavior: so you know how to act around and handle the dogs you will be spending time grooming.

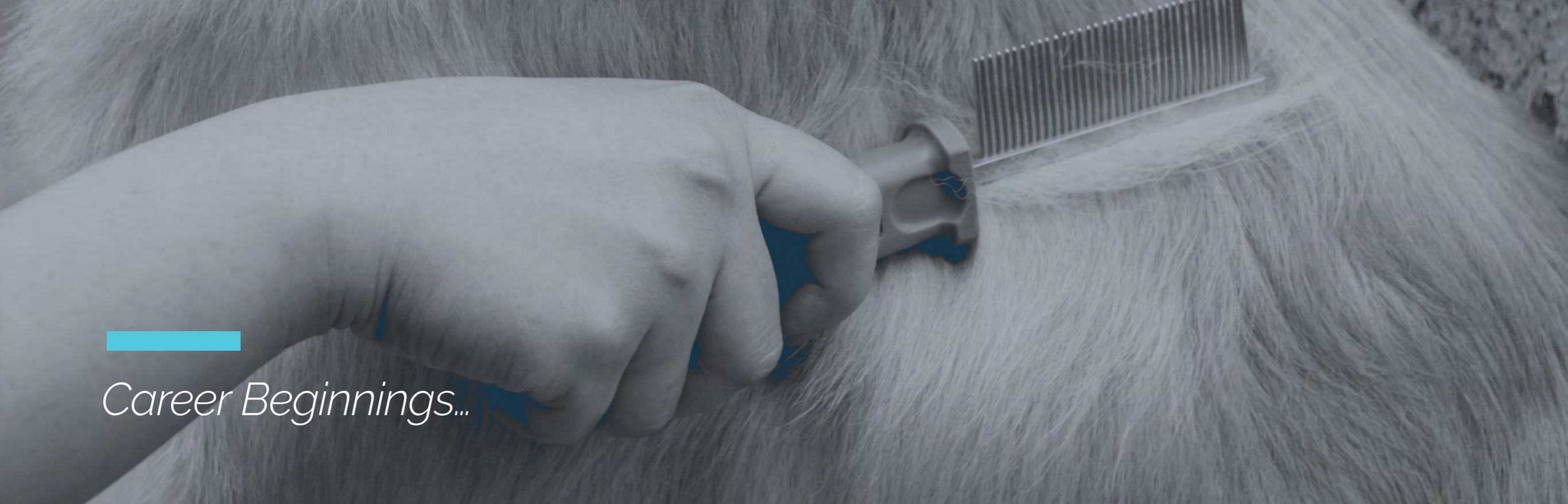
Basic dog anatomy: you should know dog anatomy so you can maneuver your clippers or scissors. Especially useful when clipping nails to avoid the quick, and when doing sanitary cuts.

Breed-specific grooming strategies: depending on the breed of dog, they might have different coat types that require different tools and cutting techniques.

Identifying health issues: so you can prevent health problems or inform the owner if the dog requires medical attention (tooth decay, skin and ear infections, parasites, etc.)

Awareness of special needs and considerations: some dogs require more special accommodation than others. Whether they be senior dogs, physically disabled dogs, or fearful/aggressive dogs, keeping special conditions in mind will create a comfortable experience for the animal.





Career Beginnings...

Certification:

For the most part, you don't need a license or certification to work in the dog grooming industry. Rules and regulations change from region to region, so make sure that you check with local governing boards to find out what you need to get started in the business. If the industry is unregulated in your area, you can either choose to get formal dog grooming training (and become certified), or jump right into hands-on grooming if you already have significant experience.

Do your research and decide what the best option is for you!

Apprenticeship

The best way to become acquainted with this fast-paced work setting is to seek advice from a fellow professional. Ask them how they began their career, and even inquire to see if they would be willing to have you shadow or assist them at their next job. You'll be surprised by how much you learn. Just make sure the advice you get is coming from a seasoned professional who has your best interests in mind; we suggest contacting a certified dog groomer who has a few years of experience under their belt.

Assistantship

Becoming an assistant to a more experienced dog groomer is an amazing opportunity to refine your grooming skills and learn through hands-on work. The groomer you're assisting might even recommend you to others when you become a full-fledged groomer after working with you!

Assisting an expert lets you see what successful dog groomers do right and how they handle a sticky situation. Assistantships are a great transition between your training and your professional career. You'll get unparalleled advice from an experienced professional that you might not otherwise have gotten.



Career Outlook

Becoming a dog groomer is not a walk in the park. Even after you get your foot in the door, it takes a lot of hard work to become successful! Especially if you decide to start your own grooming business, you'll find yourself spending a lot of time, energy, and resources to get that business off the ground.

If you chose the right type of dog grooming education, you'll have a leg-up on the competition by having formal training in theory, technique and practical application. You may even learn how to start your own business. Certification is definitely preferred by employers and clients alike as proof of your competency. On the other hand, you could also choose to complete an apprenticeship or assistantship so you can real-life hands-on experience from the get-go.

In both cases, when you're finally done your training, you'll be able to work as your own boss, or as an integral part of a larger organization. Job prospects for groomers are positive since everyone seems to have a pet these days. If you are passionate about working with dog and their human counterparts, a career in dog grooming can be very rewarding.

ABOUT QC PET STUDIES

QC Pet Studies, a division of QC Career School, offers distance education for pet professionals all over the world. Our goal is to offer the highest quality training in pet grooming possible in an accessible online environment.



21-Day Full Refund Guarentee

Once you receive your course materials, you'll have a full three weeks (21 days) to review your course. If you decide that the course does not match your needs, simply return the materials to the school, unused, and your fees will be immediately refunded!

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