

CAREER INFORMATION SHEET

GUIDE DOG MOBILITY INSTRUCTOR

Guide Dog Mobility Instructors (GDMI) often have a diverse role within any guide dog organisation. They are responsible for the assessment and training of guide dogs, assessing applicants who are blind or vision impaired, matching trained guide dogs with clients and providing guide dog clients with the necessary training to ensure safe, effective, independent mobility. GDMI also provide comprehensive support services to ensure the ongoing safety and independence of guide dog clients.

GDMI are trained through a cadetship program designed to comply with the standards of the International Guide Dog Federation. This is a worldwide organisation that promotes goodwill, information sharing and uniformity of standards among guide dog organisations.

GDMI must enjoy teaching people and working with dogs. Cadet GDMI receive thorough training in the development, assessment and training of guide dogs. They also study the physiology, psychology and sociology of vision disabilities and are taught appropriate techniques to ensure safe, effective mobility for clients under their tuition.

General requirements

Because of the physical and emotional demands of the work, Cadets and Instructors must be mature in experience and outlook, enjoy good health, hearing and eyesight. They must have a genuine desire to enter the field of service for people who are blind or vision impaired, and have an aptitude for handling animals.

Education and Training

Completion of a relevant tertiary qualification in a human service field is desirable. The cadetship training program is normally conducted over approximately four years. The cadetship includes the satisfactory completion of the Guide Dog Trainer qualification (18 – 24 months), working with clients and guide dogs to complete the guide dog instructor component (18 months) and a post-graduate qualification in Orientation and Mobility (12 months).

During this time, cadets receive tuition from Senior GDMI in assessing and instructing clients in the handling of guide dogs and participate in theoretical and practical work with dogs. Cadets also receive familiarisation with guide dog breeding programs and puppy development programs.

Employment opportunities

GDMI are employed by organisations throughout the world. **Opportunities to enter the field are very limited.** Cadets are sometimes recruited from within the organisation, so vacancies are rare and competition is very keen.

Terms and conditions

Cadets normally receive a salary whilst undertaking training. After qualification GDMI are paid in accordance with performance and experience. Although employed in normal office hours, Cadets and GDMI are often required to vary their hours in accordance with the requirements, and availability, of clients and dogs.