

COE Accreditation Policies and Procedures: Requirements

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7. Requirements of an Accredited College of Veterinary Medicine

The following definitions will be used in applying the Standards:

- **Must:** Indicates a mandatory requirement.
- **Should:** Indicates the recommended and highly desirable manner in which to attain the Standard.

The Standards of Accreditation

7.1. Standard 1, Organization

The college must develop and follow its mission statement.

An accredited college of veterinary medicine must be a part of an institution of higher learning accredited by an organization recognized for that purpose by its country's government. A college may be accredited only when it is a major academic/administrative division of the parent institution and is afforded the same recognition, status, and autonomy as other professional colleges in that institution.

The chief executive officer/dean must be a veterinarian. This individual must have overall budgetary and supervisory authority necessary to assure compliance with accreditation standards. The officer(s) responsible for the professional, ethical, and academic affairs of the veterinary medical teaching hospital(s) or equivalent must also be veterinarians.

There must be sufficient administrative staff to adequately manage the affairs of the college as appropriate to the enrollment and operation.

The college must create an academic environment that does not discriminate and seeks to enhance diversity, consistent with applicable law. Diversity may include, but is not limited to, race, religion, ethnicity, age, gender, gender identity, sexual orientation, cultural and socioeconomic background, national origin, and disability.

7.2. Standard 2, Finances

Finances must be adequate to sustain the educational programs and mission of the college.

Colleges with non DVM undergraduate degree programs must clearly report finances (expenditures and revenue(s) specific to those programs separately from finances (expenditures and revenues) dedicated to all other educational programs.

Clinical services, field services, and teaching hospitals must function as instructional resources. Instructional integrity of these resources must take priority over financial self-sufficiency of clinical services operations.

7.3. Standard 3, Physical Facilities and Equipment

All aspects of the physical facilities must provide an appropriate learning environment. Safety of personnel and animals must be a high priority. Classrooms, teaching laboratories, teaching hospitals, which may include but are not limited to ambulatory/field services vehicles, seminar rooms, and other teaching spaces shall be clean, maintained in good repair, and adequate in number, size, and equipment for the instructional purposes intended and the number of students enrolled.

Offices, workspaces, laboratories, toilets, and locker rooms must be sufficient for the needs of the students, faculty, and staff.

An accredited college must maintain an on-campus veterinary teaching hospital(s), or have formal affiliation with one or more off-campus veterinary hospitals or other training sites used for teaching. Appropriate diagnostic and therapeutic service components must be present to meet the expectations of the practice type. These include, but are not limited to, pharmacy, diagnostic imaging, diagnostic support services, isolation facilities, intensive/critical care, ambulatory/field service vehicles, and necropsy facilities in the teaching hospital(s) and/or facilities that provide core clinical training. Operational policies and procedures must be posted in appropriate places. Standards related to providing an adequate teaching environment and safety of personnel and animals shall apply to all teaching hospitals and core training sites.

Facilities for the housing of animals used for teaching and research shall be sufficient in number, properly constructed, and maintained in a manner consistent with accepted animal welfare standards. Adequate teaching, laboratory, research, and clinical equipment must be available for examination, diagnosis, and treatment of all animals used by the college.

7.4. Standard 4, Clinical Resources

Normal and diseased animals of various domestic and exotic species must be available for instructional purposes, either as clinical patients or provided by the institution. While precise numbers are not specified, in-hospital patients and outpatients including field service/ambulatory and herd health/production medicine programs are required to provide the necessary quantity and quality of clinical instruction. The program must be able to demonstrate, using its assessment of clinical competency outcomes data, that the clinical resources are sufficient to achieve the stated educational goals and mission.

It is essential that a diverse and sufficient number of surgical and medical patients be available during an on-campus clinical activity for the students' clinical educational experience. Experience can include exposure to clinical education at off-campus sites, provided the college reviews and regularly monitors these clinical experiences and educational outcomes. Further, such clinical experiences should occur in a setting that provides access to subject matter experts, reference resources, modern and complete clinical laboratories, advanced diagnostic instrumentation and ready confirmation (including necropsy).

Such examples could include a contractual arrangement with nearby practitioners who serve as adjunct faculty members and off-campus field practice centers. The teaching hospital(s) shall provide nursing care and instruction in nursing procedures. A supervised field service and/or ambulatory program must be maintained in which students are offered multiple opportunities to obtain clinical experience under field conditions. Under all situations students must be active participants in the workup of the patient, including physical diagnosis and diagnostic problem oriented decision making.

Medical records must be comprehensive and maintained in an effective retrieval system to efficiently support the teaching, research, and service programs of the college. Students should be trained in the use of an electronic medical record system.

7.5. Standard 5, Information Resources

Timely access to information resources and information professionals must be available to students and faculty at core training sites. The college must have access to up-to-date human, digital, and physical resources for retrieval of relevant veterinary and supporting literature and for development of instructional materials, and provide appropriate training and technical support for students and faculty. The program must be able to demonstrate, using its outcomes assessment data, that students are competent in retrieving, evaluating, and applying information through the use of electronic and other appropriate information technologies.

7.6. Standard 6, Students

The number of professional degree students, DVM or equivalent, must be consistent with the resources and the mission of the college. The program must be able to demonstrate, using its outcomes assessment data, that the resources are sufficient to achieve the stated educational goals for all enrolled students.

Colleges should establish post-DVM programs such as internships, residencies and advanced degrees (e.g., MS, PhD), that must complement and strengthen the professional program and not adversely affect the veterinary student experience.

Student support services must be available within the college or university. These must include, but are not limited to, appropriate services to support student wellness and to assist with meeting the academic and personal challenges of the DVM program; support for students with learning or other disabilities; and support of extra-curricular activities relevant to veterinary medicine and professional growth.

The college or parent institution must provide information and access to counselling services regarding financial aid, debt management, and career advising. Career advising must include selection of clinical experiences.

The college must promote an inclusive institutional climate that fosters diversity within the student body, consistent with applicable law.

In relationship to enrollment, the colleges must provide accurate information for all advertisements regarding the educational program by providing clear and current information for prospective students. Further, printed catalog or electronic information must state the purpose and goals of the program, provide admission requirements and procedures, state degree requirements, present faculty descriptions, provide an accurate academic calendar, clearly state information on educational cost and debt risk, for the college. The college must provide information on procedures for withdrawal including the refund of student's tuition and fees allowable. Information available to prospective students must include relevant requirements for professional licensure.

Each accredited college must provide a mechanism for students, anonymously if they wish, to offer suggestions, comments, and complaints regarding compliance of the college with the Standards of Accreditation. These materials shall be made available to the Council annually.

7.7. Standard 7, Admission

The college must have a well-defined and officially stated admissions policy and a process that ensures a fair and consistent assessment of applicants. The policy must provide for an admissions committee, a majority of whom must be full-time faculty members. The committee must make recommendations regarding the students to be admitted to the professional curriculum upon consideration of applications of candidates who meet the academic and other requirements as defined in the college's formal admission policy.

The college must demonstrate its commitment to diversity and inclusion through its recruitment and admission processes, as consistent with applicable law. The college's admissions policies must be non-discriminatory, as consistent with applicable law.

Subjects for admission must include those courses prerequisite to the professional program in veterinary medicine, as well as courses that contribute to a broad general education. The goal of pre-veterinary education shall be to provide a broad base upon which professional education may be built, leading to lifelong learning with continued professional and personal development.

Factors other than academic achievement must be considered for admission criteria.

7.8. Standard 8, Faculty

Faculty numbers and qualifications must be sufficient to deliver the educational program and fulfill the mission of the college. Participation in scholarly activities is an important criterion in evaluating the faculty and the college. The college must provide evidence that it utilizes a well-defined and comprehensive program for the evaluation of professional growth, development, and scholarly activities of the faculty.

Academic positions must offer the security and benefits necessary to maintain stability, continuity, and competence of the faculty. The college must cultivate a diverse faculty through its hiring policies and retention practices, consistent with applicable law. The college must demonstrate its ongoing efforts to achieve parity in advancement opportunities and compensation. Part-time faculty, residents, and graduate students may supplement the teaching efforts of the full-time permanent faculty if appropriately integrated into the instructional program.

7.9. Standard 9, Curriculum

The curriculum shall extend over a period equivalent to a minimum of four academic years, including a minimum of one academic year of hands-on clinical education. The curriculum and educational process should initiate and promote lifelong learning in each professional degree candidate.

The curriculum in veterinary medicine is the purview of the faculty of each college, but must be managed centrally based upon the mission and resources of the college. There must be sufficient flexibility in curriculum planning and management to facilitate timely revisions in response to emerging issues, and advancements in knowledge and technology. The curriculum must be guided by a college curriculum committee. The curriculum as a whole must be reviewed at least every seven (7) years. The majority of the members of the curriculum committee must be full-time faculty. Curriculum evaluations should include the gathering of sufficient qualitative and quantitative information to ensure the curriculum content provides current concepts and principles as well as instructional quality and effectiveness.

The curriculum must provide:

- an understanding of the central biological principles and mechanisms that underlie animal health and disease from the molecular and cellular level to organismal and population manifestations.
- scientific, discipline-based instruction in an orderly and concise manner so that students gain an understanding of normal function, homeostasis, pathophysiology, mechanisms of health/disease, and the natural history and manifestations of important animal diseases, both domestic and foreign.
- instruction in both the theory and practice of medicine and surgery applicable to a broad range of species. The instruction must include principles and hands-on experiences in physical and laboratory diagnostic methods and interpretation (including diagnostic imaging, diagnostic pathology, and necropsy), disease prevention, biosecurity, therapeutic intervention (including surgery and dentistry), and patient management and care (including intensive care, emergency medicine and isolation procedures) involving clinical diseases of individual animals and populations. Instruction should emphasize problem solving that results in making and applying medical judgments.
- instruction in the principles of epidemiology, zoonoses, food safety, the interrelationship of animals and the environment, and the contribution of the veterinarian to the overall public and professional healthcare teams.
- opportunities for students to learn how to acquire information from clients (e.g. history) and about patients (e.g. medical records), to obtain, store and retrieve such information, and to communicate effectively with clients and colleagues.
- opportunities throughout the curriculum for students to gain an understanding of professional ethical, legal, economic, and regulatory principles related to the delivery of veterinary medical services, personal and business finance and management skills; and gain an understanding of the breadth of veterinary medicine, career opportunities and other information about the profession.
- Opportunities throughout the curriculum for students to gain and integrate an understanding of the important influences of diversity and inclusion in veterinary medicine, including the impact of implicit bias related to an individual's personal circumstance on the delivery of veterinary medical services.
- knowledge, skills, values, attitudes, aptitudes and behaviors necessary to address responsibly the health and well-being of animals in the context of ever-changing societal expectations.
- fair and equitable assessment of student progress. The grading system for the college must be relevant and applied to all students in a fair and uniform manner.

7.10. Standard 10, Research Programs

The college must maintain substantial research activities of high quality that integrate with and strengthen the professional program. The college must demonstrate continuing scholarly productivity and must provide opportunities for any interested students in the professional veterinary program to be exposed to or participate in on-going high-quality research. All students must receive training in the principles and application of research methods and in the appraisal and integration of research into veterinary medicine and animal health.

7.11. Standard 11, Outcomes Assessment

Outcomes of the veterinary medical degree program must be measured, analyzed, and considered to improve the program. New graduates must have the basic scientific knowledge, skills, and values to provide entry-level health care, independently, at the time of graduation. Student achievement must be included in outcome assessment. Processes must be in place to remediate students who do not demonstrate competence in one or more of the nine competencies.

The college should have in place a system to gather outcomes data on recent graduates to ensure that the competencies and learning objectives in the program result in relevant entry level competencies.

The college must have processes in place whereby students are observed and assessed formatively and summatively, with timely documentation to assure accuracy of the assessment for having attained the following competencies:

- comprehensive patient diagnosis (problem solving skills), appropriate use of diagnostic testing, and record management
- comprehensive treatment planning including patient referral when indicated
- anesthesia and pain management, patient welfare
- basic surgery skills and case management
- basic medicine skills and case management
- emergency and intensive care case management
- understanding of health promotion, and biosecurity, prevention and control of disease including zoonoses and principles of food safety
- ethical and professional conduct; communication skills including those that demonstrate an understanding and sensitivity to how clients' diversity and individual circumstance can impact health care
- critical analysis of new information and research findings relevant to veterinary medicine.

The Council on Education expects that 80% or more of each college's graduating senior students sitting for the NAVLE will have passed at the time of graduation.*

*Colleges that do not meet this criterion will be subjected to the following analysis. The Council will calculate a 95% exact binomial confidence interval for the NAVLE scores for colleges whose NAVLE pass rate falls below 80%. Colleges with an upper limit of an exact 95% binomial confidence interval less than 85% for two successive years in which scores are available will be placed on Probationary Accreditation. Colleges with an upper limit of an exact 95% binomial confidence level less than 85% for four successive years in which scores are available will, for cause, be placed on Terminal Accreditation. If no program graduates take the NAVLE, the Council will use other student educational outcomes in assessing compliance with the standard including those listed in 12.11.1.