



AMERICAN COLLEGE OF VETERINARY SURGEONS

2021 CREDENTIALS APPLICATION GUIDELINES

CREDENTIALS APPLICATION POLICIES

Following completion of the veterinary surgery residency, residents may submit a credentials application to the Resident Credentialing Committee to determine eligibility to take the Phase II Surgical Knowledge Examination.

- Applications are submitted online at www.acvs.org/apply.
- Applications are also required from former residents whose previous applications were denied or from candidates who have not passed the ACVS Certification Examination after three attempts. Applications will be submitted online at www.acvs.org/apply.
- Residents who started prior to July 1, 2007 and are applying for the first time should contact Jeff Melia, ACVS Resident Training and Technology Manager (jmelia@acvs.org or 301-916-0200 ext. 102) as soon as possible for details on how to submit your credentials application.

CHANGES FOR 2021 APPLICATIONS

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the process and deadlines for submitting credentials applications has changed for 2021.

Credentials applications must be submitted on or before August 1. Any resident who has not completed all requirements must include a letter signed by the resident and Program Director noting the deficiencies and explaining the plan to fulfill these requirements by September 1. Residents may continue to complete requirements and add training to the online log during the month of August.

Upon review of the initial credentials application submission, if there are requirements which had not been met prior to August 1, the application will be returned to the applicant to provide the remaining items with a deadline of September 1. The revised application and credentials application fee must be submitted on or before September 1.

APPLICATION DEADLINES

August 1: Credentials applications must be submitted on or before August 1 of the year preceding the anticipated examination, unless an extension has been granted by the Board of Regents following the procedure outlined in the *Residency Training Standards and Requirements*.^{*} When the deadline falls on a Saturday or Sunday, completed applications must be submitted online no later than the following Monday. THIS IS A FIRM DEADLINE. LATE APPLICATIONS WILL NOT BE ACCEPTED OR REVIEWED. ACVS will not allow late submission of applications due to delivery service problems, insufficient postage, international customs, computer/internet issues, etc.

September 1: The final deadline for the completion of all requirements, resubmission of revised applications (if applicable), and payment of the credentials application fee is September 1.

*If an extension was granted by the Board of Regents, the application must be submitted on or before August 10. (Extensions are only available for residents who started on July 25 or later.)

ELIGIBILITY TO SUBMIT AN APPLICATION

For 2021, all requirements for admission must be complete prior to September 1. This includes acceptance of the publication and successful completion of the residency.

APPLICATION TIME LIMITS

Residents whose programs began prior to July 1, 2013: Any applicant within 5 years of the completion of his/her program may apply under current requirements or the requirements in effect at the initiation of his/her program. Any resident whose credentials have not been accepted within 5 years of completion of his/her residency program must apply under the residency and credentials requirements currently in effect at the time of application. These residents may be required to pursue further training to comply with the requirements in place for a current resident before submitting credentials (i.e., a former resident wishing to apply in 2021 would need to have training equivalent to the requirements of someone who started in 2018 and plans to submit credentials in 2021). Any resident whose credentials are denied must only correct the deficit in order to reapply and is under no time limit for reapplication.

Residents whose programs began July 1, 2013 or later: Any resident must apply for credentials within five years of completion of the residency program (applies to residents whose programs start July 1, 2013 or later). The applicant must meet all residency program requirements in effect at the start of the residency program. Any resident whose credentials are denied must only correct the deficit in order to reapply but must reapply within the five-year time limit.

APPLICATION PREPARATION

All applicants must submit their applications online.

- First-time applicants whose programs began July 1, 2007 or later (online log users) should follow the [Guidelines for First-Time Applicants](#) outlined on pages 4-6.
- Applicants who are resubmitting following an unsuccessful application should follow the steps listed in the [Reapplication Procedure Following an Unsuccessful Credentials Application](#) section on page 7.
- Applicants who are re-credentialing after not passing the examination in three attempts should follow the steps listed in the [Reapplication Following Three Examination Attempts](#) section on page 8.

SUBMISSION OF APPLICATION MATERIALS AND FEE

Submitted application materials become the sole property of ACVS and will not be returned to the applicant.

Residents who wish to maintain access to their case log data should export the information from the Resident Training Log. There is a limited amount of time to access logs after the residency has been completed.

- A. **Submit initial Credentials Application on or before August 1, 11:59pm Eastern time**, online at www.acvs.org/apply.
- B. **For 2021, applications that are incomplete will receive an initial review and be returned to the applicant to update with remaining items. Resubmissions are due on or before September 1.**

- C. Submit the **Application Fee of \$1,150 or before September 1**. The fee is due on or before September 1 regardless of payment method. NOTE: Applications will not be reviewed if the application fee has not been paid. Complete applications submitted on August 1 without payment will be returned to the applicant for resubmission with payment by September 1.

The application fee is not refundable. Do not submit payment until you are certain that all requirements (including acceptance of publication) will have been met prior to the September 1 deadline for requirement completion.

1. To pay by MasterCard or Visa, choose one of the following options:
 - Submit payment online at www.acvs.org/residents/fees.
 - Fax the Payment Authorization form (available at www.acvs.org/residents/credentials-application) to 301-916-2287.
 - Mail the Payment Authorization form to ACVS.
2. To pay application fee by check, mail application fee and Payment Authorization form to the ACVS office.

The candidate is responsible for the accuracy and availability of all required application materials. Candidates are fully responsible for submission by the deadline. ACVS strongly encourages candidates to submit applications well before the deadline to avoid any unforeseen problems.

NOTIFICATION OF ACCEPTANCE/REJECTION OF APPLICATION

Applications will be reviewed by the Resident Credentialing Committee for adherence to residency training and Credentials application requirements as quickly as possible. Applicants who submitted an application indicating unfulfilled requirements due to COVID-19 will have their applications returned so they may complete the remaining items and resubmit by September 1.

The ACVS office will notify all candidates by email no later than October 1 about the outcome of their application. If the application is accepted by the Resident Credentialing Committee and approved by the Board of Regents, the candidate will be notified regarding the dates and procedure of the next examination. It is the resident's responsibility to ensure that their contact information is kept up to date with ACVS. Contact information can be verified and updated at any time by visiting www.acvs.org/my-account and selecting the option to update your profile/contact information. Note: Profile updates in "My Account" are not reflected automatically in the credentials application. Visit www.acvs.org/apply once you've made changes to force an immediate update in the credentials system.

Unsuccessful applicants will be notified at the same time via email explaining the deficiency in credentials. **Candidates whose credentials are found to contain potentially resolvable discrepancies or other errors will be conditionally denied and will have 14 days from the date of the notification letter to amend their application.** Candidates will need to respond to deficiencies in the online application system, as well as making applicable changes to the Resident Training Log. This additional material will be reviewed by the Resident Credentialing Committee and a final recommendation will be made to the Board of Regents. Candidates will receive notification of the Board's decision regarding their application no later than November 1.

APPEAL PROCEDURE

A candidate for membership in the college who disagrees with a determination by the American College of Veterinary Surgeons regarding the acceptance or rejection of credentials may appeal such determination by submission of a written petition for reconsideration. Please refer to the *Protocol for Processing of Appeals* for more information about this process. A copy of the protocol may be obtained from the ACVS office.

GUIDELINES FOR FIRST-TIME APPLICANTS

NOTE FOR 2021: All application fields that can be completed for the August 1 deadline should be completed at that time. Fields that may prevent applicants from submitting partial applications will not be required for initial submission prior to August 1. All relevant fields will be required prior to resubmitting for the September 1 deadline. Providing all information/materials, if possible, for the initial August 1 submission review will help to facilitate more timely re-review following the September 1 deadline.

Each complete application includes the following materials listed in the order presented in the online application. All sections must be completed and references obtained before the entire application can be submitted for review.

Note: Files should be uploaded as PDFs or JPGs. Avoid special characters in your document names, including commas.

RESIDENT TRAINING LOG

1. Residency Completion Information. Upload the following items:
 - a. An electronic (.pdf, .jpg, etc.) copy of the **Residency Completion email notification** stating that the Program Director has initiated program completion in the Resident Training Log.
 - b. Screenshot (.jpg, .pdf, etc.) of the **Program History screen from the Resident Training Log** showing program dates and Program Director/Resident Advisor history.
2. External Surgical Rotation Details
 - a. All applicants will need to indicate if an External Surgical Rotation was completed during the residency.
 - b. If you fulfilled part of your surgical requirements in a different institution from your primary institution/hospital, an **External Surgical Rotation Form** must be submitted with your application. This form is required if your residency began July 1, 2011 or later.
 - i. The External Surgical Rotation Form must be signed by the veterinarian supervising the case for each case the resident scrubs in on during the out-rotation, as well as by the Resident Advisor and resident.
 - ii. A separate form must be submitted for each location at which these rotations were completed, and a supervisor's signature must be present for each case listed on the form regardless of whether the case was directly supervised.
 - iii. Each form must be signed by the resident and by the Resident Advisor.

EDUCATION AND TRAINING

1. Residency details—location name and start/end dates should be recorded. If a resident transferred to a different program during the residency, previous location name(s) and start/end dates are also required.
2. Internship details—location name, start date, and end date or specify that Program Director/training program accepted equivalent training experience in lieu of an internship.
3. Veterinary School details—location name, year of graduation, and specify AVMA accreditation or provide proof of licensure/ECFVG certificate. If the candidate is not a graduate of an AVMA accredited veterinary school, one of the following documents is required:
 - a. A certificate issued by the Educational Commission for Foreign Veterinary Graduates (ECFVG), or
 - b. A current veterinary license or other form of verification that the candidate is legally qualified to practice veterinary medicine in some state, province, territory, or possession of the United States, Canada, or other country (if applicable, translated into English), or
 - c. Proof that the candidate was legally qualified to practice veterinary medicine in some state, province, territory or possession of the United States, Canada or some other country (if applicable, translated into English) during the term of his or her surgical residency program.

PUBLICATION REQUIREMENT

The manuscript must fulfill the [Criteria for Acceptance of a Publication](#) in the current Residency Training Standards and Requirements. If an applicant has more than one manuscript that meets the requirement, up to two manuscripts may be submitted. Label one as the primary publication and one as the secondary publication. Manuscripts that do not fulfill the requirements, e.g., case reports and review articles, should not be submitted. **Manuscripts may be no more than 5 years old at the time of submission of credentials.**

1. Manuscripts that have been published in a journal on the Approved Journals List
 - a. Indicate the manuscript title, publication date, and journal
 - b. Upload a copy of the published manuscript
2. Manuscripts that have been accepted, but not yet published, in a journal on the Approved Journals List
 - a. Indicate the manuscript title and journal
 - b. Upload a copy of the accepted version of the manuscript (with title page showing all authors and all figures and photographs). If uploading a blinded copy of the manuscript, the title page should be added separately, but must be included in the submission.
 - c. Upload a copy of a letter or email (see [Criteria for Acceptance of a Publication](#) in the current *Residency Training Standards and Requirements*) from the journal editor indicating acceptance of the manuscript.
3. Manuscripts that have been previously reviewed by the Resident Credentialing Committee and accepted as meeting this requirement.
 - a. Confirmation of this approval may be reflected in your online application. Your manuscript will appear in the Publication Requirement section with “MANUSCRIPT ACCEPTED” as the status. If the manuscript was accepted, but not yet published, update your entry with the final published version, if available. To do so, click on the “gear” icon and select “Submit Updated/Published Manuscript.” Add the publication date and final manuscript.
 - b. If the manuscript is not in your online application:
 - i. Follow the steps as outlined in 1. or 2. above.

- ii. In the Additional Documentation section of your application:
 1. Upload a copy of the letter indicating early acceptance of the manuscript by the RCC and
 2. Upload a copy of the ACVS Manuscript Evaluation Form as completed by the RCC.

LETTERS OF REFERENCE

All candidates must obtain Letters of Reference from three (no more) different referees, which meet the criteria outlined below. Letters of reference are requested through the online application and are completed online by the referee. Reference letters must be current (if submitting credentials in 2021, forms must be completed in 2021).

1. Criteria for Referees:
 - a. Two of the referees must be Diplomates of ACVS. The third referee may be a Diplomate of ACVS and must be a DVM or equivalent (i.e., VMD) who served in a supervisory role to the applicant during the residency or currently serves in a supervisory role to the applicant.
 - b. All referees must be familiar with the candidate's surgical residency training. In the event that only one ACVS Diplomate worked directly with the resident, a second ACVS Diplomate must be identified who was familiar with the applicant's training and can substantiate the qualifications of the applicant as requested in the Letter of Reference Form.
 - c. Two of the referees must be the candidate's Resident Advisor and Program Director in effect at the end of the residency*. Candidates for whom the Resident Advisor and Program Director is the same person must have another ACVS Diplomate act as a referee to meet the criteria in items A and B.
 - d. The Letter of Reference Forms must *collectively* document the following:
 - i. The commitment of the applicant to the constitutional objectives of ACVS.
 - ii. The moral and ethical standing of the applicant within the veterinary profession.

Note: Credentials may be rejected if a "no" answer is given by any referee to 1 or 2 above. A "cannot answer" or negative response must be accompanied by an explanation from the referee.

2. References section in application system
 - a. Enter the full name, valid email address, and how you are affiliated with the individual.
 - b. Send the form to the reference. References will receive an email with a link to complete the information. **As a courtesy to the referees, candidates should request reference letters as soon as possible and should notify the referee that they will receive a link via email to complete the letter of reference online.**
 - c. You will receive an email notification when a reference is completed.

ADDITIONAL DOCUMENTATION

Additional Documentation: Click on the "Add Additional Documentation" button to create an entry for each of the following items, as applicable. A brief explanation of each file is required. Relevant documentation should be uploaded in .pdf format.

1. If an extension of the due date for the credentials application materials has been granted to the applicant, upload a copy of the letter from the Board of Regents in this section.
2. If applicable, upload copies of any significant correspondence between the resident, Resident Advisor, Program Director, and the ACVS office or Resident Credentialing Committee.

SUBMITTING THE APPLICATION TO ACVS

Once all sections of the application are complete and all references have been received, submit the application to ACVS. Use the orange Submit Application button at the top of the screen. Indicate how payment has been submitted to ACVS. **This final step must be completed prior to the deadline.** You will receive a confirmation email upon successful submission.

REAPPLICATION PROCEDURE FOLLOWING AN UNSUCCESSFUL CREDENTIALS APPLICATION

Any resident whose credentials are denied must only correct the deficit to reapply. Time limits apply to residents whose programs started July 1, 2013 or later. See [Application Time Limits](#). All correspondence regarding application procedures and notification should be included in the Additional Documentation section of the online application. Online applications must include the same items as first-time applicants (see pages 3-6 above), with the exceptions noted here.

PUBLICATION REQUIREMENT

This section is only required if the reason for denial of the previous credentials application was because the manuscript did not meet the criteria for acceptance of the publication. If your manuscript was accepted by ACVS, it will appear in the Publication Requirement section with “MANUSCRIPT ACCEPTED” as the status.

LETTERS OF REFERENCES

Three (no more) current letters of reference are required. Applicants may use the same referees, but must obtain current letters of reference. Credentials may be rejected if a “no” answer is given by any referee to questions 1 or 2 on the Letter of Reference Form. A cannot answer or negative response must be accompanied by a letter of explanation from the referee.

1. References section in application system
 - a. Enter the full name, valid email address, and how you are affiliated with the individual.
 - b. Send the form to the reference. **As a courtesy to the referees, candidates should request reference letters as soon as possible and should notify the referee that they will receive a link via email to complete the letter of reference online.**
 - c. You will receive an email notification when a reference is completed.

ADDITIONAL

Applications must include the following correspondence, uploaded as PDF files.

- Letter(s) from the Resident Credentialing Committee explaining the previous deficiency in credentials
 - Letter(s) documenting the appeal process/appeal decision (if applicable)
 - Letter(s) or documentation specifying the correction of items found deficient
1. Use the “Add Additional Documentation” button to create an entry for each file you upload.
 2. Provide a brief explanation of the file.

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APPLICATION FEE

The 2021 credentials reapplication fee is \$1,150. See page 2 for additional details.

REAPPLICATION FOLLOWING THREE EXAMINATION ATTEMPTS

Failure to complete successfully both sections of the Phase II Surgical Competency Examination after three attempts* will require submission of a new credentials application to the Resident Credentialing Committee and complete re-examination. Candidates whose reapplications are approved must then pass both sections of the Phase II examination.

*Candidates who transitioned from the traditional Certification Examination must submit a new credentials application if they have not completed successfully the Phase II examination and, if applicable, the Phase I examination within three attempts.

Applications must be submitted online at www.acvs.org/apply and include the following items.

LETTERS OF REFERENCES

Two (no more) current letters of reference: at least one of these letters must be from an ACVS Diplomate. Credentials may be rejected if a “no” answer is given by any referee to questions one or two on the Letter of Reference Form. A cannot answer or negative response must be accompanied by a letter of explanation from the Referee.

1. References section in application system
 - a. Enter the full name, valid email address, and how you are affiliated with the individual.
 - b. Send the form to the reference. References will receive an email with a link to complete the information. **As a courtesy to the referees, candidates should request reference letters as soon as possible and should notify the referee that they will receive a link via email to complete the letter of reference online.**
 - c. You will receive an email notification when a reference is completed.

CREDENTIALS APPLICATION REQUIRED FILES

All pertinent correspondence: This should include a document listing all years of previous credentials applications and all examination notification letters, as well as any other significant documentation relating to the examination or credentials process. Relevant documentation should be uploaded (in .pdf format) via the Credentials Application Required Files section of the online application.

1. Use the “Add Additional Documentation” button to create an entry for each file you wish to upload.
2. Provide a brief explanation of the file.

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