ABOUT THIS SUPPLEMENT

This supplement to the 2021 ACVS Phase II Surgical Competency Information Pamphlet highlights the sections of the pamphlet that have changed due to the re-examination being offered to candidates on April 7-8, 2021. All other policies remain in place as outlined in the Phase II Surgical Competency Examination Information Pamphlet for the February 22, 2021 examination. Note: This supplemental pamphlet reflects the policies and procedures as of April 2021. All policies and procedures are subject to change. If you have any questions or require further information, please visit www.acvs.org or contact the ACVS staff at 301-916-0200 x104.

POLICIES: ELIGIBILITY, DEFERRALS, AND LIMITATIONS

Eligibility: The re-examination is offered only to candidates who did not pass the February 22, 2021 Phase II Surgical Competency Examination. Candidates who failed one or both sections of the examination and choose to take the re-examination must register with ACVS by March 22, 11:59 pm (Eastern Daylight Time). There is no fee for the retesting opportunity.

Deferrals: Candidates who choose not to take the re-examination opportunity, will be granted a one-year deferral. This means the examination on February 22 will not count as one of your examination attempts, and you will be granted one additional year in which to pass the Phase II examination. There will not be a refund of your examination fee but ACVS will not require you to pay the examination fee for the 2022 Phase II examination as it will count as your deferred re-examination. This waiver of the fee will not extend past the 2022 Phase II examination. You must contact Kimberly Soehnlein at ksoehnlein@acvs.org by March 22, 11:59 pm (Eastern Daylight Time) to indicate your deferral. Deferrals will not be accepted after this date.

If you choose to defer this year’s re-examination attempt, ACVS will provide an Examination Feedback report with 10 days of your notice to ACVS of your deferral. An ACVS Examination Committee member will be assigned as your advisor by April 2. If you have any questions regarding this examination or your preparation for next year’s examination, please contact your advisor. As a reminder, ACVS has instituted a limitation of the number of examination attempts for all candidates. You will receive a follow-up email regarding your examination status within 30 days of your deferral. Candidates will receive an email in September 2021 when examination information is available for the 2022 examination.

Limitations: Candidates who do not pass the April 7–8 examination, are subject to existing policies regarding retaking the examination, recredentialing requirements, and limitations on examination attempts. Please refer to the 2021 Phase II Surgical Competency Information Pamphlet for specific limitation policies.

EXAMINATION SCHEDULE

March 30: 7:30 pm (Eastern Daylight Time). Virtual information session for candidates and proctors. The session will be recorded. We strongly recommend candidates attend this session on the computer and internet connection they intend to use for the examination.

US/Canada/Europe/Middle East

Wednesday, April 7: Practical Section—Large Animal and Small Animal
Thursday, April 8: Case-based Section—Large Animal and Small Animal

Australia

Thursday, April 8 Practical Section—Large Animal and Small Animal
Friday, April 9 Case-based Section—Large Animal and Small Animal
ACVS will finalize the starting times based on the number of candidates registered. The tentative plan is for all candidates in the continental US and Europe to start at 11:00 am Eastern Daylight Time. Candidates in Australia would start at 8:00 am Australian Eastern Standard Time. Candidates in Hawai‘i would start at noon HST.

**EXAMINATION DESCRIPTION**

The examination is composed of two (2) sections: case-based and practical. There are separate examinations for large and small animal candidates.

- Candidates are allowed to take unscheduled breaks during the two examination sections. Please note, however, that test time will not stop during unscheduled breaks. Unscheduled breaks are discouraged during the case-based exam as limited time is allowed for each “page” of questions and the candidate is not allowed to return to previous pages. Similarly, unscheduled breaks are discouraged during the period of the practical exam when images are being shown, as the images will not be shown again.
- During the scheduled break between the two portions of the case-based exam, candidates may access food/snacks, as well as medication, and comfort aids (e.g., cough drops, inhaler, diabetic tools). Candidates are not permitted to access notes, phones, or study materials during the breaks. A bottle of water is allowed within the testing room.

The Phase II examination tests all phases of surgery in all species and types of animals pertinent to the specialty (small animal or large animal) as well as competence in non-species-specific knowledge categories. The general content (and the weight of each content area) for the case-based and practical sections has been determined by means of an analysis of the veterinary surgeon’s occupation. In all, five hundred twenty-four (524) American College of Veterinary Surgeons (ACVS) Diplomates participated in the study that examined the importance of a variety of content areas for performance as a veterinary surgeon. Questions for the Phase II examination are written and reviewed by the ACVS Examination Committee. Each question is validated by securing a reference source that corroborates the information in the question. The sources used comprise current veterinary textbooks, current veterinary medical and surgical journals, and current medical texts and journals including, but not limited to, the recommended reading list.

**CASE-BASED SECTION**

The case-based section will be comprised of 2 parts, Orthopedic/Neurosurgery and Soft Tissue. The case-based section tests the candidate’s management of a sequentially presented surgical case(s) prior to, during, and after surgery. Candidates will be provided visual and descriptive information on the case and should be prepared to answer questions covering all areas of surgical practice. Each part of the case-based section will be administered over approximately 75-80 minutes, with a break of 20 minutes between parts. Each “page” of questions in the case-based section is allotted a pre-determined amount of time ranging from 2-6 minutes. As cases are presented in a sequential fashion, the candidate will not be allowed to return to a previous page after moving on to the next. Each part of the case-based section will be worth 250 points and a minimum of 20% of the points for the examination will be based on the suggested reading of the current literature. Questions are prepared each year by members of the Examination Committee. Examination Committee members and several members of the Board of Regents review all questions and visual materials for clarity and fairness. Each candidate’s case-based examination section is graded according to a pre-set scoring guide by multiple Examination Committee members who are blinded to individual candidate identity.

**PRACTICAL SECTION**

The practical section will be comprised of a total of 32 questions based on visually presented material of surgically-related diseases or conditions. Candidates will be provided visual images (still and/or videos), as well as descriptive information for each question. Visual material may depict anatomic specimens, instruments, surgical diseases, pathologic/histologic specimens, imaging studies, or other relevant information to test the candidate’s recognition and interpretive skills covering all areas of surgical practice. Images will be shown for 4 minutes for each page and will not be shown again; therefore, the candidate is encouraged to make notes about the images if they feel they may have to return to the question
later. After all 32 images have been presented, a 60 minute review period will be provided, during which the candidate may return to any question on the practical exam. Each page will be worth 12 points and a minimum of 20% of the points for the examination will be based on the suggested reading of the current literature. New questions are prepared each year by members of the Examination Committee to correspond to the topic areas in the examination blueprint. Examination Committee members and several members of the Board of Regents review all questions and visual materials for clarity and fairness. Each candidate’s practical examination section is graded according to a pre-set scoring guide by multiple Examination Committee members who are blinded to individual candidate identity.

EXAMINATION ADMINISTRATION

ACVS will administer the re-examination through virtual presentations via Zoom by the Examination Committee. Candidates will complete the test by writing on paper examination forms. Candidates must have an in-person proctor in the room with them during the entire examination.

PROCTOR SELECTION

- ACVS requires identification of a primary proctor. A secondary proctor is recommended should the primary proctor become unavailable. Up to three proctors per candidate are acceptable.
- Proctors must meet the following qualifications:
  - The first choice is a Diplomate of ACVS.
  - However, a Diplomate from another specialty college (recognized by the American Board of Veterinary Specialties or the European Board of Veterinary Specialisation) or a professional examination proctor with appropriate credentials may also serve in the role.
  - Any fee associated with the use of a professional proctor is the candidate’s responsibility.
  - All proctors must sign the Confidentiality Agreement for ACVS Examination Proctors or, if a professional proctor, must sign a similar non-disclosure agreement that can be provided to ACVS.
  - Proctors cannot be related to the candidate.
- The candidate and the proctors must review and sign the Proctor Agreement for the ACVS Phase II Surgical Competency Examination.

EXAMINATION SITE LOCATION

- Confirm a location where the candidate can take the examination without any distractions or disruptions and with a reliable high-speed internet connection. A wired connection is preferred, although Wi-Fi may be used. Please ensure that this location will be available on the examination days for the entire duration.
- The examination workspace must be clear of papers, textbooks, mobile phones, smartwatches, tablets, and any other material that could be considered evidence of unethical behavior.
- An empty office, conference room, or similar space is recommended.
- Ensure the location has restricted access and that no one except the candidate(s) and proctor(s) can enter the space for the entirety of the examination.
- Ensure a seating arrangement in which the candidate’s face remains illuminated throughout the examination.

APPROPRIATE TECHNOLOGY/EQUIPMENT

- Have a computer (desktop or laptop) available with the latest version of Zoom installed.
  - A working built-in or external webcam and microphone
  - Do not use a Wi-Fi hot spot. Test your connectivity at https://zoom.us/test.
  - Disable all pop-up notifications and scheduled virus scans for the day of the examinations.
  - Disable any sleep or power save settings on the computer. Ensure that the hard drives and screen will not go to sleep after a period of inactivity.
EXAMINATION RULES

The integrity of the Phase II Examination of the American College of Veterinary Surgeons will be maintained to ensure fairness to all candidates during the test. Any questions should be directed to Ann Loew, ACVS Chief Executive Officer, at (301) 916-0200 x108 or the chair of the Examination Committee.

The **deadline for registering for the examination is March 22, 2021**—the online registration process must be completed by 11:59 pm (Eastern Daylight Time). ACVS will not allow late submission of registration due to computer/internet issues, etc.

REGISTERING FOR THE EXAMINATION

Registering for the examination consists of submitting the online application, including signed proctor agreements.

**Deadline:** Submit your online application no later than **11:59pm (Eastern Daylight Time), March 22, 2021**.

SUBMIT THE ONLINE REGISTRATION APPLICATION

Candidates must register online for the Phase II Examination at [www.acvs.org/apply](http://www.acvs.org/apply). Online registration opens March 15 for eligible candidates. During the application process, candidates will need to:

1. Provide their name and mobile phone number and confirm the examination section(s) to be taken.
2. Indicate if they were approved for an accommodation for the February 22 examination. Candidates will receive the same time accommodations previously granted.
3. Provide the testing location, time zone of the testing location, and proctor name(s), email addresses, mobile phone numbers, and shipping address of the primary proctor. Upload signed copies of the [proctor agreement](#) and [confidentiality agreement](#).
4. Agree to the terms and conditions of the **ACVS Phase II Surgical Competency Examination Contract**. Candidates who fail to agree with these terms will not be allowed to take the Phase II examination.

CONFIRMATION

Candidates will receive an email upon successful submission of their online registration. ACVS staff will review registrations for completeness and contact candidates with any concerns as soon as possible.

Candidates whose registration materials are in order will receive an **Examination Authorization** email from ACVS. This email will include the Candidate ID number and Authorization ID number. **The authorization ID number will be included on the paper test form that the candidate completes.** Each candidate should review carefully the information in the authorization email, as this information will indicate the sections of the examination for which the candidate is registered, and it is the candidate’s responsibility to notify the ACVS office immediately of any perceived inaccuracies.

CANCELLATION

In the event that a candidate needs to cancel their examination registration, the candidate must contact Kimberly Soehnlein at ksoehnlein@acvs.org and the assigned Examination Committee presenter, if with 24 hours of the examination.

EXAMINATION MATERIALS

ACVS will ship copies of the examination to the primary proctor using the address provided by the candidate in the examination registration process. **Packages will be shipped via FedEx to arrive by April 1.** Any proctor who has not received the package by Friday, April 2, should contact Kimberly Soehnlein, ksoehnlein@acvs.org or (301) 969-8659. The package will contain sealed envelopes for each section the candidate is register for that include examination form and scratch paper for that section.
TAKE THE EXAMINATION

Candidates will be assigned to Zoom meetings for the sections they are taking. ACVS will send Zoom meeting links to candidates and proctors by April 2. This email will also include the contact information for the examination presenters and back-up presenters.

On the day of the examination, candidates and proctors should arrive approximately 20 minutes before the examination start time to ensure the examination space is clear and the computer is connected. The Zoom session should be joined 15 minutes before the scheduled examination start time.

The examination presenter will verify that all assigned candidates have joined the meeting. Candidates will be asked to show a government-issued identification (via their web camera) to the examination presenter to confirm their identity. Examination presenters will manage the timing for each question and share any images that candidates need to answer questions. If a candidate experiences technical issues, the proctor should immediately contact the back-up examination presenter. The examinee may not work on the exam (beyond the time allocated to the current page they are on) while technical issues are being resolved.

Proctors will be instructed to unseal the appropriate examination envelope (case-based or practical) in view of the Examination Committee member and give the paper examination and scratch paper to the candidate. The proctor should confirm that the correct Authorization number is on the exam before giving it to the candidate. If the number is incorrect, the proctor should notify the examination presenter immediately.

See the next sections for specific instructions regarding the case-based and practical sections.

CASE-BASED SECTION INSTRUCTIONS

The case-based section tests surgical principles in case management prior to, during, and after surgery. Information about these cases is presented in the form of images, videos, and data. Images will be shown on the screen by the examination presenter. Each page of questions in the case-based section is allotted a pre-determined amount of time ranging from 2-6 minutes. When the allotted time is up, the candidate will be instructed to turn to the next page. As cases are presented in a sequential fashion, the candidate will not be allowed to return to a previous page after moving on to the next. Scratch paper will be provided for you to take notes during the examination. You can refer to these notes for the entire duration of the examination.

There is a 20-minute break between the Orthopedic/Neurosurgery and Soft Tissue portions of the case-based exam. It is strongly recommended that you not leave for any unscheduled breaks during either portion of the exam since questions cannot be revisited. If technical difficulties are encountered by the exam presenter during exam administration, the timer will stop and will resume after the problem has been corrected. You will receive the full amount of time allotted for the exam. If technical difficulties are encountered by an individual examinee, the exam will not stop, and the proctor should immediately contact the back-up examination presenter.

If a question asks for a specific number of responses, you will be graded on only the requested number of answers. Additional responses beyond the number requested will not be graded. For instance, if we ask you for one diagnosis and you give us two, we will grade only the first answer. Minimize the use of abbreviations to make sure your answer is clearly understood. Commonly used medical abbreviations may be used; however, if you are concerned that the grader may not understand the abbreviation, you should define it.

PRACTICAL SECTION INSTRUCTIONS

The practical section is comprised of 32 questions. Each question will have a set of images accompanying it. Images will be shown on the screen by the examination presenter. Images will be shown for 4 minutes for each page and will not be shown again; therefore, the candidate is encouraged to make notes about the images if they feel they may have to return
to the question later. After all 32 images have been presented, a 60 minute review period will be provided, during which the candidate may return to any question on the practical exam.

If technical difficulties are encountered by the exam presenter during exam administration, the timer will stop and will resume after the problem has been corrected. You will receive the full amount of time allotted for the exam. If technical difficulties are encountered by an individual examinee, the exam will not stop, and the proctor should immediately contact the back-up examination presenter.

If a question asks for a specific number of answers, only that number will be graded. For example, if a question asks for two answers and you provide three answers, we will look at only the first two answers. Minimize the use of abbreviations to make sure your answer is clearly understood. Commonly used medical abbreviations may be used; however, if you are concerned that the grader may not understand the abbreviation, then you should define it.

**AFTER THE EXAMINATION**

**CREATE A BACK-UP COPY**

Proctors are encouraged to create a back-up copy of the candidate’s answers.

- The preferred method is for proctors to use a photocopier with scan to email capabilities. Scan the answers and email to residency@acvs.org. Contact Kimberly Soehnlein, ksoehnlein@acvs.org or (301) 969-8659 to confirm receipt by ACVS of the back-up copy.
- If the proctor does not have access to such a photocopier, they may create a digital copy by other means (e.g. AdobeScan). The proctor should keep the digital copy in a secure, password protected location until they can confirm receipt of the shipped copy of the examination. Once confirmed, the proctor is responsible for ensuring all digital copies are permanently deleted.

**RETURN THE EXAMINATION**

The proctor will insert the completed examination and all scratch paper into the designated envelope for that section and seal the envelope. The candidate and proctor must sign across the seal. **The proctor will ship the examination to HumRRO (ACVS examination service) using the provided FedEx shipping label as soon as possible after the examination and no later than Friday, March 9.**

**SUBMIT THE POST-EXAMINATION PROCTOR REPORT**

Proctor must return a completed Post-Examination Proctor Report to ACVS within 24 hours of exam administration. This form must include information about unplanned or extended breaks and report any observed activities that could be interpreted as consistent with academic dishonesty. ACVS will not release the candidate’s results until the report has been received.