



AMERICAN COLLEGE OF VETERINARY SURGEONS

2025 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 cert.acvs.org.
- Applications are also required from former residents whose previous applications were denied.
- Candidates who have not passed the Phase II Surgical Competency after three attempts should contact Jeff Melia, ACVS resident training and technology manager, at jmelia@acvs.org or (301) 916-0200 x102, as soon as possible for details on how to submit your recredentialing application.
- 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 x102, as soon as possible for details on how to submit your credentials application.

APPLICATION DEADLINES

August 1: Credentials applications must be submitted on or before 11:59pm (Eastern Time) 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*.^{*} 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.

^{*}If an extension for the submission of an application 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. If applicable, please contact Jeff Melia at jmelia@acvs.org to coordinate submission of your application after August 1.

ELIGIBILITY TO SUBMIT AN APPLICATION

All requirements for admission must be complete prior to August 1. This includes acceptance of the publication and successful completion of the residency requirements.

APPLICATION TIME LIMITS

Residents whose residency began July 1, 2013 or later: Residents must apply for credentials within five consecutive credentialing cycles following the completion of their residency as established in their Semi-Annual Review. The applicant must meet all resident training requirements in effect at the start of the

residency. A credentialing cycle is defined as an opportunity to submit a credentials application for the annual August 1 deadline.

Any resident who does not complete the requirements within these time limits will be required to restart the process to achieve ACVS board certification following current policies, including a new residency, Phase I examination, and manuscript.

For extenuating circumstances, an application can be made for a hardship extension, which will be evaluated by the RCC on a case-by-case basis, and a recommendation made to the Board of Regents for review. Extensions must be requested prior to the end of the eligibility period and should include a petition to the RCC director, nature of hardship, duration of extension requested, and at least two letters of support from ACVS diplomates.

Residents whose residency began prior to July 1, 2013: Residents who started training prior to July 1, 2013, must submit an acceptable credentials application no later than August 1, 2028. Individuals whose credentials are not accepted as of 2028 will be required to restart the process to achieve ACVS board certification following current policies, including successfully completing a new residency, passing the Phase I examination, and having an accepted manuscript in an ACVS-approved journal.

NEW: Time limit for acceptance of a credentials application for residents who started prior to July 1, 2013

Any applicant within five years of the completion of their residency may apply under current requirements or the requirements in effect at the initiation of their training. Any resident whose credentials have not been accepted within five years of completion of their residency 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 2025 would need to have training equivalent to the requirements of someone who started in 2022 and plans to submit credentials in 2025).

APPLICATION PREPARATION

All applicants must submit their applications online.

- First-time applicants whose residencies 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.

SUBMISSION OF APPLICATION MATERIALS AND FEE

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.

Submit Credentials Application on or before August 1, 11:59pm Eastern time, online at cert.acvs.org.

Submit the Application Fee of \$1,268 or before August 1. Payment of the application fee online is the final step of the submission process. Applications are not considered submitted until the fee has been paid.

Payments are made online using Visa, Mastercard, or American Express. The fee is due on or before August 1 regardless of payment method. NOTE: 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 August 1 deadline for requirement completion.

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

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 cert.acvs.org 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. A written petition to appeal a credentials determination must include a statement of the grounds for reconsideration with necessary and appropriate documentation addressed to the chair of the ACVS Board of Regents at the ACVS office. The petition must be postmarked to the ACVS office within 15 days from the date on which the contested ACVS determination was made. 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. The appeal must be prepared and will be handled in accordance with this protocol.

GUIDELINES FOR FIRST-TIME APPLICANTS

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. Once all minimum requirements have been entered into the logs and reached a “Submitted,” “Awaiting Committee Review,” or “RCC Approved” status, a banner will appear at the top of the resident’s log summary screen indicating that all minimum requirements have been submitted.
2. The program director will close the resident’s log via a link at the top of the resident’s log summary screen to mark the residency as complete.
3. External Surgical Rotation Details
 - a. If you fulfilled part of your surgical requirements in a different institution from your primary institution/hospital, verification of those cases is required from an appropriate supervisor. An [External Surgical Rotation Form](#) must be submitted with your application for any cases entered into your logs prior to the launch of the new CERT system. 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.
 - iv. These forms should be sent via email to certification@acvs.org prior to the August 1 deadline. Please include “Credentials Additional Documentation” and your name in the email subject to assist in faster processing. If possible, please combine all forms into one PDF file before sending.
 - b. Cases newly logged in CERT receive verification online from the listed supervisor and do not require submission of the External Surgical Rotation Form.

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 2025, forms must be completed between June 1 and August 1, 2025).

- 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 i or ii

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 and valid email address of the referee.
- 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. When a reference is completed, the status column in the letters of reference section of the application will reflect the date the reference was received.

ADDITIONAL DOCUMENTATION



Residents who performed cases at external locations are required to obtain verification from a supervisor at the secondary facility. Cases entered into the resident training log prior to the launch of CERT require signatures on the External Surgical Rotation Form. Cases newly entered into CERT receive verification online and do not require signatures on the external surgical rotation form. 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 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 their surgical residency.

If applicable, any significant correspondence between the resident, resident advisor, program director, and the ACVS office or Resident Credentialing Committee should be provided.

These documents should be sent via email to certification@acvs.org prior to the August 1 deadline. Please include “Credentials Additional Documentation” and your name in the email subject to assist in faster processing. If possible, please combine all relevant documentation into one PDF file before sending.

SUBMITTING THE APPLICATION TO ACVS

Once all sections of the application are complete you will see either a green checkmark  or a purple thumbs-up  next to the application item indicating that the credentialing requirement has been met or completed.

Requirements to submit your application are:

- Passing of the Phase I Surgical Knowledge Examination
- Submission of all minimum requirements in your resident training log
- Completion of the residency (closure of the logs) by the program director
- Submission or previous approval of an acceptable publication

- Completion of letters of reference by three referees

All correspondence regarding application procedures and notification should be sent via email to certification@acvs.org prior to the August 1 deadline. Please include “Credentials Additional Documentation” and your name in the email subject to assist in faster processing. If possible, please combine all relevant documentation into one PDF file before sending.

When all required items have been completed, a green banner will appear with a “Submit Now” button to complete the verification statement, submit your application, and pay the \$1,268 credentials application fee. Payment of the fee completes the submission of your application. Submission of the application and payment of the fee must be done no later than **11:59pm on August 1**.

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 residencies started July 1, 2013 or later. See [Application Time Limits](#).

Online applications must include the same items as first-time applicants (see pages 4-6 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 previously accepted by ACVS, it will appear in the Publication Requirement section indicating an acceptable 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 an explanation from the referee.

1. The Letter of Reference Forms must *collectively* document the following:
 - a. The commitment of the applicant to the constitutional objectives of ACVS.
 - b. 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 i or ii 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 and valid email address of the referee.
 - 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. When a reference is completed, the status column in the letters of reference section of the application will reflect the date the reference was received.

ADDITIONAL DOCUMENTATION

Applications must include the following correspondence:

- 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

These documents should be sent via email to certification@acvs.org prior to the August 1 deadline. Please include “Credentials Additional Documentation” and your name in the email subject to assist in faster processing. If possible, please combine all relevant documentation into one PDF file before sending.

SUBMITTING THE APPLICATION TO ACVS

When all required items have been completed, a green banner will appear with a link to submit your application and pay the credentials application fee. Payment of the fee completes the submission of your application. Submission of the application and payment of the fee must be done no later than **11:59pm on August 1.**

APPLICATION FEE

The 2025 credentials reapplication fee is \$1,268. 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.

Contact Jeff Melia at jmelia@acvs.org or (301) 916-0200 x102, as soon as possible for details on how to submit your recredentialing application.

Applications must 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.

The Letter of Reference Forms must *collectively* document the following:

1. The commitment of the applicant to the constitutional objectives of ACVS.
2. 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 i or ii above. A “cannot answer” or negative response must be accompanied by an explanation from the referee.

CREDENTIALS APPLICATION REQUIRED FILES

All pertinent correspondence: This should include any significant documentation relating to the examination or credentials process if applicable.

These documents should be uploaded via the “Pertinent Correspondence” section of your application. If possible, please combine all relevant documentation into one PDF file and include your name in the file name before sending.

APPLICATION FEE

The 2025 credentials reapplication fee is \$1,268. The fee should be paid online at www.acvs.org/certification/reapplication-fee no later than August 1.