



**ABVO**

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AMERICAN BOARD OF  
VETERINARY OPHTHALMOLOGY

American Board of Veterinary Ophthalmology (ABVO)

Policies and Procedures

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## 1.00 DEFINITIONS

- (a) **Applicants for Maintenance of Certification (MOC).** ACVO Diplomates who are required (Mandatory Applicants for MOC) or who elect (Voluntary Applicants for MOC) to submit application materials to the ABVO MOC Committee so as to maintain their certification as a Diplomate of the ACVO.
- (b) **Certified Copy:** A photocopy of a document in its entirety, accompanied by the following sworn and signed statement: “I swear or affirm under the penalties of perjury that the submitted documents are true and correct copies of [insert document name].” The signature on this statement must be acknowledged by a court clerk, lawyer, or notary public.
- (c) **Chair:** The appointed leader(s) of an ABVO committee.
- (d) **Vice Chair:** The appointed future committee leader, scheduled to succeed the current committee Chair. This position’s term is to be up to two years. The purpose of this position is to be trained by the incoming Chair.
- (e) **Corresponding Supervising Diplomate:** A Supervising Diplomate, designated by the institution or practice, who is responsible for all communications regarding the Resident, particularly with the Residency, Credentials, and Examination Committees. The Corresponding Supervising Diplomate does not need to be the same individual for each Resident in a multi-resident practice.
- (f) **Direct Supervision:** That time a Supervising Diplomate or External Participant is physically present in the clinical facility and actively engaged with the Resident in clinical service to patients.
- (g) **Examination:** The ABVO Certifying Examination.
- (h) **Examination Applicant:** A veterinarian applying to the ABVO Credentials Committee to take the ABVO Certifying Examination
- (i) **External Participant:** An ACVO Diplomate who participates in some, but not all, aspects of resident training and provides direct clinical supervision of a Resident for less than 100 days and is not listed on the RTP. These are typically Diplomates who are supervising residents visiting other practices, those providing coverage (locums) when Supervising Diplomates are unavailable, and those exposing the Resident to surgical techniques, instrumentation, or species not routinely available at the RTP institution or practice. External Participants can supervise residents in the same way Supervising Diplomate roles are outlined.
- (j) **Examination Candidate:** A veterinarian who has been accepted by the ABVO Credentials Committee to take the next ABVO Certifying Examination
- (k) **Guidelines:** A set of written instructions developed and regularly updated by the

ABVO Credentials Committee to guide Examination Applicants, Provisional Residents, and Supervising Diplomates through the ABVO credentialing process.

- (l) **Provisional Resident:** A veterinarian who has been accepted into an ABVO-approved Residency Training Program by the sponsoring institution and who is applying to the ABVO Credentials Committee to be accepted as an ABVO-approved Resident.
- (m) **Residency Training Program (RTP):** A residency training program approved by the ABVO Residency Committee.
- (n) **Resident:** A veterinarian who has been accepted into an ABVO-approved RTP by the sponsoring institution, who has been accepted by the ABVO Credentials Committee as an ABVO-approved Resident, and who is actively engaged in the RTP.
- (o) **Supervising Diplomat:** A DACVO who provides direct supervision to the Resident, participates in all aspects of resident training and is listed on the RTP as such.
- (p) **Veterinarian:** A graduate of an accredited school or college of veterinary medicine that has a license in good standing to practice veterinary medicine or is exempt from licensure by an employing university or government agency.

All applications/submissions to the ABVO and its Committees must comply with Policies and Procedures in place at the time of approval. Where Policies and Procedures change between submission and approval, resubmission will be required.

## **2.00 ABVO BOARD POLICIES AND PROCEDURES**

### **2.01 Procedural Requirements Stipulated by the ACVO Bylaws, ABVO Charter or the Memorandum of Understanding Between the ACVO and ABVO**

- (a) The Board shall consist of a Chair, a public member and 3 additional voting members of ACVO.
- (b) Board members shall not be current ACVO Regents, Officers of the ACVO, or members of ABVO Committees.
- (c) Only the public member may not serve as chair.
- (d) Election of Board members shall take place annually as described in section 2.03.
- (e) Other than the inaugural officers, terms of officers shall be 4 years and be staggered.
- (f) Board members may serve no more than 2 consecutive terms.

- (g) An ABVO Board member may be removed by a majority vote of ABVO Board members or by a 2/3 majority vote of all ACVO Diplomates.
- (h) The ABVO Board meeting times and places, and agenda are determined by the Chair.
- (i) Notice of ABVO Board meetings must be provided to Board members at least 3 days prior to the date of the meeting.
- (j) ABVO Board meetings may take place via telephone or other electronic means.
- (k) For ABVO Board meetings, a majority of Board members constitutes a quorum.
- (l) A majority of Board members shall decide any item of business
- (m) The ABVO Board may take action without a meeting if consent in writing is signed by a majority of Board members.
- (n) ABVO Committee members shall consist of ACVO Diplomates, who are MOC compliant when applicable.
- (o) ABVO Committees shall recommend policies that are subject to rejection, amendment, adoption and approval by the Board.
- (p) The ABVO Chair shall provide annual reports of the Board's activities to the ACVO Board of Regents.
- (q) The ABVO fiscal year shall be the same as that for the ACVO.
- (r) The ABVO shall review its operating costs annually at its spring meeting. The ABVO will submit a budget to the ACVO Board of Regents for consideration at their meeting the following fall.

## **2.02 Conflicts of Interest and Confidentiality**

- (a) At the commencement of his or her term of office, each member of the ABVO Board shall agree not to disclose any confidential information of the ABVO.
- (b) Each member of the ABVO Board will further agree to fully and promptly disclose to the ABVO any existing or potential conflict of interest the Board member may have of either a personal, professional, business, or financial nature. After full disclosure, the Chair and remaining ABVO members shall determine whether or not the member shall be excused from voting on any matter involving the conflict. Conflicts are defined and the policies for appropriate handling of conflicts are as described in the ACVO General Policies and Procedures.
- (c) Breach of confidentiality or conflict of interest shall constitute good cause for the removal of members of the ABVO from office pursuant to the policies of the ABVO.

### **2.03 Election of ABVO Board Members**

- (a) Open positions on the ABVO Board will be announced to the ACVO Diplomate population by April 1 of the year the position is to be filled.
- (b) Any ACVO Diplomate in good standing may serve on the ABVO Board; however, ACVO Diplomates seeking ABVO Board Membership shall have served on at least one of the ABVO, ACVO standing committees or ACVO Vision for Animals' standing committees or Board.
- (c) Any ACVO Diplomate in good standing may nominate themselves or any other ACVO Diplomate.
- (d) Nominations must be received by the ABVO Office by May 15, and materials requested for the ballot must be provided no later than 5 days following the requested nomination.
- (e) The vote shall take place electronically during the month of June and results will be posted on the ABVO web site by the first business day following July 4.
- (f) The Board member-elect is expected to attend the fall meeting of the ABVO Board for training purposes, in person or virtually. The new Board member's term officially begins at the adjournment of the fall ABVO Board meeting.
- (g) Election of ABVO Board Chair: The Board Chair shall be elected by majority vote of the Board members at any scheduled meeting of the Board.
- (h) The Public Member shall be appointed by the ABVO as prescribed by the ABVO Charter.

### **2.04 Policy for Amending Committee Policies and Procedures**

- (a) The ABVO will review, oversee, and approve the policies and procedures of its Committees, including but not limited to the Residency Committee, the Credentials Committee, the Examination Committee, the Maintenance of Certification (MOC) Committee, and the Appeals Committee (AC). Changes to the policies and procedures of the ABVO Committees require approval by a majority of the members of the ABVO Board. Each Committee shall draft its own policies and procedures subject to the approval of the Board. Requests for approval of changes to committee policies and procedures must be included in fall or spring committee reports to the Board, but may be forwarded to and dealt with by the ABVO whenever they deem appropriate.
- (b) If it is decided that a policy or procedure for a Committee reporting to the ABVO Board needs to be modified or if new procedures or policies are needed, the ABVO Board will direct the Committee to draft the necessary change to the Committees' policies and procedures. This draft will be expected to be submitted to the ABVO within 30 days. The Board will review the proposed changes at its next scheduled meeting or sooner, at the Board's discretion. The Board may vote

to accept the proposed changes or return them to the Committee for further consideration. ABVO Board or committee proposals that impose major change(s) in the processes of the ABVO will be posted on the ABVO website and subject to a period of non-binding stakeholder comment of up to 3 months. The ABVO Office will oversee the process and mechanism for obtaining stakeholder comment. Following the comment period, the ABVO Board may vote to accept or reject the proposed changes.

- (c) Approved changes to Committee policies and procedures will be communicated to the ABVO Office whose staff will maintain currently approved versions of all documents.

## **2.05 ABVO Committee Composition**

- (a) Eligibility: Only Diplomates of the ACVO in good standing may serve on ABVO Committees. Emeritus and Honorary ACVO Diplomates are not eligible to serve on ABVO Committees.
- (b) Nominations: The ABVO Board will review nominations for Committee members from the Committees via their requests submitted to the Board in their bi-annual reports. Any ACVO Diplomate in good standing is eligible to serve and may self-nominate or be nominated by other ACVO Diplomates, for review by the ABVO Board by writing the ABVO Chairperson. Requests from Committee chairpersons for new or replacement committee members shall be included in their spring report to the ABVO Board, and may be made at other times of the year as needed.
- (c) Appointment & Removal:
  1. The ABVO Board will appoint, and/or approve or reject the final Committee appointments.
  2. The ABVO Chairperson will appoint, and/or approve or reject the recommended Chair(s) and Vice Chairs of each ABVO Committee from duly appointed Committee members.
  3. The ABVO Board may remove Committee members and/or the chair(s) of a Committee without cause with a majority vote.
  4. The ABVO Board shall appoint members to the Credentials, Residency, Appeals and MOC Committees at their spring meeting, with committee member terms beginning immediately after the spring meeting. Examination Committee members shall be appointed twice annually.
  5. Committee Chairs may request the ABVO Board approve leaves of absence for committee members temporarily unable to perform their duties. If approved, at the discretion of the ABVO Board acting reasonably, an ACVO Diplomate with prior experience on the committee may be appointed.

6. All committee members must agree to and submit any required forms to agree to confidentiality, harassment, ethics and conflict of interest policies, or any other documents determined necessary by the ABVO Board, and keep these documents in compliance when asked by the ABVO Office staff or ABVO Board (see section 2.06 herein).
7. Without prior Board approval, any individual may only serve on only one ABVO Committee at any one time

## **2.06 Committee Reports to the ABVO Board**

- (a) Format: All Committee reports will be submitted in the same format as designated by the Board.
- (b) Submission dates: Written Committee reports shall be electronically submitted to the ABVO Office not less than 4 weeks prior to the fall ABVO Board meeting, and if scheduled, 2 weeks prior to the spring ABVO Board meeting.

## **3.00 ABVO CREDENTIALS COMMITTEE**

### **3.01 Statement of Purpose**

The Credentials Committee of the ABVO determines eligibility criteria for, and evaluates applications from, two groups of individuals: Provisional Residents applying for acceptance as an ABVO-approved Resident, and Examination Applicants applying to take the ABVO Certifying Examination. The Credentials Committee also collects any fees associated with either of these application processes that together compose the two-stage credentialing process.

### **3.02 Committee Objectives**

- (a) To define the criteria that must be satisfied by Provisional Residents so as to be eligible to become ABVO-approved Residents, and by Examination Applicants so as to be eligible to take the Examination.
- (b) To define the methods by which Provisional Residents and Examination Applicants shall prove that they have met these criteria.
- (c) To review and judge all data submitted by and regarding a Provisional Resident and an Examination Applicant during their respective application processes.

### **3.03 Committee Membership**

The Credentials Committee shall consist of a minimum of 4 (four) members including the Chair and a Vice Chair. Members serve terms of 3 (three) years and may serve up to 2 (two) consecutive terms. Terms may be shortened as needed to maintain staggered committee member terms. To serve as either Chair or Vice Chair requires at least 1 (one) year of ABVO Credentials Committee experience. The term of Chair shall be 1 (one) year, following service of 1 (one) year as Vice Chair. Chairmanship shall be determined



as outlined in sections 2.05(b and c) of this document.

### 3.04 Eligibility Criteria

- (a) **Step One:** Successful completion of the first step in the two-step ABVO credentialing process (i.e., acceptance as an ABVO-approved Resident), requires that the Provisional Resident must:
  - 1. Be a veterinarian;
  - 2. Have attained a minimum of 12 months' full-time clinical practice as a veterinarian between graduation and beginning the RTP;
  - 3. Be of satisfactory moral character in the discretion of the Credentials Committee acting reasonably; and
  - 4. Have completed and submitted, by the assigned deadline, all documentation and paid all fees required as part of the credentialing process.
- (b) **Step Two:** Successful completion of the second step in the two-step ABVO credentialing process (i.e., establishing eligibility to take the Examination) requires that the Examination Applicant must:
  - 1. Have successfully completed or be scheduled to successfully complete a RTP by the assigned deadline;
  - 2. Be of satisfactory moral character in the discretion of the Credentials Committee acting reasonably;
  - 3. Have completed and submitted, by the assigned deadline, all documentation and paid all fees required as part of the credentialing process.

### 3.05 Application Process

- (a) All Provisional Residents, Examination Applicants, and Supervising Diplomates must submit all requested information as dictated in the Guidelines issued by the Credentials Committee. Current Guidelines shall be available on the ABVO website.
- (b) All information provided by Provisional Residents, Examination Applicants, and Supervising Diplomates as part of the credentialing process must include consideration of any and all RTPs or parts of RTPs from which the Provisional Resident or Examination Applicant is claiming experience.
- (c) When a Supervising Diplomat's supervisory role ends prematurely (due to either the Resident or the Supervising Diplomat leaving the RTP), all required forms shall be completed within one month of the severance occurring.

- (d) It is the responsibility of each Provisional Resident, Examination Applicant, and Supervising Diplomat to state, under penalty of perjury, that all information they provide throughout all stages of the credentialing process is, to the best of their knowledge and belief, true and correct.
- (e) No prescribed form may be changed in any way; however additional material may be provided as attachments.
- (f) All documents submitted as part of the credentials process must be in English or be accompanied by a certified translation into English. A certified translation must contain:
  - 1. The original text in its source language;
  - 2. The translated text in English; and,
  - 3. A statement signed by the translator or translation company representative, with their signature notarized by a Notary Public, attesting that the translator or translation company representative believes the target-language text to be an accurate and complete translation of the source-language text. The translator or translation company representatives need not be certified and so the Examination Applicant themselves (if they choose) may be the translator. The Notary Public seal assures only that the signature is that of the person who presented themselves to the notary. The Notary Public is not attesting to the accuracy of the translation.
- (g) Information from Supervising Diplomates may not be submitted by Examination Applicants directly.
- (h) A discrete set of submissions is required for each Examination Applicant and from each Supervising Diplomat, i.e. no Supervising Diplomat submissions may describe more than one Examination Applicant and no Supervising Diplomat submissions may be signed by more than one Supervising Diplomat.
- (i) All Supervising Diplomates and Examination Applicants are required to advise the Credentials Committee of any changes in submitted information between the time of submission of paperwork and the Examination Applicant becoming Board certified.
- (j) All fees submitted must be payable in U.S. currency.
- (k) The fee for each application reviewed by the Credentials Committee (whether successful or unsuccessful) shall not be refundable.
- (l) Applications not accompanied by the appropriate fee may be assessed a late fee.
- (m) Provisional Resident applications must be received by the ABVO Office at least 30 days prior to beginning the proposed RTP, but after approval of the RTP by the Residency Committee. Provisional Resident applications submitted anywhere

other than to the ABVO Office, or prior to the approval of the RTP by the Residency Committee, shall not be reviewed.

- (n) The complete Examination application must be received by the ABVO Office by midnight on January 15 each year in order for the Examination Applicant to be eligible to take the Examination in that year.
- (o) Applications and any supporting material, including Supervising Diplomate Forms, from Provisional Residents and Examination Applicants received after the deadline (i.e., 30 days prior to beginning the proposed RTP for Provisional Residents, and January 15 for Examination Applicants), incomplete submissions, and submissions not using original, unaltered, current versions of all prescribed forms will render the application incomplete. Incomplete applications may not be reviewed.
- (p) The ABVO reserves the right to independently verify any information received and to request further data.
- (q) The examination applicant must pass all exam sections within five (5) consecutive years of a candidate completing an ABVO-approved residency training program. If an applicant fails to pass all sections of the ABVO Certifying Examination within five (5) consecutive years after residency completion, the candidate must then seek re-training through an ABVO-approved residency. This will apply to ALL examination applicants starting with the 2022 ABVO Certifying Examination, which corresponds to the November 2021 to January 2022 Credentials application window.

### **3.06 Review Process**

- (a) All information submitted by Provisional Residents, Examination Applicants, and Supervising Diplomates to the ABVO Office prior to the submission deadline will be reviewed by the Credentials Committee Chair, or a designated Credentials Committee member in cases in which review by the Chair may constitute a conflict of interest. Applications will be reviewed and a decision letter emailed within 30 days of the deadline. Should a candidate fail to receive email confirmation within 30 days, they should contact the Credentials Committee Chair and the ABVO Office.
- (b) Complete applications which are received by the ABVO Office by the relevant deadlines and verify that the Provisional Resident or Examination Applicant fulfills all eligibility criteria shall be approved and accepted by the Credentials Committee Chair.
- (c) Those applications which the Credentials Committee Chair believes fail to satisfy one or more eligibility criteria shall be referred to at least two (2) other members of the Credentials Committee for review and evaluation. If these Credentials Committee members believe the application fails to fulfill one or more eligibility criteria, the application may be rejected.

- (d) Prior to receiving a Provisional Resident or Examination application for review, Credentials Committee members will be required to declare any potential, perceived, or real conflicts of interest with regards to Provisional Residents and Examination Applicants, and shall not review that application.
- (e) One complete set of application documents from every successful or unsuccessful Provisional Resident and Examination Applicant will be retained by the ABVO Office.
- (f) All Provisional Residents and Examination Applicants (regardless of application outcome) will receive communication regarding the outcome of their application at the email address provided on their application. Applications will be reviewed and a decision letter emailed within 30 days of the deadline. Should a candidate fail to receive email confirmation within 30 days, they should contact the Credentials Committee Chair and the ABVO Office. The Examination Applicant shall be responsible for ensuring that this email address is accurate and for updating this email address as needed with the ABVO Office.
- (g) Names of successful Provisional Residents shall be provided to the Chair(s) of the Residency Committee, and names of successful Examination Applicants shall be provided to the Chair(s) of the Examination Committees.
- (h) Prior to completion of their RTP, successful Examination Applicants receive only *provisional* acceptance from the Credentials Committee to take the Examination. *Final* acceptance of an Examination Applicant's credentials is conditional upon successful completion of their RTP as determined by the Residency Committee.

#### **4.00 ABVO RESIDENCY COMMITTEE**

##### **4.01 Statement of Purpose**

The Residency Committee is responsible for:

- (a) Developing the standards for Residency Training Program (RTP) approval
- (b) Providing direction to Diplomates seeking approval of a RTP
- (c) Granting approval of RTPs that satisfy Residency Committee requirements
- (d) Certifying that a Resident has successfully completed a RTP

##### **4.02 Committee Objectives**

- (a) Develop the standards for RTP approval.
- (b) Provide directions to institutions seeking approval of a RTP.
- (c) Grant approval to RTPs that satisfy the Committee's requirements.

- (d) Maintain a current list and description of RTPs offered by ACVO Diplomates.
- (e) Provide Residents with a letter of welcome and a copy of their RTP application. The letter will direct Residents to the current standards for residency training, required forms, the credentialing process and the examination information.
- (f) Provide the Chairs of the Credentials and Examination Committees with a list of Residents who are anticipated to complete or have completed all RTP requirements.

Provide a Committee report to the ABVO Board at the prescribed time prior to the fall and spring meetings of the ABVO Board.

- (g) Provide a list of Residents in RTPs to the Executive Director of the ACVO so that the Residents may receive any benefits due.
- (h) Monitor RTPs through 6 month evaluations provided by Residents and Supervising Diplomates so as to ensure that all required training elements are being met.
- (i) Revoke, suspend or place on probation RTPs in which required training elements are not met. Communicate with Supervising Diplomates to assist in correcting deficiencies so that probationary status can be lifted.

#### **4.03 Committee Membership**

The Residency Committee shall consist of a minimum of 8 (eight) members including the Chair and Vice Chair. Members serve terms of 4 (four) years and may serve up to 2 (two) consecutive terms. Terms may be shortened as needed to maintain staggered committee member terms. To serve as either Chair or Vice Chair requires at least 1 (one) year of Residency Committee experience. The term of Chair shall be up to 2 (two) years, following service of up to 2 (two) years as Vice Chair. Chairmanship shall be determined as outlined in sections 2.05 (b and c) of this document.

#### **4.04 Eligibility to train an ABVO-approved Resident**

- (a) All Supervising Diplomates and External Participants must be ACVO diplomates.
- (b) The number of Supervising Diplomates per Resident in an institution's RTP is based on the ability to provide adequate Direct Supervision of residents during their training program. The requirement is as follows: two Supervising Diplomates may supervise up to 3 Residents per program; three Supervising Diplomates may supervise up to 4 Residents per program (the number of residents is always one more than the number of Supervising Diplomates). Ophthalmology residents being trained in non-ABVO programs (e.g., ECVO residents) but in the same facility as the ACVO Resident and by the same Supervising Diplomates must be included in this calculation.
- (c) Each resident must be trained by >1 Supervising Diplomat. Each resident must have at

least 100 supervised clinical days with a second or more Supervising Diplomates.

In addition to meeting all other requirements outlined here, in a situation where two (or more) ACVO diplomates who are not employed in the same institution work together to conduct a Collaborative RTP in a joint mentorship scenario, additional criteria concerning facilities, advanced scheduling, numbers of days each Supervising Diplomate supervises the resident in a clinical setting, and participation of Supervising Diplomates in non-clinical training of the resident during the program are listed in the RTP Application.

- (d) The RTP Application must be completed by the Corresponding Supervising Diplomate and sent electronically to the ABVO Office within the time designated in the RTP Application form.
- (e) Supervising Diplomate(s) signing the RTP application are expected to remain responsible for training the Resident throughout the RTP. Each Supervising Diplomate must submit a Supervising Diplomate Information form at the start of their first RTP and upon entering a new program or leaving a program. In addition, this change should be noted on the next 6-month evaluation form.

#### **4.05 Eligibility to become an ABVO-approved Resident**

- (a) Eligibility to become an ABVO Resident is based on requirements determined by the Credentials Committee and, in some cases, additional requirements by sponsoring institutions.
- (b) Residents are selected in whatever manner is deemed appropriate by the Supervising Diplomate(s) and the institution in which the RTP will be conducted. After selecting a Resident, the Corresponding Supervising Diplomate must notify the appropriate ABVO committees as described in the RTP application. The Provisional Resident will then be contacted by the relevant ABVO Committees with further instructions.

#### **4.06 Review of a traditional Residency Training Program (RTP)**

- (a) The RTP application will undergo initial evaluation for completeness, accuracy, and to ensure that all RTP requirements are met. Incomplete, inaccurate, or deficient RTP applications will not undergo full review and the Corresponding Supervising Diplomate will be notified of deficiencies. A new RTP application addressing the deficiencies must be submitted to the Residency Committee Chair by the Corresponding Supervising Diplomate.
- (b) Only accurate and complete RTP applications will undergo full review by the Residency Committee.
- (c) Each Residency Committee member is expected to approve, not approve, or request additional information to supplement the RTP application. The Chair maintains a record of the votes cast.
- (d) A RTP application is approved if a simple majority of the Residency Committee approves

the RTP application.

- (e) RTPs are approved for individual Residents, not for Diplomates or training institutions. Therefore, each time a Diplomat/Institution wishes to train a new Resident, that Diplomat/Institution must submit a new RTP application.

#### **4.07 Decisions regarding non-traditional Residency Training Programs (RTP)**

- (a) The RTP application and the alternative RTP application are filled out by the Corresponding Supervising Diplomat(s) and submitted to the Chair of the Residency Committee. The alternative RTP application is available by request from the Residency Committee Chair.
- (b) All other policies and procedures are identical for non-traditional and traditional RTPs.

#### **4.08 Notification of decisions regarding Residency Training Program applications**

- (a) The Corresponding Supervising Diplomat will be notified of the Residency Committee decision by the Residency Committee Chair(s).
- (b) A copy of approved RTP applications, the approval communication, and all subsequent correspondence to the Corresponding Supervising Diplomat and/or the Resident are kept by the Residency Committee Chair.

#### **4.09 Requirements for Residency Training Programs**

- (a) Residents and Supervising Diplomates must abide by the ABVO Statement on Ethics and Professionalism as set out on the ABVO website. Failure by the Supervising Diplomat(s) or Resident to abide by the Statement on Ethics and Professionalism may result in the ABVO a) revoking the RTP with no action against the Resident, b) terminating the Resident from the RTP with no action against the RTP, c) revoking the RTP and denying the resident admission to RTPs in the future, d) revoking the RTP and/or denying future RTP applications from the Supervising Diplomat(s), or e) taking other actions deemed appropriate.

To prevent misrepresentation, Residents are considered to be in training to become ophthalmologists for the duration of the RTP, and must not be referred to as “specialists”, “Diplomates”, “ophthalmologists” or “Board Eligible”. Terms such as "resident in veterinary ophthalmology" or "veterinary ophthalmology resident" are acceptable.

- (b) A practice must be open full time for at least 1 year prior to submitting an application to take a resident, and must be open full time for at least 2 years prior to the resident starting the program.
- (c) The minimum length for an ABVO RTP is 36 months (156 weeks). In some circumstances, time spent in a prior RTP may be applied to a subsequent RTP following submission of satisfactory performance evaluations by previous Supervising Diplomat(s) and the Resident.

- (d) **Clinical training and supervision of Residents.** The ABVO requires that all Residents receive clinical ophthalmology training for at least 104 weeks (i.e., 520 days), with a week defined as 5 working days (at least 40 hours). Time spent on emergency duty does not count as clinical ophthalmology training time, but Supervising Diplomates should still be available for consultation during these times. At least 80% (i.e. 416 days) of all clinical ophthalmology training must be under Direct Supervision. Direct Supervision is defined as that time the Supervising Diplomate is physically present in the clinical facility and actively engaged with the Resident in clinical service to patients. For the remaining 20%, a Supervising Diplomate must be available for consultation by phone and/or computer (for transmission of photographs and email). Direct Supervision is required at all times for the first 6 months of the RTP to ensure that the Resident has developed early clinical skills in ophthalmology. An exception to this is made for the annual ACVO meeting since attendance is often mandatory for Supervising Diplomates and Residents. In this unique situation, it is acceptable to have a first-year Resident in the first 6 months of their RTP work without Direct Supervision for the time associated with the meeting only.

All Supervising Diplomates are expected to guide the Resident through medical, surgical, and academic training by direct, personal, one-on-one instruction. This is to occur throughout the entire RTP. Initially, Direct Supervision and instruction in the clinical setting are expected to be strict, while gradually allowing the Resident more independence as time goes on. However, it is expected that continued interaction on the clinic floor would be the norm for the entirety of the RTP. The Supervising Diplomate is expected to use his/her judgment regarding the degree of independence allowed, based on his/her assessment of the Resident's abilities.

One Supervising Diplomate may provide Direct Supervision for no more than two Residents while on the clinic floor. Additional Residents on the clinic floor during that time cannot count this as time under Direct Supervision.

The Residency Committee mandates case examination and surgical case minimums, which are outlined in the RTP application.

- (e) In order to ensure adequate supervision, a RTP Master Schedule may be requested (to cover the entire period of the RTP) at the beginning of the RTP and every 6 months (along with the 6-month evaluation) thereafter. The schedule must indicate Resident and Supervising Diplomate activities (including clinical duties, histopathologic review, journal club, research, and any other items directly related to the RTP). The schedule must include the name(s) of the Resident(s), Supervising Diplomate(s) on duty with planned dates of interaction (day/week/month), as well as the practice name (particularly if training occurs in more than one facility). In addition, the Corresponding Supervising Diplomate is required, upon request, to provide the ABVO Residency Committee with information concerning the structure or content of the RTP (see Residency Training Program Application form for further details concerning RTP Master Schedules).



- (f) **Time for professional development:** While the bulk of the experience during a RTP is intended to be clinical ophthalmology training, a minimum amount of “off clinic time” is necessary for professional development. The ABVO minimum requirement for off clinic time is 15% of the duration of the RTP (117 days, in a 3-year, 156 week, RTP). “Off clinic” time does not include vacation or the two regular days off per week.
- (g) **Library access:** Residents must have access to a medical library that contains the texts and journal titles as sources of test material by the ABVO Examination Committee.
- (h) **Literature review/Educational topic review:** The ABVO requires that Residents be guided by the Supervising Diplomates or External Participant in regular, systematic review of the ophthalmic literature for at least 2 hours per month. At least one Supervising Diplomat is required to participate in these reviews, either in person or via electronic transmission.
- (i) **Histopathology training:** The ABVO requires that Residents be trained in ocular histopathologic interpretation. A minimum of 12 hours of histopathology training is required annually (36 hours per 3-year RTP). Ideally, this training should be spread out approximately equally over the RTP so that Residents may correlate histologic findings with clinical cases seen during the RTP. While there is no maximum total number of histopathology training hours, no more than 2 hours per month may count towards the 12 hours per year. Options for histopathology training include:
  - 1. Directly working with a DACVP; preferably someone well versed in ophthalmic pathology
  - 2. Use of an established, ongoing course in ophthalmic pathology, headed by a DACVP, or Honorary DACVO, who is well versed in ophthalmic pathology.
  - 3. Pathology course work given at the ACVO Basic Science Course. This counts for a total of two hours.
  - 4. Working with Supervising Diplomates.
- (j) **Financial commitments:** It is assumed that financial commitments to each Resident will be maintained throughout their RTP. However, financial compensation and other employment issues are negotiated between the Resident and Supervising Diplomat/employer and do not fall under the purview of the Residency Committee.

#### 4.10 Evaluation of Residency Training Programs

- (a) Each RTP must be evaluated by the Resident and the Corresponding Supervising Diplomat

every 6 months. This evaluation includes submission to the Residency Committee of 6-monthly Program Evaluation Forms by Residents and Corresponding Supervising Diplomates, and species and surgical case summaries submitted by Residents. All information must be submitted on line via the portal on the ABVO website by the date stated in the RTP application and on the ABVO website. Additionally, Supervising Diplomates are required to provide the Resident with a written progress evaluation at 6 month intervals. These are not submitted to the Residency Committee.

- (b) Failure of the Supervising Diplomate(s) to comply will result in the inability of the Supervising Diplomate(s) to receive approval to train future Residents at the discretion of the Residency Committee. Failure of the Resident to comply will result in termination of the RTP at the discretion of the Residency Committee.
- (c) In addition to the 6-monthly Program Evaluation Forms listed above, in RTPs where Supervising Diplomates are at different institutions/practices, detailed logs of resident-mentor interactions for the 6-month evaluation period may be requested biannually with the 6-month Program Evaluation Forms.
- (d) The Residency Committee Chair (or designated Committee member) will review the Resident and Supervising Diplomate program evaluation forms for each RTP, and ensure that the Supervising Diplomate(s) and Resident are consistently meeting all of the minimum training guidelines outlined in the RTP application form(s).
- (e) Site visits may be conducted by members of the Residency Committee or its designees.
- (f) Medical records may be requested by the Residency Committee to validate case examination/species logs and surgical case logs.

#### **4.11 Notification of deficiencies in a Residency Training Program**

- (a) The Residency Committee Chair (or designated Committee member) will note any deficiencies discovered in the comparison process of the six-month Program Evaluation Forms.
- (b) Any deficiencies will be documented in writing to all Supervising Diplomates and the Resident and may result in the RTP or Resident being placed on probation.
- (c) Serious deficiencies or documented deficiencies that are not corrected during the ensuing 6 months may result in the RTP or the Resident being terminated, and the Supervising Diplomate(s) not receiving approval for future RTPs until corrected.

#### **4.12 Program changes**

- (a) **Termination of a Resident from a RTP:** If a Resident is terminated by the Supervising Diplomat(s) or employing institution for any reason, the Resident and all Supervising Diplomates must inform the Residency Committee in writing of the termination. Early termination would prompt a review of the program and whether it is meeting all requirements. If deficiencies are found, these must be corrected before a subsequent RTP is approved. Any Resident beginning a new RTP must disclose any previous RTP. In some circumstances, time spent in a previous RTP may be applied to a subsequent RTP following submission of satisfactory performance evaluations by previous Supervising Diplomat(s) and the Resident. If a new RTP is sought by the terminated Resident, the interval between RTPs must not exceed one year if time spent in the previous RTP is to be included in the new RTP.
- (b) Substantive changes that are planned or anticipated in a residency training program must be submitted to ABVO for approval prior to implementation of those changes. Substantive changes are changes to personnel and to facilities or equipment that would prevent a program from continuing to meet minimum standards. If no ACVO Diplomat remains at the RTP, the program is immediately suspended. Changes which result in the program no longer meeting minimum standards may result in probation, suspension or revocation.
- (c) If the number of Supervising ACVO Diplomates in a program decreases below the required minimum based on the number of residents in training, **the program will be placed on probation and be given a grace period established by the Residency committee to replace the absent Supervising Diplomat,** or establish an external rotation or partnership with an ACVO Diplomat(s) or provide the ABVO Residency Committee with a formal plan. The Residents currently in the program can finish that program, pending approval of the ABVO Residency Committee, if it can be established that all remaining requirements of the program will be met. If no plan is approved at the end of the grace period and the requirements are not being met, the program may be suspended at the discretion of the Residency Committee.
- (d) A suspended program may apply for reinstatement once the deficiencies causing suspension have been corrected. The Corresponding Supervising Diplomat must submit a written request detailing the resolution of issues precipitating the suspension. Alternatively, RC will notify the Corresponding Supervising Diplomat and Resident(s) when the period of probation or suspension has ended.
- (e) If a program is revoked, the Supervising Diplomates may not be approved to train residents in the future. A resident from a revoked program may enter into another RTP, however, any time served by a resident after the program was revoked will not count towards completion.

#### **4.13 Completion of a Residency Training Program**

- (a) Residents are required to complete their ABVO-approved training programs by August 1 of the year in which the examination is to be taken. Residents must submit to the Residency Committee Chair the 1) final 6-month RTP evaluation (Resident), 2) surgical log, and 3) species examination log. Requirements for minimum case examination numbers and level 2 surgical procedures must be met by the end date of the RTP. The Corresponding Supervising Diplomate must submit the final 6-month RTP evaluation (Supervising Diplomate). The final evaluation forms are due to the Residency Committee by the specific date noted on the evaluation forms. In most cases the date is prior to the official ending date of the residency program. If a resident completes their residency without completing the minimums, they may take the examination but cannot obtain diplomate status until the minimum case requirements are met.
- (b) The Residency Committee Chair(s) will notify the Examination Committee Chair and the Credentials Committee chair once the RTP is successfully completed.

### **5.00 ABVO EXAMINATION COMMITTEE**

#### **5.01 Statement of Purpose**

The mission of the ABVO Examination Committee (EC) is to conduct a fair and unbiased examination of Examination Candidates and to provide to the ABVO a list of Examination Candidates that have demonstrated minimally competent skills and knowledge required of a veterinary ophthalmologist.

#### **5.02 Committee Objectives**

- (a) Write questions for the Multiple Choice (MC) and Image Recognition (IR) parts of the Examination (performed by Committee Members).
- (b) Review and validate questions prior to use on the Examination (performed by Committee Members).
- (c) Annually review the ABVO Suggested Reading List to determine its suitability for preparation of Examination Candidates (performed by Committee members).
- (d) Review Examination content for alignment with ABVO Blueprint (performed by Committee Chairs).
- (e) Review all Examination questions from prior year's Examination and eliminate approximately 1/3 of questions based upon item analysis criteria or outdated references (performed by Committee Chairs).

- (f) Reconstruct MC and IR parts of the Examination utilizing newly written items or questions from the Question Bank (performed by Committee Members).
- (g) Transmit new questions to contracted testing service for incorporation into subsequent year's Examination (performed by Committee Chairs).
- (h) Proofread MC and IR parts of the Examination after they have been entered into the on-line system (performed by Committee Chairs).
- (i) Provide Angoff and Hofstee ratings for new items on the MC and IR parts of the Examination (performed by Committee Members).
- (j) Communicate individual Examination scheduling information to Examination Candidates (performed by Committee Chairs).
- (k) Grade IR part of the Examination on-line (performed by Committee Members).
- (l) Schedule, administer and grade Practical part of the Examination to eligible Examination Candidates (performed by Committee Members).
- (m) Communicate examination results to examinees, supervising diplomates approved to receive such information, and to the ABVO (performed by Committee Chairs).
- (n) Provide diagnostic reports to unsuccessful examinees, outlining their examination performance relative to the ABVO Examination Blueprint (Committee Chairs). The diagnostic reports are supplied to the EC Chairs and the ABVO office by the contracted testing service.
- (o) Prepare summary report of Examination results for distribution to the ACVO members as part of the annual committee report (performed by Committee Chairs).

### **5.03 Committee Membership**

The Examination Committee (EC) shall consist of a minimum of 9 (nine) regular Committee Members and 3 (three) Chairs. Regular Committee Members may serve up to 2 (two) consecutive terms, each of 3 (three) years. However, the first term may be shortened if a regular Committee Member becomes a Chair.

Chairs serve a 3 (three)-year term comprised of 1 (one) year as Vice Chair, 1 (one) year as Chair, and 1 (one) year as Past Chair. Chairs may serve only 1 (one) term. A Committee Member must have served at least 1 (one) year as an EC Member before becoming Vice Chair. In addition to 9 (nine) regular Committee Members and 3 (three) Chairs, an Ad Hoc Host member may serve on the Committee for a 1(one) -year term to fulfill all functions associated with holding the Examination at a location arranged by the Host. A Host member is not necessary if one of the regular Committee Members fulfills this role but may be requested by the Chairs and reviewed for approval or decline by the Board when requested. Host members may serve multiple 1(one)-year terms depending on the location of the Examination. An Ad Hoc Host member shall not

participate in construction or grading any part of the Examination and shall not serve as Chair or Vice Chair.

New regular Committee Members are recommended by the EC Chairs and appointed by the ABVO Board on a semi-annual basis, to maintain the required number of Committee Members. Chairmanship shall be determined as outlined in sections 2.05 (b and c) of this document. Membership of the ABVO EC is designed to reflect in general the population of ACVO Diplomates with regard to gender, number of years as an ACVO Diplomate, and professional activity (i.e. academic vs. private practice).

#### **5.04 Conflicts of Interest and Confidentiality**

- (a) All individuals involved with ABVO Examination development, item writing, and passing score workshops must sign a Statement of Confidentiality.
- (b) All Examination Candidates will be asked to declare any conflicts of interest prior to administration of the Practical part of the Examination. Examiners will recuse themselves from examining a candidate if there is a declared conflict of interest.
- (c) Individuals who are involved with establishing the Examination pass criteria point for each part of the Examination agree not to discuss the results of this process with individuals other than members of the ABVO or its Committees.
- (d) If it is determined that an individual or individuals violated the confidentiality of the item writing, examination development, passing score process, or other aspect of the accreditation process, the ABVO may pursue legal and other actions against the individual, or individuals, including recovery of financial damages.

#### **5.05 Nature and Scope of the Examination**

- (a) The Examination is offered annually to Examination Candidates who have successfully completed all requirements as dictated by the Residency and Credentials Committees. The Examination consists of three separate parts: 1) Image Recognition (IR), 2) Multiple Choice (MC), and 3) Practical. The Examination is constructed to evaluate the Examination Candidate's proficiency and knowledge of elements considered relevant and important to a veterinary ophthalmologist. The IR part of the Examination is designed to evaluate ability to identify, assess, and problem-solve (assimilate) clinical material. The MC part of the Examination is designed to evaluate knowledge of the current scientific literature relevant to the clinical practice of and basic sciences related to veterinary ophthalmology. The Practical part of the Examination is designed to evaluate proficiency in ophthalmic surgical techniques.

#### **5.06 Sections of the Examination**

- (a) **Image Recognition Examination**

1. The IR consists of a series of digital images and corresponding questions regarding three anatomic areas of the eye and related structures: Orbit and Adnexa, Anterior Segment, and Lens and Posterior Segment. Questions from these areas are randomized into three different sections on the IR part of the Examination.
2. The major demands of the IR part of the Examination include identification, assessment, and problem-solving (assimilation) of the appearance and information presented on a photographic image. Questions and answers for the IR are written and Examination Candidates are asked to respond to structured questions with a short answer while viewing the image. The Examination Candidates are given approximately 2 (two) to 2.5 (two and one half) hours to complete each of the three sections of the IR Examination. Generally, the Examination Candidates are asked to give 1 (one) to 2 (two) answers for each image.
3. The images used on the IR part of the Examination include clinical photographs of the eye or patient, fundus photographs, goniphotographs, slit lamp photographs, photographs of imaging techniques and other special diagnostic techniques, cytologic specimens, and gross and microscopic (photomicrographs) pathology specimens. Questions on surgical techniques, principles, equipment and complications are also covered in each of the three anatomic areas. Questions typically include such items as listing lesions or abnormalities, developing a differential considerations list for the specific disease process, citing the most likely etiologic diagnosis(es) or pathogenesis, listing a morphologic diagnosis, listing appropriate therapy for the specific condition, identifying species on the image, identifying surgical techniques, surgical instruments, surgical principles, or surgical complications.

(b) **Multiple Choice Examination**

1. The MC consists of 250 multiple-choice questions in eight disciplines: anatomy/embryology, physiology, neuro-ophthalmology, surgery, pharmacology, pathology, medical ophthalmology, and diagnostics.
2. The MC is designed to evaluate the Examination Candidate's knowledge of current literature and basic science information relevant to veterinary ophthalmology. A list of journals and textbooks from which the questions are generated is provided on the ABVO website under the heading *ABVO Resident Reading List*. All journal article-based questions must be from articles published seven calendar years from the Examination year (for e.g., questions for the 2024 Examination must be from articles published no earlier than 2017). Up to and including the 2024 Certifying Examination, the publication date of a journal article is considered the date the article appeared in print, when the manuscript was assigned a DOI or Digital Object Identifier. For the 2025 Certifying Examination and following years, the publication date for journal articles will change

from the date the manuscript is assigned a journal issue to the date a manuscript is assigned a DOI, i.e., the ‘ePub’ date. The specific content of the questions follows a Blueprint approved by the EC and based upon a Job Task Analysis of ACVO Diplomates, detailing discipline, animal species, and region of the eye. The MC is given in two sections each comprising 125 questions. Questions from the eight disciplines are randomized to the two sections. The Examination Candidates are given 3.5 (three and one half) hours to complete each section.

(c) **Practical Examination**

1. The Practical consists of two separate sections: intraocular and extraocular, which are designed to evaluate an Examination Candidate's proficiency in ophthalmic surgical techniques.
2. Both sections of the Practical must be passed to successfully complete the Examination. Only failed sections of the Practical must be repeated. The Examination Candidate is given 50 (fifty) minutes to set up and perform a surgical procedure. There are two surgery stations – one for the extraocular (corneal/conjunctival) procedure and one for the intraocular procedure. The two Practical sections involve surgical exercises on cadaver (calf, pig, rabbit, dog, cat or other appropriate species) eyes. The Examination Candidate is required to supply all necessary surgical instruments, irrigating solution, suture material, blades, gloves, etc. An operating microscope and stands for organizing the instruments are provided. All time limits are strictly enforced.
3. Failure to bring necessary supplies may result in failure. The Examiners will not offer supplies. Examination Candidates are evaluated on components of the procedure, and primarily on surgical technique.

**5.07 Assuring Examination Questions Reflect Professional Activities Expected of Diplomates**

- (a) It is the Examination Committee's responsibility to ensure that Examination questions reflect professional activities expected of Diplomates.
- (b) Questions for the IR and MC parts of the Examination are validated by Committee Members using an item validation rating scale. The Committee Members act as expert judges when validating the images and questions and must consider whether the knowledge or skill measured is relevant, important, and critical to certification level performance. Only questions with a positive score for each category from each expert judge are validated and available for use on the Examination. For the Practical, the Committee has constructed evaluation sheets for each section of this part of the Examination. These are designed to measure whether the performance of the Examination Candidate in each task is at



the entry level for certification.

## **5.08 Development, Review, Grading, and Evaluation of the Examination**

The Examination Committee (EC) meets yearly to construct the next Examination. The IR and MC parts of the Examination are constructed as follows:

- (a) **Image Recognition:**
1. Prior to the Construction Meeting:
    - i. EC Chairs assign question topics from one of three anatomic areas (orbit/adnexa, anterior segment, posterior segment) to each EC Member. EC Members select images for their assigned topic and write a question for each image. Question answers are short, no more than a few words. Each question may be worth one or more points.
  2. At the Construction Meeting:
    - i. New images and questions are reviewed by groups of three EC Members. EC Members review questions from a different topic area than the one they were assigned to write. This is to ensure that images are of sufficient quality, are accurate, and that questions meet three criteria: relevant, important, and critical to certification level performance.
    - ii. EC Members review the IR part of the Examination from the previous year and select approximately 1/3 of the questions to eliminate from the Examination. Criteria for question elimination include item analyses provided by a testing consultant, as well as quality of the image and the question. Item analyses provide data that may include, but are not limited to, statistics detailing how many candidates answered each question correctly, average time for candidates to answer each question, and the correlation between performance on each question with candidates' overall Examination performance.
  3. After the Construction Meeting:
    - i. EC Chairs review the newly constructed IR part of the Examination to ensure accuracy and clarity.
    - ii. EC Chairs submit the IR part of the Examination to the testing consultant, who conducts a standardization assessment which provides data to assist in determining the passing point after the Examination is administered. The standardization assessment may include, but is not limited to, an Angoff rating by EC Members to estimate the likelihood that a minimally competent Examination Candidate will answer each question correctly, and a Hofstee rating by EC Members to estimate the highest acceptable failing score and lowest acceptable passing score.

Following administration of the Examination, EC Members grade IR answers independently and without knowledge of candidates' identity. Each Examination Candidates' answers are graded by three EC Members and the scores averaged.

The testing consultant uses Angoff and Hofstee ratings to determine the passing point of the IR part of the Examination, with candidate scores anonymized. The consultant notifies EC Chairs of the passing point, and names of candidates above and below the passing point

(b) **Multiple Choice (MC)**

1. Prior to the construction meeting:

- i. EC Chairs review the previous year's MC part of the Examination and select approximately 1/3 of the questions to eliminate from the Examination. Criteria for question elimination include item analyses provided by a testing consultant, as well as age of the reference, and quality of the question. Item analyses provide data that may include, but are not limited to, statistics detailing how many candidates answered each question correctly, and the correlation between performance on each question with candidates' overall Examination performance.
- ii. EC Chairs assign question writing topics to EC Members based on the Examination Blueprint, which details approximately how many questions for each species and anatomic segment should comprise the MC part of the Examination. EC Members write questions on assigned topics in multiple choice form.

At the Construction Meeting, new questions are reviewed by a group of three EC Members who wrote questions on topics from different anatomical areas. New questions are reviewed to ensure that they are accurate, and that they meet three criteria: relevant, important, and critical to certification level performance.

2. After the Construction Meeting:

- i. Newly constructed MC part of the Examination is reviewed by EC Chairs to ensure accuracy and clarity.
- ii. MC part of the Examination is then submitted to the testing consultant, who conducts a standardization assessment which provides data to assist in determining the passing point after the Examination is administered. The standardization assessment may include, but is not limited to, an Angoff rating by EC Members to estimate the likelihood that a minimally competent exam candidate will answer each question correctly, and a Hofstee rating by EC Members to estimate the highest acceptable failing score and lowest acceptable passing score.

Following administration of the examination, the testing consultant grades the MC part without knowledge of candidates' identity.

The testing consultant uses Angoff and Hofstee ratings to determine the passing point of the MC, with candidate scores anonymized. The consultant notifies EC Chairs of the passing point, and names of candidates above and below the passing point

#### **5.09 Grading of the Examination and Determination of Passing Point**

The passing points for the IR and MC parts of the exam are determined using Angoff and Hofstee validation methods. The passing points for the Intraocular and Extraocular parts of the Practical are set at 70 (seventy).

#### **5.10 Application Procedure for Examination Accommodations.**

- (a) In compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), the ABVO shall offer its exams in a manner that accommodates individuals with disabilities, including persons with learning disabilities.
- (b) An Examination Candidate who has a disability and has completed the credentialing requirements of the ABVO, may request accommodations in taking the Written and Image Recognition parts of the Examination. Due to the nature of the Practical Examination (which includes the Intraocular Surgery and Extraocular Surgery stations), accommodations in the form of time extension or altered setting are not provided for these parts of the Examination.
- (c) To apply for Examination accommodations the 'Accommodations Request and Release Authorization for the ABVO Certifying Examination' form must be submitted to the ABVO office via email no later than 90 days prior to the scheduled administration of the MC and Image IR parts of the ABVO Certifying Examination. Instructions and documents are available at the end of the EC section of this policy document.

#### **5.11 Examination Candidate Notification and Reexamination Procedures**

- (a) Examination Candidates are notified of their results by the EC Chairs. Examination Candidates are informed of their specific scores and minimum passing point on each section of the Examination. If unsuccessful on one or more sections of the Practical Examination, Examination Candidates are also provided comments specific to their performance. Unsuccessful Examination Candidates are subsequently provided a diagnostic report outlining their performance on the MC and/or IR parts of the Examination relative to the distribution of questions specified by the Examination Blueprint.
- (b) An Examination Candidate need only retake the section(s) of the Examination for which an unsuccessful score was rendered. Only unsuccessful sections of the Practical need be repeated, i.e. not the entire Practical Examination.
- (c) For those candidates repeating only the MC and/or IR, there will be an option to take the examination remotely. Repeat candidates who still need to take the Practical will need to take all parts of the exam in person.
- (d) The Examination applicant must pass all Exam parts within 5 (five) consecutive

offerings of a candidate completing an ABVO-Approved Residency Training Program (RTP). If an applicant fails to pass all sections of the ABVO Certifying Examination within 5 (five) consecutive offerings after residency completion, the candidate must then satisfactorily complete re-training through an ABVO-Approved Residency before being eligible to retake the Exam. This will apply to ALL Examination applicants starting with the 2022 ABVO Certifying Examination which corresponds to the November 2021 to January 2022 Credentials application window.

- (e) Force Majeure: In the event that the American Board of Veterinary Ophthalmology (ABVO) determines that the ABVO Certifying Examination is inadvisable, illegal or impossible to administer due to, without limitation, epidemics, pandemics, civil or military disturbances, acts of war or terrorism, nuclear catastrophes, natural disasters or acts of God, wide-spread interruptions of communications, utilities and/or computers services (software and/or hardware) or other occurrences beyond reasonable control of the ABVO Board and Committees, the EC in consultation with the ABVO may decide to pause the five-year examination cycle and re-start the subsequent year that an ABVO Certifying Examination is administered.
- (f) In the event of extenuating circumstances affecting an individual candidate, a candidate may apply, in writing, to the ABVO for an extension or temporary suspension of the 5-year cycle that may be granted at the discretion of the board.

#### **5.12 Procedure for Reapplication to Repeat the Examination**

First-time and repeat Examination applicants must re-submit and comply with all requirements as outlined by the Credentials Committee in order to repeat any part(s) of the Examination. Previous satisfaction of Credential Committee requirements does not insure successful reapplication.

## Special Testing Accommodations - ABVO Certifying Examination

*(Document approved by the ABVO, 3.15.22)*

### Introduction

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In compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), the American Board of Veterinary Ophthalmology (ABVO) offers its examination in a place and manner that accommodate individuals with disabilities, including persons with learning disabilities.

The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) defines a disability as a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more of the major life activities of the individual. An individual is not substantially limited in a major life activity if the limitation does not amount to a significant restriction when compared with the abilities of the average person.

Accommodations that are deemed appropriate depend on individual circumstances. In evaluating a request for accommodation from a disabled candidate, the ABVO will take into account the individual's specific limitations and needs. However, the ABVO will not offer an accommodation that would fundamentally alter the measurement of the skills or knowledge that the examination is intended to test or one that would present an undue burden to the ABVO.

If a candidate requests accommodation based on a learning disability, the ABVO must ensure that the examination results for that individual accurately reflect the individual's medical knowledge and clinical judgment, rather than his or her impaired mental capacities. In order to meet this objective, on a case by case basis the ABVO will consider accommodations that do not fundamentally alter the nature of the examination and which allow individuals with disabilities to demonstrate their true aptitude or achievement level on the examination, provided they do not create an undue burden on ABVO. Common examples of accommodations for learning disabled candidates include:

- Changes in the length of time permitted for completion of the examination
- Permitting the candidate to take the examination in a quiet room with minimal distractions

A candidate who has a disability, but has completed the credentialing requirements of the ABVO, may request accommodations in taking the Written and Image Recognition portions of the ABVO certifying examination. Due to the nature of the Practical portions of the certifying examination accommodations in the form of time extension or altered setting are not provided for these portions of the exam.

The following protocol sets forth the procedural guidelines utilized by ABVO in evaluating the need for and, if appropriate, providing such accommodations to candidates who state that they have disabilities that will affect access to the ABVO Certifying Examination, including any learning disability.

### Documentation Requirements

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All requests for accommodation of a disability, whether mental or physical, must be submitted in writing to the ACVO Executive Director's office. All requests and all documentation must be received at least 90 days prior to the administration of the Written and Image Recognition portions of the ABVO certifying examination. For specific information regarding the process and submission of documentation or for a request of accommodation, please contact ABVO at 1-208-466-7624 or [by email](#).

Address all documentation to:

Stacee Daniel – ACVO Executive Director  
PO Box 1311  
Meridian, Idaho 83680

The following documentation is required:

1. The diagnosis or evaluation or other documentation of (such as an Individualized Education Program, Section 504 Plan, Individuals with Disabilities Act Summary of Performance or a private school formal written plan) of the disability using standard nomenclature completed any time after the candidate reached the age of 13. Copies of the diagnosis or evaluation report or other documentation, on, or accompanied by a letter from the evaluating professional, on the evaluating professional's letterhead, including a list and a copy of the standard instruments and assessment devices used to determine the disability. The professional's report should address all appropriate elements relative to the request for accommodation of disability. With respect to each element, the treating professional should include the name of each test administered, its date, a description of the candidate's performance in each of the areas of the test battery, a summary of test scores, and a complete diagnostic formulation in standard DSM-IV terminology utilizing all diagnostic axes. Diagnostic formulations should integrate current testing findings with academic and psychiatric histories. Raw test data should be available upon request.
2. A description of the candidate's functional limitations due to the disability that the candidate contends interferes with the accessibility of the examination.
3. The name, address and telephone number of all professional(s) providing reports that document the disability. As well as the date of the assessment upon which each professional's report is based.
4. A description of the requested accommodation.
5. Copies of any official documentation or reports of past accommodations, if any, the candidate received on examinations because of the current disability. If no previous accommodation was made despite being requested, provide a detailed explanation of the reasons no accommodation was given in the past and the reason one is needed now. If an accommodation has been sought and been denied, please explain the circumstances involved.
6. An Accommodations Request Verification and Release form signed by the candidate.

The ABVO reserves the right to require a candidate to provide additional information to verify the existence of a disability and the need for any modification or aid. Reapplication for special accommodation is not required for each examination administration, unless a new accommodation is requested.

In addition, the ABVO reserves the right to require a second opinion. If, in the ABVO's judgment, it is not clear whether the candidate is disabled or whether the requested accommodation is necessary, ABVO may seek the opinion of an outside expert. Costs of such consultation, if required, will be paid by the ABVO.

### **Additional Documentation that may be Requested**

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#### Neuropsychological Evaluation

A comprehensive neuropsychological evaluation conducted by a professional (psychiatrist or licensed psychologist) who regularly practices neuropsychology. The report must be based upon examination of the candidate after the candidate reached the age of 13 and must appear on, or be accompanied by a letter on, the evaluating professional's letterhead. At a minimum, the requisite elements of a comprehensive evaluation are an intelligence test, an assessment of neuropsychological functions, an academic achievement test, and psychiatric/psychological history. For candidates seeking accommodations on the basis of attention deficit disorder or hyperactivity disorder, the evaluation must include a behavioral index. Each of these required elements is described in greater detail below.

The professional's report should address all appropriate elements relative to the request for accommodation of disability. With respect to each element, the treating professional should include the name of each test administered, its date, a description of the candidate's performance in each of the areas of the test battery, a summary of test scores, and a complete diagnostic formulation in standard DSM-IV terminology utilizing all diagnostic axes. Diagnostic formulations should integrate current testing findings with academic and psychiatric histories. Raw test data should be available upon request.

A. Intelligence Test

The Wechsler Adult Intelligence Scale-Revised and at the discretion of the evaluating professional other estimates of verbal and nonverbal intelligence, such as Peabody Picture Vocabulary Test, Raven's Progressive Matrices or Leiter International.

B. Assessment of Neuropsychological Functions

1. A complete, integrated neuropsychological battery, such as the Halstead-Reitan Neuropsychological Battery or the Luria Nebraska Neuropsychological Battery (LNNB).
2. Memory assessments utilizing an age-normed, standardized instrument assessing both verbal and nonverbal memory such as the Wechsler Memory Scale-Revised.
3. Assessments of the specific cognitive and perceptual processes affected by the disability. Examples: in cases of auditory-verbal learning disabilities, include specific tests of phonemic processing. In cases of attention deficit disorder, include specific tests of sustained attentional resources, such as the Continuous Performance Test.

C. Academic Achievement Test Results

Standardized, comprehensive academic achievement test, appropriately normed for the candidate's age group, including assessment of spelling, arithmetic and reading comprehension.

D. Psychological/Psychiatric History

1. Standardized psychometric assessment of personality and emotional functioning (MMPI-2 or MCMI-II).
2. Standard diagnostic interview for presence of current psychiatric disorder.
3. If the candidate has undergone treatment for a psychological or psychiatric condition within the past three years, provide a report, including diagnosis, from the treating mental health professional.

E. Behavioral Indices

Standardized psychometric assessments of behavioral indices of attention deficit disorder, such as the Wender Scales or the Achenbach Scale.

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### **Evaluation of Accommodation Request and Associated Documentation**

After the candidate furnishes the required documentation, ABVO will contract with an expert in the field to conduct a review, at its expense, of the diagnoses offered and the accommodation requested to determine if the request should be granted.

Upon receipt of the specified documentation and Accommodations Request Verification and Release form, the ABVO staff will submit the documentation to the contracted expert as soon as feasible. The review will entail an assessment of the following issues:

1. Is the candidate disabled and, if so, what is the nature of the disability?

2. Will the disability interfere with the candidate's ability to take the examination and, if so, in what ways?
3. Is the requested accommodation necessary to enable the candidate to take the examination? If not, what, if any, accommodation is necessary?
4. Are there any alternative methods to accommodate the disability that ABVO should consider?

If the answers to these questions are not clear from the documentation presented, the ABVO may seek the opinion of an outside expert in the field of learning disabilities. In that case, ABVO will send the documentation to the expert for review. Costs of such consultation will be paid by the ABVO.

### **Decision to Grant or Refuse Requested Accommodation**

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Upon completing the review of the documentation and, if applicable, receiving the opinions of an outside expert, ABVO will notify the candidate in writing of its decision regarding the requested accommodation and the basis for the decision. Decisions will be rendered within 30 days following the documentation submission deadline. If the ABVO declines to accommodate the candidate because it has concluded that the requested accommodation either constitutes a fundamental alteration or an undue burden, the ABVO will also notify the candidate of any alternative methods of accommodation suggested by the expert which are acceptable to ABVO.

### **Appeals**

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If the candidate is dissatisfied with ABVO's decision concerning his or her request for accommodation, the candidate may refer to the general appeals procedure set forth in the ABVO's Policies & Procedures document provided at [www.ABVO.us](http://www.ABVO.us)



## **Accommodations Request and Release Authorization for the ABVO Certifying Examination**

*(Document approved by ABVO, 03.30.2020)*

**FOR THOSE REQUESTING SPECIAL ACCOMMODATION FOR A DISABILITY ONLY**

### **Requested Accommodations**

**PLEASE NOTE:**

- 1. All requested accommodations must be supported by the documentation provided.**
- 2. Accommodation requests may only be made for the Multiple Choice (MC) and Image Recognition (IR) exam, but not the practical portions of the examination.**
- 3. Accommodations must be requested anew each year.**

- Accommodation requested for Multiple Choice (MC) Exam
- Accommodation requested for Image Recognition (IR) Exam
- Extended time – 50% (i.e. time and one-half)

List accommodations you have received for standardized examinations such as college, graduate and professional school admissions tests and professional licensure and certification examinations: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Is(are) the requested accommodation(s) the same as or equivalent to accommodation(s) received on a previous standardized examination? If not, why?

\_\_\_\_\_

List accommodations you have received under an Individualized Education Program (IEP), Section 504 Plan or other formal or informal testing policy:

\_\_\_\_\_

Is(are) the requested accommodation(s) the same as or equivalent to accommodation(s) received on a under an IEP, Section 504 Plan or other school policy? If not, why?

**Impairment Information**

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Describe the nature of the impairment(s) for which accommodation is requested:

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Year first diagnosed: \_\_\_\_\_

Describe any major life activities that are substantially impaired by your impairment(s), how the impairment(s) affect(s) your access to the ABVO Certifying Examination and how the requested accommodation will alleviate the impact of the impairment(s):

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**Previous Requests**

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Have you previously applied to take the ABVO Certifying Examination? \_\_\_\_\_

Did you request any accommodation(s)? If so, describe accommodation(s) requested:

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Was your accommodation request granted? Describe accommodation(s) provided:

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Are you requesting the same or equivalent accommodation(s) for this exam?

If different accommodation(s) is (are) requested, please explain:

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## Required Documentation

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- Attach copies of any official documentation of previous testing accommodations provided.
- Attach copies of any official documentation of the diagnosis or evaluation or other documentation of impairment from a licensed or otherwise credentialed professional on the evaluating professional's letterhead, the date of the assessment upon which each professional's report is based, a list and a copy of the standard instruments and assessment devices used to determine the disability, and the name, address and telephone number of the qualified professional and a description of his/her credentials.

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## Verification and Authorization to Release Information

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I, \_\_\_\_\_  
(print your name)

hereby agree to provide to the American Board of Veterinary Ophthalmology (ABVO) all required documentation in connection with my request for accommodation of my stated disability.

I declare and verify under penalty of perjury that all information provided by me to the ABVO or to others evaluating my disability is true to the best of my knowledge and belief.

I understand and agree that the ABVO has requested this documentation for use in evaluating the existence and nature of my disability and the need for the requested accommodation. I further understand and agree that the ABVO may provide this documentation to qualified professionals in connection with an independent review of my request for accommodation.

I understand that my request for accommodations, including this form and all supporting documentation, must be received by the ABVO sufficiently in advance of my anticipated test date in order to provide adequate time to evaluate and process my request

I agree that the ABVO and/or its outside experts may directly contact any of the professionals or other persons who have provided information pertaining to my disability to obtain further information, clarification, or documents.

I authorize those individuals or entities identified in this request form to disclose such information concerning their evaluation.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Candidate's Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

## **6.00 ABVO MAINTENANCE OF CERTIFICATION (MOC) COMMITTEE**

### **6.01 Statement of Purpose**

The MOC Committee of the ABVO determines eligibility criteria for maintenance of certification by Diplomates of the ACVO and evaluates initial and reestablishment MOC submissions of both Mandatory and Voluntary Applicants. Participation in MOC is mandatory for individuals who become board-certified during or after 2015 and voluntary for those who became board-certified prior to 2015. As of “2021” the MOC Committee annually provides a list of the successful and unsuccessful Applicants for MOC.

### **6.02 Committee Objectives**

- (a) To define the criteria for MOC in the areas of:
  - 1. Professional development, scholarly activities, and professional service.
  - 2. The time interval between evaluations for MOC.
  - 3. Methods whereby Applicants for MOC may prove the criteria have been met.
  - 4. Proportion of Diplomates for whom MOC is required and who will be audited in each cycle.
- (b) To review, validate, and certify that activities submitted by Diplomates satisfy the criteria for MOC.
- (c) To develop paths to MOC for Diplomates who fail to fulfill the requirements for MOC as defined in section 6.04 of this document.
- (d) To enact consequences of loss of Diplomate status by those who fail to fulfill the requirements for MOC as defined in section 6.04 of this document.
- (e) To advise on modernizing the application process on a yearly basis to try to take advantage of the latest in information technology.

### **6.03 Committee Membership**

The MOC Committee shall consist of a minimum of 8 members including the Chair and Vice Chair. Members serve terms of 3 years and may serve up to 2 consecutive terms. Terms may be shortened as needed to maintain staggered Committee member terms. To serve as either Chair or Vice Chair requires at least 1 year of MOC Committee experience. The term of Chair shall be 1 year, following service of 1 year as Vice Chair. Chairmanship shall be determined as outlined in sections 2.05b and 2.05c of this document.

### **6.04 Eligibility Criteria and Application Process**

- (a) The participation in MOC is mandatory for individuals who become board-certified during or after 2015, and voluntary for those who became board-certified prior to 2015. Diplomates who became board-certified prior to 2015 may voluntarily apply or reapply for MOC according to the deadlines posted on the ABVO website.
- (b) Both Mandatory and Voluntary Applicants for MOC must be ACVO Diplomates and veterinarians with current licensure or alternate documentation (e.g., institutional licensure or

waiver, foreign/non-US approval by country of residence) to practice in good standing for the entire cycle of the review.

- (c) Mandatory Applicants for MOC must submit application materials to the MOC Committee every 5 years. The application time window is announced by the MOC Committee in the fifth year of the original ABVO certification. Applications must be received through the ABVO/MOC online application form by the deadline posted on the ABVO website.
- (d) Voluntary applications for the MOC of Diplomates boarded prior to 2015 must be received through the ABVO/MOC online application form by the deadline posted on the ABVO website. The MOC for Voluntary Applicants is on a 6-year cycle.
- (e) Applications to maintain certification, whether submitted by Mandatory or Voluntary Applicants for MOC, must describe a minimum of 300 verifiable points per cycle gained through completion of activities approved for the MOC Committee.
- (f) Both the application fee, payable to the ABVO, and a completed application form must be successfully submitted as per ABVO policy, and received by the ABVO office before the MOC application is considered complete and eligible for review. Incomplete applications will not receive consideration and will be assumed absent. In that case, the procedures for reapplication for MOC would need to be resubmitted including the additional payment and any penalty.

#### **6.05 Committee Communications and Review Process**

- (a) Annually, the MOC Committee will announce, on the ABVO website, the MOC application deadlines for Mandatory and Voluntary Applicants. The deadline for Voluntary Applicants will be announced separately on the ABVO website.
  - 1. The MOC Committee and the ABVO office are not permitted to send individual reminders to Applicants. All notifications are posted on the ABVO website, and it is the responsibility of the Applicant to track MOC deadlines.
  - 2. It is the responsibility of the Applicant to verify receipt of the MOC application form and payment. Automatic digital receipts are emailed by the application system. It is the responsibility of an Applicant to check their email including spam and clutter email boxes. If an email proof of receipt is not found, the Applicant must contact the ABVO office to verify receipt and/or resubmit the application and payment.
  - 3. Late applications, outside of verifiable emergencies, will be not be accepted. Diplomates who miss their application deadlines will be considered non-compliant and must follow the steps as outlined in section 6.08 of this document.
- (b) Each MOC application will be reviewed by 2 separate Diplomates of the MOC Committee. The MOC Committee Chair or Vice Chair will review and make the final decision on the passage or failure of an application when there is a discrepancy between the assessments of both reviewers. All applications that do not fulfill the requirements for MOC as defined in section 6.04 will be further reviewed by the Chair of the MOC Committee before notification of the ABVO.
- (c) The MOC Committee Chair and Vice Chair as well as individual MOC Committee members, may opt-out of reviewing any Diplomate applications if they perceive a conflict of interest.

Such conflicts of interest may include, but are not limited to, any present or prior relationships between a reviewer and the Applicant (e.g., marriages, cohabitation, life partnerships, common law marriages, etc.). Additional conflicts of interest between a reviewer and an Applicant may include:

1. Former mentorships or residencies.
  2. Prior or present business partnerships.
  3. Prior or present coworking arrangements.
  4. Prior employer/employee relationships.
  5. Familial relationships.
  6. Direct business or academic competition.
- (d) Up to 10% of Voluntary and Mandatory applications for MOC will be selected by random lottery to be audited for content, accuracy, and proof of stated activities. Accounting and verification of the accuracy of these applications will be performed by MOC Committee members and completed within 60 days of application deadlines.

#### **6.06 Methods by Which Applicants for MOC May Prove that Criteria Have Been Met**

- (a) Documentation of CE should consist of a copy of CE certificates obtained at meetings attended.
- (b) Documentation of scholarly activities by the Applicant may include:
1. A copy or PDF of a an authored, or coauthored, and published manuscript.
  2. A copy of a letter or email from the journal or book editor verifying acceptance of a refereed manuscript or book chapter.
  3. A copy of an abstract and program, or schedule for, a poster or spoken presentation.
  4. A brief correspondence from the organizer of a meeting describing a scholarly presentation.
  5. A brief correspondence from a supervisory Department Chair stating that lectures to veterinary students were performed as described.
- (c) Documentation of professional service participation should consist of a brief communication from the Chair of the Committee on which the Applicant for MOC served, or from the Editor of the journal for which the Applicant for MOC has reviewed.
- (d) Documentation of participation in ophthalmology rounds should include a log of attendance with dates, names of those present, and the type of review completed (e.g., journal club, pathology review, slide rounds, etc.).
- (e) Documentation of licensure should consist of copies of certificates or alternate verifications that are active for the entire review cycle.

#### **6.07 Recognition of Maintenance of Certification**

- (a) Diplomates who maintain certification will receive documentation from the ABVO acknowledging this accomplishment. The ABVO office will receive from the MOC

Committee a list of individuals that have fulfilled, or failed to fulfil, the requirements for MOC as defined in section 6.04 of this document within 60 days of the close of an application cycle.

- (b) Diplomates who maintain certification will be recognized in their listing on the ABVO websites by an asterisk (\*) followed by the year in which their latest MOC is valid. A notation will be added to the Diplomate directory explaining the MOC program.
- (c) All Applicants for MOC will be notified of the outcome of their application reviews by both certified US mail and email within 10 business days of receipt of the list provided by the MOC Committee. Diplomates who fail to fulfill the requirements for MOC as defined in section 6.04, should refer to section 6.08 of this document.

#### **6.08 Remediation of Application Deficiencies and/or Failed Audits**

- (a) Mandatory Applicants for MOC who do not submit a completed application or payment, meet the minimum MOC compliance qualifications (300 points), or who fail documentation verification by an audit, will be allowed to resubmit an application and any additional fees by a second deadline posted on the ABVO website. Such Applicants will be notified if they have met MOC requirements within 75 days of this second application deadline.
- (b) Mandatory Applicants for MOC who do not submit a completed application or payment, meet the minimum MOC compliance qualifications (300 points), or who fail documentation verification in a second audit by the second published deadline, will be allowed to resubmit an application by a third deadline posted on the ABVO website. Such Applicants will be notified if they have met MOC requirements within 75 days of this third application deadline.
- (c) Mandatory Applicants for MOC who do not submit a completed application or payment, meet the minimum MOC compliance qualifications (300 points), or who fail documentation verification in a third audit by a third deadline posted on the ABVO website, will be allowed up to 24 months past that year's original application deadline to meet a greater expectation of compliance qualifications (450 points) in a 7-year extended cycle.
- (d) Mandatory Applicants who fail to fulfill the requirements for MOC as defined in section 6.04 of this document after three deadlines must adhere to the penalties defined in section 6.09 of this document.
- (e) Voluntary Applicants for MOC who do not submit a completed application or payment, meet the minimum MOC compliance qualifications (300 points), or who fail documentation verification by an audit, will be allowed to resubmit an application and any additional fees by a second deadline posted on the ABVO website. Such Applicants will be notified if they have met MOC requirements within 75 days of this second application deadline.
- (f) Voluntary Applicants for MOC who do not submit a completed application or payment, meet the minimum MOC compliance qualifications (300 points), or who fail documentation verification in a second audit by the second published deadline, will be allowed to resubmit an application by a third deadline posted on the ABVO website. Such Applicants will be notified if they have met MOC requirements within 75 days of this third application deadline.
- (g) Voluntary Applicants for MOC who do not submit a completed application or payment, meet the minimum MOC compliance qualifications (300 points), or who fail documentation

verification in a third audit by a third deadline posted on the ABVO website, will be allowed up to 24 months past that year's original application deadline to meet a greater expectation of compliance qualifications (450 points) in a 7-year extended cycle.

- (h) The MOC Committee may grant up to a 60-day reprieve to an Applicant who misses any submission deadline due to a documented emergency. Requests for a reprieve must be received within 30 days of an application deadline via email to the MOC Committee.

#### **6.09 Loss of Diplomate Certification**

- (a) The Diplomate status of a Mandatory Applicant will be revoked along with all its associated privileges if any of the following conditions apply:
  1. An MOC application is not submitted within any of the 3 consecutive deadlines (with consideration of any reprieves granted by the MOC Committee).
  2. An MOC application does not meet the requirements for certification as outlined in section 6.04 of this document through 3 consecutive deadlines.

A notice of the formal loss of Diplomate certification will then be sent to a Mandatory Applicant by certified mail within 15 business days of the completion of the third application cycle.

The title of Diplomate, and ACVO-associated trademarks and copyrights are permitted by any board-certified Mandatory Applicant prior to revocation by the ABVO.

- (b) Within 25 business days of a Mandatory Applicant's loss of certification, the ABVO will share this information with all concerned parties of the Mandatory Applicant. Such concerned parties include, but are not limited to, the Mandatory Applicant's employer, the OFA, the ACVO Residency Committee if the Mandatory Applicant was a Supervising Diplomate, the ACVO Board of Regents, and the state licensing board where the Mandatory Applicant was practicing as a "specialist" or "ophthalmologist." The AVMA will also be notified to update their records of specialists boarded by the ACVO.
- (c) A Mandatory Applicant who has lost Diplomate certification must cease the use of all ACVO- and ABVO-owned trademarks and copyrights, and may no longer describe themselves as a "specialist" or "ophthalmologist." Such designations and trademarks must be removed from promotional materials, business cards, websites, and social media of the Mandatory Applicant within 30 days of the loss of certification. The MOC Committee will monitor the removal of these trademarks and designations, and will notify the ABVO of any non-compliance.
- (d) A list of Mandatory Applicants who have lost certification, and the year that certification was lost, will be maintained on the ABVO website for public reference.
- (e) A Mandatory Applicant whose MOC application is not approved after an additional 24-month application cycle (see section 6.08 of this document) may permanently lose their Diplomate status.

Any Mandatory Applicant's resubmission approved by the MOC within 24 months of a revocation of Diplomate status will immediately reinstate that status, along with all rights and privileges afforded by it, upon formal receipt of written notification by the ABVO.



- (f) Any Mandatory Applicant who has been denied certification by the ABVO may file an appeal with the Appeals Committee.
- (g) Voluntary Applicants (board-certified prior to 2015) for MOC may elect to not maintain their certification without penalties at any time.

## **7.00 ABVO APPEALS COMMITTEE**

### **7.01 Statement of Purpose**

The purpose of the ABVO Appeals Committee is to complete a fair, transparent and expeditious review of an appeal by an “individual” or “interested party”. They shall do this by considering whether the ABVO or one of its Committees has ruled erroneously by:

- (a) Disregarding the current Policies and Procedures of the ABVO or relevant ABVO Committee.
- (b) Failing to properly consider relevant evidence and documentation.

An “individual” or “interested party” is defined as a(n):

- (a) ACVO Diplomate.
- (b) ABVO Resident.
- (c) Provisional Resident.
- (d) Veterinarian who has completed all or part of a RTP.
- (e) Examination Applicant.
- (f) Examination Candidate.
- (g) Applicant for Maintenance of Certification.
- (h) Any person who, upon application to the ABVO Executive Board is granted standing as an “individual” or “interested party” in the sole discretion of the ABVO Executive Board acting reasonably upon written submissions for such standing by such person.

### **7.02 Committee Objectives**

- (a) To review in a timely and unbiased manner, decisions or actions by the ABVO Executive Board and its Committees that have been imposed upon an individual or interested party who objects to such decision or actions, and petitions for reconsideration in accordance with these Policies and Procedures.

- (b) To affirm, modify or reverse the action or decision of the ABVO or its respective Committee. An action or decision shall be affirmed if the Appeals Committee determines that it is within a reasonable range of decisions or actions that would be made based upon the initial investigation. A decision or action shall be modified or reversed on the basis that, upon review by the Appeals Committee, such action or decision was deemed unreasonable, erroneous or failed to comply with the policies of the ABVO Executive Board or the relevant ABVO Committee.

### **7.03 Committee Membership**

The Appeals Committee shall be composed of voting member Diplomates of the American College of Veterinary Ophthalmologists (ACVO) in good standing, and a (non-veterinary) Public Member. Diplomates who are currently serving on the ABVO Executive Board or on an ABVO Committee and ACVO Diplomates serving on the ACVO Board of Regents are not eligible to serve on the Appeals Committee. The Appeals Committee shall consist of a Chairperson, four (4) other ACVO Diplomates, one of whom is an alternate member to serve in instances of conflicts (per 7.04) and a Public Member. The purpose of the Public Member is to protect and preserve the public interest relevant to matters of appeal. Nominations for committee members or replacement members and the Public Regent shall be forwarded to the ABVO Executive Board for consideration. Final appointment of the Committee Chairperson, members, and the Public Member to the Appeals Committee is the responsibility of the ABVO Executive Board. In making appointments to the Appeals Committee, the ABVO Executive Board shall endeavor to reflect a diverse membership balanced relative to age, experience, and emphasis upon practice, education, research, or other endeavors within veterinary ophthalmology. Each Committee Member shall serve a term of 3 years with staggered appointments. Members may serve up to two (2) consecutive terms. The Public Member may serve consecutive terms without limitation. Terms may be shortened as necessary to maintain staggered committee member terms. At least 1 year of Appeals Committee service experience is required to serve as Committee Chair or Vice Chair. The Chair and Vice Chair terms are each one (1) year and to be served consecutively. Only the Public Member shall not serve as Chair. Chairmanship shall be determined as outlined in sections 2.05(b and c) of this document.

- (a) The Chair of the Committee will serve as the principal administrative officer for the Committee and is responsible for ensuring that these Administrative Procedures are followed. The Chair presides at, and participates in, all meetings and hearings of the Appeals Committee. The Chair is responsible directly and exclusively to the ABVO Executive Board.

### **7.04 Conflicts of Interest and Confidentiality**

Each member of the Appeals Committee shall immediately disclose to the Committee

any existing, real, perceived or potential conflict of interest involving the appellant or the appeal. Any member of the Appeals Committee who has a conflict shall be recused from participating in any aspect of the appeal. In such an event, the alternate member will serve. The appeal decision and the reasons therefore shall be kept confidential and disclosed only to the ABVO Executive Board, the relevant ABVO Committee, and the appellant. Breach of confidentiality or conflict of interest shall constitute sufficient cause for the removal of Committee Member from the Appeals Committee.

## **7.05 Administrative Procedures**

The Administrative Procedures maintain the structure and operation of the Appeals Committee and specify procedures followed by the Appeals Committee in managing appeals filed by an individual or interested party. The appellant is required to comply strictly with the Procedure for Appeals. Failure to comply with these Procedures shall, at the sole discretion of the Appeals Committee, constitute sufficient cause to dismiss any appeal.

## **7.06 Procedure for Appeals**

- (a) An individual or interested party who objects to a decision of the Executive Board or an ABVO Committee has the right to appeal to the Appeals Committee. The individual or interested party may, at his or her option, petition the Appeals Committee to reconsider any decision including, but not limited to, the residency program approval, training, credentialing, examining, certifying, or MOC process.
- (b) The individual or interested party desiring to appeal an adverse decision or action shall adhere to the following procedures:
  - 1. Appeals may be based only on grounds that the ABVO or one of its Committees has ruled erroneously by:
    - a. Disregarding the current Policies and Procedures of the ABVO or relevant ABVO Committee.
    - b. Failing to properly consider relevant evidence and documentation.
  - 2. Appeals based upon the content of or assessment of performance on the ABVO Certifying examination will not be considered.
  - 3. The Notice of Appeal shall be digital, addressed to the ABVO Appeals Committee, and sent by email to the ABVO office at the current email address. Digital proof of receipt by the ABVO office is required to confirm the filing of the notice.
  - 4. It is the responsibility of the individual or interested party requesting the

appeal to ensure the Notice of Appeal is filed within thirty (30) days of the delivery of the decision being appealed. The delivery date of the appealed decision shall be verified by digital proof of receipt notification. Appeals received after the 30-day deadline will not be considered.

5. The Notice of Appeal must be written and shall include a statement of the grounds for reconsideration, and written documentation, if any, in support of the appeal. Supporting documents and evidence shall be included with the Notice of Appeal at the time of submission. New or additional supporting evidence presented after the initial ruling by the respective ABVO Committee will only be considered by the Appeals Committee if it relates to the reason why such written evidence was not available at the time of the decision appealed from.
6. The Notice of Appeal shall contain the following information and be in the form set out in the Notice of Appeal Form:
  - i. A description of the decision being appealed
  - ii. The date of the decision being reviewed
  - iii. The reason(s) the decision is alleged to be erroneous
  - iv. Any written submissions of the appellant in support of the appeal
  - v. A statement of the corrective action(s) sought
  - vi. Copies of relevant documentation
7. Requests for appeal shall be acted upon by the ABVO Appeals Committee within thirty (30) days of the receipt of the request. The Appeals Committee may extend this time period an additional thirty (30) days, for good cause, provided written notification is made to the appellant. The written decision of the Appeals Committee together with the reasons therefore shall be forwarded to the appellant by certified mail or by email with digital receipt within ten (10) days of the decision having been made.
8. The decision of the Appeals Committee shall be final and there is no further right of appeal.

## **7.07 Review Process**

- (a) **Preliminary Disposition.** The Appeals Committee Chair shall conduct an initial review of each appeal to determine if all procedural / administrative requirements

for further review are satisfied. The Chair has the right to, but is not obliged to seek additional information, in any form, or clarification from the appellant, respective ABVO Committee, ABVO Executive Board, or any other source regarding the initial decision being appealed from.

- (b) In the event that the Chair concludes that the appeal satisfies all procedural / administrative requirements for further review, the Chair shall notify the members of the Appeals Committee of the appeal. In the event that the Chair concludes that all procedural / administrative requirements were not satisfied for further review, the request for appeal shall not be considered by the Committee and shall be returned to the appellant for further revision/completeness so that the appellant can comply with all procedural requirements. Any revisions to an appeal shall be received by the ABVO Office within thirty (30) days following delivery of the appealed decision, as stipulated in 7.06 (b)3. All resubmitted requests for appeal received after the 30-day deadline will not be considered. Notice of such decision shall be provided to the ABVO Executive Board or the relevant ABVO Committee.
- (c) Meetings of the Appeals Committee shall be called upon by notice to Committee Members by the Committee Chair and will include a copy of the agenda for the meeting together with a copy of the notice of appeal. The Appeals Committee may, at its discretion, review any aspect, portion, or all of the material involved in the decision(s) being the subject matter of the appeal, having regard to the content of the notice of appeal and any other documentary evidence presented in connection with the decision appealed from. The Committee may, but shall not be obliged to, request additional information considered necessary to make reasonable findings.
- (d) All written communications shall be sealed and marked “Confidential.”
- (e) Review of a decision is not a judicial proceeding. Legal rules of evidence and procedure do not apply. The appeal review shall be limited in its scope to grounds cited in the notice of appeal and the review by the Appeals Committee will include relevant documentary evidence and written submissions.
- (f) A quorum consists of all appointed Committee members. Voting is by majority of the votes of the Appeals Committee. Mail (e-mail) voting without a meeting is permitted where all Committee members submit mail (e-mail) votes.
- (g) The appellant or other relevant individuals may, at the discretion of the Appeals Committee, be invited to appear at a meeting of the Appeals Committee or to

participate in a conference, teleconference, or videoconference with the Committee for the purpose of clarifying any of the written submissions set out in the notice of appeal.

- (h) The Appeals Committee shall notify the ABVO Executive Board and the Chair(s) of the respective ABVO Committee involved in the original decision of its final decision.

## **7.08 Indemnification and Insurance**

All Appeals Committee members, staff, and other individuals engaged in review at the written request of the Chair, are indemnified and defended by the ABVO against liability arising from Appeals Committee-related activities to the extent provided by the Bylaws of the ABVO for the Executive Board, Officers, ABVO committee members, employees, and agents. The ABVO maintains indemnification insurance against such liability.

## **7.09 Financial Reimbursement**

Appeals Committee members shall be reimbursed for expenses.

## **7.10 Award of Costs**

The Appeals Committee has no jurisdiction to award costs for or against the appellant.

## **8.00 MANAGEMENT POLICIES**

### **8.01 Replacement Diplomat Certificates**

Approved by the ABVO Members at the fall board meeting in 2017, requests for replacement certificates can be granted to a Diplomat if a sworn statement and proof of name change (E.g., driver's license; passport) was provided, and if the original certificate was returned. A fee of \$100 will be collected for all such requests. Diplomates should contact the ABVO office if this service is needed and a Replacement Certificate form should be requested.