NATURE AND SCOPE OF THE EXAMINATION - 2024

The ABVO Certifying Examination is offered annually to candidates who have successfully completed all requirements as dictated by the Residency and Credentials Committees. The examination consists of three separate parts: Image Recognition (IR), Multiple Choice (MC), and Practical. The examination is constructed to evaluate the candidate's proficiency and knowledge of elements considered relevant and important to a veterinary ophthalmologist.

Image Recognition

The IR part of the Examination is designed to evaluate ability to identify, assess, and problem-solve clinical material.

It 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. Candidates are given 2.5 (two and one half) hours to complete each of the three sections.

The major demands of the IR include identification, assessment, and problem-solving. Candidates are asked to respond to structured questions with a short answer after viewing one or more images. Generally, candidates are asked to give one to several answers for each image. The images used on the IR part of the examination include clinical photographs of an eye or patient; fundus photographs; gonio photographs; slit lamp photographs; photographs of imaging techniques and other special diagnostic techniques; cytologic specimens, and gross and microscopic (photomicrographs) pathology specimens.

Questions may include, list the lesions or abnormalities; develop a list of differentials for the disease process; give the most likely etiologic diagnosis, cause, or pathogenesis; give a morphologic diagnosis; list appropriate therapy for a specific condition; identify the surgical technique, surgical instrument, surgical principle, or surgical complication.

The IR examination is administered through the software program ExamSoft. Each digital image, and associated question(s), is graded in-person by at least three exam committee (EC) members. The passing point is determined using Angoff and Hofstee validation methods.

Multiple Choice

The MC part of the examination is designed to evaluate the candidate's knowledge of current literature and basic science information relevant to veterinary ophthalmology.

A list of journals and textbooks from which questions are generated is posted on the ABVO website, under the heading *ABVO Resident Reading List*. All journal-based questions are from articles published up to seven calendar years prior to the year of the examination. **For the purposes of the 2024 examination, the publication date of a journal article is considered the date the article appeared in print, not the date**

of issue (DOI). (e.g., questions for the 2024 exam will be taken from manuscripts with a publication date from January 2017 through December 2023).

The MC part of the examination consists of 250 multiple-choice questions covering the following disciplines: anatomy/embryology, physiology, neuro-ophthalmology, surgery, pharmacology, pathology, medical ophthalmology, and diagnostics. The MC is given in two sections each comprising approximately 125 questions. Questions from the disciplines listed above are randomized to the two sections. Candidates are given approximately 3.5 (three and one half) hours to complete each section.

The specific content of the MC questions follows a Blueprint approved by the examination committee and is based upon a job task analysis of ACVO Diplomates.

The MC examination is administered through the software program ExamSoft. The questions are graded automatically. The passing point is determined using Angoff and Hofstee validation methods.

Practical

The Practical part of the examination is designed to evaluate proficiency in ophthalmic surgical techniques.

The Practical consists of two sections: intraocular and extraocular surgery. The extraocular procedure is a *corneal conjunctival transposition (CCT)*. The intraocular procedure is an *extracapsular lens extraction (ECLE).* There is a separate room/station for each of the two surgical procedures.

All surgeries are performed on cadaver (calf, pig, rabbit, dog, cat, or other appropriate species) eyes; every attempt is made to provide fresh eyes to candidates. An operating microscope, stool/chair (not necessarily with arms, and a stand for organizing instruments are provided at each surgical station. The candidate is required to supply <u>all </u>necessary surgical instruments and consumables including irrigating solution, suture material, blades, gloves, etc. An area is provided for candidates to set up their instruments and clean them after each surgery. Instruments/consumables will need to be carried from one surgical station to the next. Failure to bring the necessary supplies may count against the candidate.

Examiners assess the candidate's knowledge of the components of each surgical procedure, primarily evaluating the surgical technique. A rubric for each surgery is provided on the ABVO website under the headings *ABVO Intraocular Rubric* or *ABVO Extraocular Rubric.* Candidates are given 50 (fifty) minutes to set up and perform the surgical procedure. All time limits are strictly enforced.

Three examiners will grade each surgery. One grader will act as a surgical assistant, two graders will view the surgery on a video monitor in the same room. Conflicts of interest for candidates and examiners are considered, candidates are also identified by number, not by name, to try to assure anonymity.

Both surgeries must be passed to successfully complete the Practical part of the examination. The passing point for each surgery is 70. If a candidate passes one surgery but not the other, only the surgery failed

will need to be repeated in the future.

ADDITIONAL DETAILS regarding the ABVO Certifying Examination are available on the ABVO website. Please refer to the ABVO Policies and Procedures document, specifically, *section: 5. ABVO Examination Committee.*