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**American Board of Veterinary Specialties (ABVS) Mission Statement and Preface**

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**ABVS MISSION STATEMENT AND PREFACE**

The American Board of Veterinary Specialties (ABVS) of the American Veterinary Medical Association (AVMA) recognizes and encourages the development of recognized veterinary specialty organizations (RVSOs) promoting advanced levels of competency in well-defined areas of study or practice categories to provide the public with exceptional veterinary service.

The Policies and Procedures are designed to improve communication and understanding between the AVMA, AVMA members, RVSOs, and the public. This manual will be particularly useful for specialty organizations seeking AVMA recognition.

The Policies include the current description of the AVMA ABVS from the AVMA Liaison Manual and the Guidelines for Establishment, Recognition, and Supervision of Veterinary Specialty Organizations.

The Procedures describe the general operation of the ABVS. The Procedures may be particularly helpful to newly recognized veterinary specialty organizations of the ABVS.

Suggestions on how the Policies and Procedures can be improved are welcomed by the ABVS.
POLICIES OF THE AMERICAN BOARD OF VETERINARY SPECIALTIES

I. History and Description of the American Board of Veterinary Specialties

In 1950, the AVMA Board of Directors received applications for recognition from the first two veterinary specialty organizations. These applications were from the American College of Veterinary Pathologists (ACVP) dated February 10, 1950, and from the American Board of Veterinary Public Health (ABVPH) dated July 31, 1950. The applications were referred to the Council on Education (COE) and the Association of Deans of American Veterinary Colleges for recommendations. In 1951, the AVMA House of Representatives approved criteria for recognition of veterinary specialty organizations. At the same meeting, the House of Representatives approved recognition of the ACVP and the ABVPH, and assigned the responsibility of reviewing future applications to the COE and the AVMA Board of Directors (BOD). In 1957, upon the recommendation of the COE and the Board of Directors, the AVMA House of Representatives granted recognition to the American College of Laboratory Animal Medicine (ACLAM).

In 1959, the COE recommended, and the House of Delegates approved, the establishment of an Advisory Board on Veterinary Specialties. The resolution establishing the Advisory Board on Veterinary Specialties also specified its composition and outlined its duties, and directed the COE to review and take action on recommendations submitted to it by the Advisory Board on Veterinary Specialties. The initial meeting of the Advisory Board on Veterinary Specialties occurred on February 20, 1960. In 1961, the House approved two documents developed by the Advisory Board on Veterinary Specialties: one was titled “Procedures for Establishment of Veterinary Specialty Organizations,” and the other, “Rules for Organization and Operation of the Advisory Board on Veterinary Specialties.” The Procedures document restated the criteria approved by the Board of Directors in 1951. The rules, criteria, and procedures have been updated, revised, and approved by the House of Delegates in 1969, 1981, 1985, 1988, 1990, 1991, and 1992. The Advisory Board of Veterinary Specialties was renamed the American Board of Veterinary Specialties (ABVS) in 1992. The most recent update of the rules, standards, and procedures of the ABVS were approved by the AVMA Board of Directors in 2015.

A. Relationships of organizational units in veterinary specialization (see Figure 1, page 34).

B. The objectives and duties of the ABVS are:

1. Establish and evaluate criteria for determining whether a proposed specialty organization fills a recognizable need and represents a distinct area of specialization in veterinary medicine.

2. Determine whether a sufficient number of qualified and interested veterinarians exist to form a new recognized veterinary specialty organization (RVSO), or a recognized veterinary specialty (RVS) within a currently existing RVSO.

3. Furnish advice and assistance to those groups submitting petitions for establishment and recognition of veterinary specialty organizations. The ABVS will:
   a. Provide guidance and encourage development under the AVMA umbrella.
   b. Encourage emerging groups, when appropriate, to organize as an RVS under an existing RVSO.
   c. Encourage existing RVSOs to embrace appropriate emerging specialties and subspecialties.
4. Review petitions to ensure that the essential standards established by the ABVS for recognition as a veterinary specialty organization are fulfilled.

5. Make appropriate recommendations to the AVMA BOD concerning the granting of AVMA recognition to veterinary specialty organizations.

6. Receive and review annual reports from all AVMA-recognized veterinary specialty organizations (including, where appropriate, their independent certification boards), and evaluate a detailed, in-depth review of each organization at 5-year intervals, to ensure continued compliance with the ABVS standards for recognition of veterinary specialty organizations.

7. Ascertain through annual reports, five-year reviews, and interim reports that each RVSO's (or their independent certification board's) procedures for credentialing, examination, and appeals are administered fairly and in compliance with the standards of the ABVS.

8. Offer a neutral location (at AVMA headquarters) for mediation between candidates or applicants for specialty board certification and RVSOs when both parties are agreeable.

9. Educate the public about specialty services provided by diplomates of recognized veterinary specialty organizations.

C. Representation on the ABVS

Membership and voting privileges are accorded to one representative from each AVMA-recognized veterinary specialty organization. An alternate shall be designated by each RVSO to attend ABVS meetings if the representative is unavailable. Where an RVSO has established an independent certification board, the RVSO's representative to ABVS will serve as the liaison between the certification board, the parent RVSO, and the ABVS. This responsibility shall include providing the certification board's annual and 5-year in-depth reports to ABVS.

D. Liaisons to the ABVS

One liaison representative from the COE, one liaison representative from the AVMA BOD and one liaison representative from the Association of American Veterinary Medical Colleges (AAVMC) will attend meetings of the ABVS. The liaison representatives are non-voting members.

E. Appointment and tenure of representatives

Representatives and alternates shall be appointed by each RVSO for renewable four-year (minimum) terms. Terms begin and end at the close of the annual session of the AVMA House of Delegates, which is held in conjunction with the AVMA annual convention. Representatives and alternates must be AVMA members in good standing, fulfill all requirements for the position at the time of the appointment, and understand the assignment and be willing to serve. In addition, it is recommended that each ABVS representative be a member of the RVSO's governing body or be invited to serve in a manner that ensures communication between each RVSO and the ABVS occurs in a consistent and timely manner. Each RVSO must convey current contact information for existing and newly appointed representatives and alternates to AVMA staff by July 1 of each year. To ensure continuity of ABVS operations, RVSOs shall appoint representatives and alternates who are committed to fulfilling the responsibilities of the
position for the full term elected. However, if a representative or alternate cannot complete the term of his/her appointment, the RVSO will appoint a new representative and/or alternate to fill the unexpired term and must notify AVMA staff in writing within 10 days of when that new information is available.

F. ABVS meetings

The annual meeting of the ABVS is held during the late winter or early spring. Other meetings of the full ABVS may be scheduled as web and/or teleconferences throughout the year as needed. The ABVS Executive Committee and the Committee on Development of New Specialties meet by web and/or teleconference during the fall of each year to prepare for the annual meeting of the ABVS.

G. Reports to the AVMA Board of Directors

After each annual ABVS meeting, AVMA staff prepares a report, in the form of recommendations for action by the AVMA BOD, for review and approval by the ABVS chair. These recommendations will be placed on the agenda of the next meeting of the BOD.

H. ABVS meeting expenses

Except for the COE representative, AVMA will reimburse airfare (or mileage) to and from Schaumburg and meal and lodging in Schaumburg for one representative, or the alternate from each RVSO, (but not both), and the AAVMC liaison, to each regularly scheduled ABVS meeting. All other expenses (travel to and from the departure airport, parking, etc.) will be the responsibility of the representative and their respective RVSO. AVMA will reimburse all expenses of the COE representative.

II. Standards for the Recognition of Veterinary Specialty Organizations

A. Definition of a recognized veterinary specialty organization (RVSO)

An AVMA-recognized veterinary specialty organization that meets the standards established by the ABVS for certification of veterinarians in a specialized field of veterinary medicine.

B. Standards for recognition of veterinary specialty organizations by the AVMA

For a veterinary specialty organization (or their independent certification board) to be recognized by the AVMA, they must:

1. Demonstrate that improved veterinary medical services will be provided to the public.

2. Serve a clearly defined need within the profession.

3. Have an adequate number of potential diplomates to fulfill the functions and expenses required of a certification body, including verification of candidate credentials, examination development and administration, and provision of an appeal process independent from the credentialing and examination processes.

4. Represent a distinct and identifiable specialty of veterinary medicine, one that is supported by a base of scientific knowledge and practice that is acceptable to the profession and the public.
5. Establish and abide by clearly stated standards for certification of diplomates.
   a. The RVSO (or their independent certification board) must examine only veterinarians who:
      i. Have a degree necessary for the practice of veterinary medicine in some state, province, territory, or possession of the United States, Canada, or other country.
      ii. Meet the education, training, and experience requirements established by the RVSO (or their independent certification board).
      iii. Demonstrate unquestionable moral character and ethical professional behavior.
   b. The RVSO (or their independent certification board) must certify only veterinarians who have demonstrated, by meeting established training and/or experience requirements and by attaining acceptable scores on comprehensive examinations administered by the RVSO, their fitness and ability to practice the specialty.

6. Ensure that all training or experience requirements and all prerequisites for examination serve the purpose of assessing the competency of the candidate.

7. Establish routes through education, training, and experience to qualify candidates for examination. Information about these routes must be available to any potential candidate.

8. Not require any period that involves merely a passage of time (waiting period) between successful completion of formal training and eligibility to sit for examination. Experience requirements must be clearly defined, relevant to the objectives of the specialty, and amenable to evaluation. Knowledge of those requirements must be readily attainable by potential candidates.

9. Notify candidates promptly of any deficiencies in credentials that prevent their examination or certification by the RVSO (or their independent certification board).

10. Adhere to the following examination procedures:
    a. Examinations must reflect the professional competence expected of the diplomate based on a job/task analysis performed at least once every 10 years (Proviso: recognized veterinary specialty organizations have until December 31, 2016 to be in compliance with this criterion).
    b. Time between final credentials decisions and the examination date must be sufficient (not less than 120 days) to permit adequate examination preparation or appeal of an adverse decision.
    c. If a candidate’s credentials are denied and an appeal is filed, the RVSO must review this appeal and inform the candidate of their decision at least 45 days prior to the examination date.
    d. Candidates must receive a content outline (blueprint) of the exam and exam format prior to the exam.
e. Candidates must be informed prior to the examination of the passing point, or, if this is not determined in advance, the method of setting the passing point. The passing point may be adjusted lower than a previously published passing point, but not higher, after administering the exam.

f. Avoid personal conflict, or the appearance of conflict, that could affect results of examinations.

g. Candidates must be notified of their examination results contemporaneously. Regardless of notification method, each candidate who took the examination must be notified of his/her result prior to notifying the general membership or the parent RVSO if certification is performed by an independent certification board. A reasonable time limit must be established (not to exceed 45 days) for notifying candidates with the results of the examination.

h. Candidates who do not successfully complete the examination (including any oral examination), must, upon request, be provided with an explanation of the deficiencies that prevented their passing the examination. The procedure for obtaining this review must be published by the veterinary specialty organization (or their independent certification board) prior to the examination.

i. All candidates must be informed of their remaining eligibility and reapplication procedures.

j. Accommodate reasonable requests from applicants with documented disabilities for special test considerations in accordance with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). Model language for ADA requests is provided in appendix F.

11. Provide certification attesting to diplomate status:

a. There shall be one certification for each RVSO and/or recognized veterinary specialty (RVS), should the RVSO have more than one RVS, indicating the individual is certified in the AVMA-recognized specialty.

b. Certification of diplomate status will be issued by the certifying entity of the RVSO.

12. Have a mandatory program for maintenance of certification (MOC). Beginning no later than 2016 all awarded diplomate certification must be time dated. A MOC program requires actions by newly-certified diplomates to maintain their certification that includes an evaluation process by their RVSO to ensure compliance. For those RVSOs with an independent certification board, the process for implementing MOC may be relegated to that board.

Each RVSO develops their own standards and protocol for their MOC program based on the following characteristics:

a. Examinations may be used but are not required.

b. A point system may be used and points may be accrued in a variety of
ways (e.g., continuing education attendance or presentations, publications, serving on exam committees, etc.) as determined by the RVSO.

c. Evaluation of diplomates for MOC will occur every 10 years from the date of their initial certification (or renewal of certification), but an RVSO may choose a shorter period of time if desired.

d. An honor system for compliance, with diplomates self-declaring completion of requirements, is acceptable. However, if an honor system is used, random audits of diplomat compliance must be performed at a level determined by the RVSO.

e. MOC will not be retroactive to previously certified diplomates. That is, certificates awarded prior to the initiation of an MOC program (i.e., certificates that are not time dated) cannot be withdrawn for noncompliance with the MOC program.

f. RVSOs are encouraged to initiate a system of voluntary replacement of original certificates that are not time dated with certificates requiring maintenance. Procedures for certification maintenance will be the same as those required for diplomates attaining certification after the program has been initiated.

13. Establish a formal appeal procedure for candidates in case of an adverse decision by the RVSO (or the independent certification board). The appeal procedure must appear in the constitution, bylaws, and/or policies and procedures documents (e.g., policy and procedure manuals, standard operating procedures) of the organization, and must accompany each application form and notification of an adverse decision. For those RVSOs with an independent certification board, the appeals process must be defined the same in the operation documents of both entities.

14. Encourage and implement special training beyond the professional veterinary degree to enhance the ability of candidates to meet certification requirements and to maintain the competence of diplomates. The RVSO may provide educational or training programs to enhance the preparation of candidates; however, the RVSO must not require candidates to complete educational or training programs provided by the RVSO for eligibility for certification.

15. Avoid contracts or agreements leading to activities outside the scope of the stated objectives of the RVSO.

16. The constitution and/or bylaws and/or policies and procedures documents (e.g., policy and procedure manuals, standard operating procedures) of RVSOs and RVSs and any independent certification board created by an RVSO or an RVS must contain elements as specified in section II, part D9 of the Policies of the ABVS. Organizations must notify the ABVS of all changes in the RVSO’s, the RVS’s, and the independent certification board’s constitution, bylaws, and/or other policies and procedures documents at the time of the next annual report. Annual reports must include previous and newly accepted wording.

17. Be legally incorporated as a not-for-profit educational organization within a state
or district of the United States, and have a determination made as to the federal
tax status of the organization. Groups are encouraged to incorporate and secure
tax exemption under section 501(C)(3) or 501 (C) (6) of the Internal Revenue
Service code.

C. Procedures for obtaining AVMA recognition of a veterinary specialty organization

Procedures include a letter of intent, a period of public comment, and a complete, formal
petition.

1. A group of veterinarians seeking AVMA recognition for a veterinary specialty
organization must submit a letter of intent before November 1 containing the
following information:

   a. Acknowledgement that the organizing group has read and understands
      the standards that the ABVS applies for recommendation of AVMA
      recognition.
   b. A statement that the organizing group has read the procedures for
      obtaining AVMA recognition.
   c. Justification that the proposed specialty organization is distinct from
      presently recognized RVSOs or their RVSs.
   d. A list of the organizing committee members and their credentials (see II.
      Part D1 and D2 of the Policies of the ABVS).
   e. Specify if there is going to be an affiliated, independent certifying body
      and, if so, the proposed relationship between the RVSO or RVS and the
      certifying agency.

2. Once a letter of intent has been received, the chair of the ABVS will assign two
members of the ABVS to liaise with the group and assist them in preparing a
petition for recognition as described in Section II, parts B and D of the Policies
of the ABVS.

   a. The liaison(s) will submit a written report each year to the ABVS
      Committee on the Development of New Specialties (CDNS) to document
      the group’s progress toward developing a petition for recognition as a
      veterinary specialty organization.
   b. The liaisons’ report will be presented at the annual ABVS meeting.

In the circumstance that two or more groups approach the ABVS concurrently
with the intent to seek recognition for the same (or a very similar) specialty in
veterinary medicine, the ABVS will appoint the same liaisons to each group to
determine if the groups will work together to create a unified petition for
submission. The ABVS will not recognize duplicate or redundant RVSOs.

3. Once the proposed specialty organization is ready to move forward with their
petition, a period of public comment is initiated before the complete, formal
petition is submitted. Public comment is used to gauge the need for, and public
acceptance of a new veterinary specialty from diverse stakeholders. The
organizing committee of the petitioning veterinary specialty organization must
submit the information found within Section II, Part D1, D2, D4 through D8, and
D12 of the Policies of the ABVS for evaluation by the CDNS by November 1, in
order to initiate the period of public comment.

   a. The ABVS CDNS will review the information requested in Section II, Part
C3 of the Policies for completeness at their late fall meeting; and if accepted, the period of public comment will begin shortly after the beginning of the next year. The CDNS will solicit information and opinion from the following groups:

i. The AVMA membership through an announcement in the Journal of the American Veterinary Medical Association and on the AVMA Web site.

ii. Existing RVSOs.

iii. Appropriate veterinary societies and academies.

iv. Appropriate educational, research, governmental, military, commercial, and public bodies.

b. The CDNS will review the information and opinions gathered by public comment and forward it to the petitioning veterinary specialty organization by September 1. Concerns and issues raised by the public must be addressed by the petitioning organization in the formal petition for AVMA recognition.

4. A complete, formal petition (see section IV, part D of the Operating Procedures of the ABVS) must be submitted to the ABVS no more than four years after submission of the letter of intent. The ABVS may grant an extension of the four-year limit, if an extension is requested in writing that explains the necessity. In addition, the petition must be submitted to the liaison(s) for comments prior to submission to the ABVS (see section IV, part D of the Operating Procedures of the ABVS).

a. The petition must be submitted to the ABVS by November 1 for consideration during the late fall meeting of the CDNS.

b. If the submission criteria in Section II Parts B and D of the Policies of the ABVS are met, the chair of the CDNS will assign two reviewers, one of which will be a member of the CDNS and the other an at-large ABVS representative, to evaluate the petition prior to the next full meeting of the ABVS.

c. The two assigned reviewers will present their findings and recommendations at the next annual ABVS meeting.

5. The ABVS considers the reviewers’ report of the complete, formal petition for recognition as a veterinary specialty organization at their annual meeting.

a. Representatives of the organizing group will be invited to attend, at their own expense, the meeting of the ABVS when their petition will be considered.

b. Following discussion, the ABVS votes to accept or reject the formal petition.

i. If the petition is found to be incomplete, the ABVS will make appropriate suggestions to the organizing committee regarding additions or corrections.

ii. If the petition is found to be complete (as described in Section II Part D of the Policies of the ABVS) and the petitioning organization is found to meet all of the standards in section II, Part B of the Policies, the ABVS will forward the petition along with a recommendation for provisional recognition to the Board of Directors.
6. The Board of Directors will review the petition and the ABVS recommendation for recognition. If the BOD does not approve AVMA recognition of the petitioning organization, the petition will be returned to the ABVS with a statement of deficiencies identified.

7. If provisional recognition has been granted by the AVMA BOD, the newly recognized veterinary specialty organization may take any necessary steps to complete formalization of its structure and proceed to function under its constitution and/or bylaws. Including the creation of an independent certification board if that was outlined in their approved petition. The RVSO (or their independent certification board) may examine and certify candidates, collect dues, send a representative to ABVS meetings, and conduct other business as specified in its constitution and/or bylaws, and/or other policies and procedures documents.

8. Only those individuals completing the credentialing requirements and certification examinations after provisional recognition is achieved shall be considered board certified specialists in the RVSO field of veterinary medicine.

9. After a minimum of four years, but not more than ten years, under provisional recognition, a veterinary specialty organization may submit a request for full recognition to the AVMA. The ABVS may grant an extension of the 10-year time limit, if an extension is requested in writing. A petition for full recognition must be organized in the format described under the guidelines for five-year in-depth reviews (see section V, part B of the Operating Procedures of the ABVS), and must indicate that the organization is fully functional and fulfilling its stated objectives.

10. The ABVS will review the request for full recognition and make appropriate suggestions to the provisionally recognized veterinary specialty organization concerning any necessary additions or corrections. If the documentation indicates that the organization meets all of the criteria in section II, parts B and D of the Policies of the ABVS, and is functioning effectively, the ABVS will forward the petition with a recommendation for approval to the AVMA BOD.

11. The AVMA BOD reviews the request and the recommendations of the ABVS. If the BOD review is favorable and it appears that the specialty organization meets the criteria listed in Section II, Parts B and D of the Policies of the ABVS, and is functioning effectively, the BOD will approve that the requesting organization be granted full recognition by the AVMA. If the BOD review is not favorable, the petition is returned to the ABVS with a statement of deficiencies identified.

12. The AVMA BOD makes the final decision to grant or not grant recognition to a veterinary specialty organization. Decisions of the BOD are reported annually to the AVMA House of Delegates.

13. Adverse decisions regarding recognition of new, or existing, veterinary specialty organizations - At any point during review of a petition for recognition of a veterinary specialty organization (as described in section II, parts C5 through C13 of the Policies of the ABVS) or review of an existing AVMA-recognized veterinary specialty organization, adverse decisions may be rendered. The entity denying approval will notify the organization of the adverse decision and the reasons for it within 30 days of the decision. The organization will be informed of its rights of appeal under the established general appellate
procedures of the AVMA. The organization may take action to correct the deficiencies identified and resubmit a request for recognition; may petition the agency that made the adverse decision for reconsideration; or may appeal to the AVMA Board of Governors for review of the decision. Petitions for reconsideration or additional review must be made in accordance with the established general appellate procedures of the AVMA.

D. Contents for a petition for recognition of a new veterinary specialty organization

1. A veterinary specialty organization seeking AVMA recognition must designate an organizing committee limited in number to those essential to conduct the business of the specialty and to achieve provisional recognition. Members of the organizing committee must be veterinarians recognized as exceptionally qualified and who meet one or more of the following criteria:

   a. Be a professor of the proposed specialty in a college or department of veterinary medicine.

   b. Be an author of important publications resulting from research or practice in the specialty.

   c. Have at least 10 years’ experience in the specialty and, by teaching, research, or practice, have contributed substantially to the development of the specialty.

   d. Have advanced training in the specialty and have demonstrated competency through teaching, research, or practice in the specialty to which most of the individual’s professional time is devoted.

   e. The petition must contain a curriculum vitae (see Appendix A) for each member of the organizing committee.

2. Members of the organizing committee:

   a. Should include representatives from academia, research, industry, government, and the private sector where appropriate.

   b. Should come from diverse geographical areas.

   c. May include diplomates of another RVSO to assist in the organization of the new specialty but who do not wish to become a diplomate of the new specialty.

   d. Shall be no fewer than 16 for a veterinary specialty organization and no fewer than eight for a veterinary specialty.

   e. Will be “founders” of the RSVO but not be considered diplomates unless, or until, completion of the certification requirements of the RVSO

   f. May submit credentials and if accepted, sit the certification examination to become diplomates of the new specialty organization upon its recognition through examination
3. The petitioning organization must document that it meets the standards for a veterinary specialty organization recognized by the AVMA as specified in section II, parts B1 through B16, of the Policies of the ABVS. Each item must be specifically addressed.

4. The petitioning organization must document the number of potential diplomates of the specialty available and convince the ABVS that within a reasonable period of time, growth of the veterinary specialty organization will result in a number of specialists that will have an impact on organized, private, corporate, academic, industrialized, or governmental veterinary medicine and the public.

5. The petitioning organization must justify its role in fulfilling a recognizable need and demonstrate that its existence is acceptable to the profession and the public.

6. The petitioning organization must identify the base of scientific knowledge and practice that forms the basis for recognition as a specialty and distinguishes it from all existing RVSOs. It will be necessary to:
   a. Define the scientific basis of the proposed specialty.
   b. Relate the subject matter to current professional and postgraduate veterinary medical curricula.
   c. Describe how diplomates would be employed in public, institutional, and private practice (including the approximate number employed in each category, and the scientific disciplines relevant to each category).
   d. Describe current or proposed continuing education programs.

7. There must be a description of relationships and commonalities with existing RVSOs.

8. There must be an explanation of why the relationships and commonalities with existing organizations are insufficient to warrant inclusion as a veterinary specialty or veterinary subspecialty of an existing organization.

9. A copy of the proposed constitution and/or bylaws and all available policies and procedures documents must be submitted, which shall contain within these documents, at minimum:
   a. The name of the RVSO.
   b. A statement of objectives.
   c. Titles, election procedures, and duties of officers.
   d. A description of membership categories, including duties, privileges, and method of selection for each.
   e. Descriptions of qualifying routes, within and outside of standard residency or degree programs, to qualify candidates for examination in a timely manner. Descriptions must include required education, experience, publications, teaching, research, nature of supervision of the
candidate, and the qualifications of the mentor(s).

f. A description of the scope and nature of certifying examinations.

g. Procedures for establishing and amending dues and fees.

h. Causes and procedures for censuring or suspending diplomates or canceling certification.

i. Procedures for appealing adverse decisions.

j. Procedures for conducting business and meetings.

k. Procedures for amending the constitution and/or bylaws.

10. A letter of intent regarding creation of an independent certification board, if such an entity is planned, describing how that entity will be related to the parent RVSO and how its independence in the certification process will be sustained.

11. There must be a description of how the specialty plans to organize and initiate its functions (e.g., how the initial officers will perform their duties, how examinations will be prepared, administered, and monitored, and how training programs will be established). This will include a description of the relationship between the proposed RVSO and their independent certification board if one is to be created.

12. There must be evidence that facilities and programs are available for advanced training of veterinarians that will lead to certification in the veterinary specialty. A description of existing educational programs, including established postgraduate educational programs and the number of people in these programs must be provided. Objectives, measures of competence, and expected contributions and measurements of the success of such programs should be specified. Evidence for the continued existence and growth of educational programs in the veterinary specialty must be included.

13. A list of current and past officers of the organizing agency and a list of proposed founders of the veterinary specialty must be included, if applicable. Founders must be members of the organizing committee.

14. There must be a financial statement.

15. Any organization seeking new AVMA recognition as an RVSO or RVS, must represent to the AVMA that it is the owner of its name and logo and is entitled to use its name, logo and acronym in commerce; and that to the best of its knowledge and belief, no other person, firm, corporation, or association has the right to use its name in commerce, either in identical form or in such near resemblance thereto as to be likely to cause confusion, mistake, or deception.

III. Standards for the Recognition of a Veterinary Specialty under an Existing Recognized Veterinary Specialty Organization

A. Definition of a recognized veterinary specialty (RVS)
An AVMA-recognized veterinary specialty is certification of a clearly-defined unique subset of an RVSO based upon a species, discipline, or system related to that of the parent RVSO

B. Procedures for obtaining AVMA recognition of a veterinary specialty

1. A veterinary specialty seeking recognition as an RVS under the auspices of an existing RVSO may:

   a. Be recognized by the AVMA BOD under the procedures described in Section II, Part C of the Policies of the ABVS with the following exceptions to those procedures:

      i. An RVS need not be incorporated separately.

      ii. An RVS is represented on the ABVS by the representative of the parent RVSO.

      iii. An RVSO with one or more RVSs may have

          a. One constitution delineating the operations of the RVSO and separate bylaws delineating the functions and operations of each RVS, or

          b. A single constitution and bylaws clearly delineating the operations of the RVSO and the functions and operations of each RVS, or

          c. A single bylaws clearly delineating the operations of the RVSO and the functions and operations of each RVS.

   b. Have an adequate number of founding members on the veterinary specialty organizing committee to conduct the business of the veterinary specialty and to achieve provisional approval. Each founder must:

      i. Be a diplomate of the parent RVSO, or

      ii. Be a diplomate of another RVSO recognized by the AVMA, or

      iii. Have demonstrated competency through teaching, research, or practice of the veterinary specialty and meet the criteria for members of an organizing committee as specified in Section II, Part D1 of the Policies of the ABVS.

   c. A petition for immediate full recognition may be submitted by a veterinary specialty arising from a restructuring of a parent RVSO (or parent RVS). Petitions for immediate full recognition may be submitted by veterinary specialties arising from a restructuring of a parent RVSO following the procedure described in Section III, Part B7. The petition for full recognition will undergo the same review process required for an RVSO. Results of this review must indicate that the veterinary specialty is immediately able to become fully functional and can fulfill its stated objectives. Procedures for recognition will be followed as previously described in Section III, Parts B1 through B4. Section II, Parts B, C, and D will also apply. The petition must:
i. Be prepared and organized as an in-depth report (see Appendix C).

ii. Provide a statement outlining the reasons for, and benefit(s) of restructuring the RVSO into the described veterinary specialties.

iii. Describe the process by which existing RVSO diplomates may be reclassified into the respective veterinary specialties.

iv. Include an organizational chart showing the present and proposed relationships of the veterinary specialties within the RVSO.

2. Letter of Intent - Veterinarians seeking AVMA recognition of a veterinary specialty under an existing RVSO must submit a letter of intent to the AVMA at the earliest possible time. The letter should state that the organizing group has read and understands the standards that the ABVS applies for recommendation of AVMA-recognition; that the organizing group has read the procedures for obtaining AVMA-recognition; that the organizing group has the agreement of the RVSO under which they will organize; and list the members (and their credentials) of the organizing committee.

3. AVMA Liaisons to Organizing Committee – Once a letter of intent has been received, at the next meeting of the full ABVS (usually in late winter or early spring), the chair of the ABVS will assign two members as liaisons to the organizing group. The representative of the parent RVSO will liaise with the specialty group. An ABVS representative from another RVSO will be appointed as a second liaison. The liaisons shall assist the proposed RVS in preparing the petition for recognition as described in Section II, Parts B and D of the Policies of the ABVS. The liaisons shall submit a written report each year to the CDNS two weeks prior to the annual meeting of the CDNS to document progress of the specialty group’s petition for recognition.

4. Initial Petition for Recognition of the Veterinary Specialty - Within the first two years following the submission of the letter of intent, the organizing committee of the veterinary specialty should submit the information requested in Section II, Part D1 through D5 and D8 of the Policies of the ABVS for evaluation by the CDNS by November 1.

5. Public Comment - After receiving a petition for recognition of a new veterinary specialty, the ABVS will solicit comments from various stakeholders in veterinary medicine to gauge the need for, and public acceptance of, a new veterinary specialty. The organizing committee of the veterinary specialty must submit the information found within Section II, Part D1 through D5 and D8 of the Policies of the ABVS for evaluation by November 1, in order to initiate the period of public comment.

The ABVS CDNS will review the information for completeness at their annual meeting; and, if accepted, the period of public comment will begin. The CDNS will solicit information and opinion from the following groups:

a. The AVMA membership through an announcement in the Journal of the American Veterinary Medical Association and on the AVMA web site.

b. Existing RVSOs
c. Appropriate veterinary societies and academies

d. Appropriate educational, research, governmental, military, commercial, and public bodies.

The CDNS will review the information and opinions gathered by public comment and forward it to the petitioning group by September 1. Concerns and issues raised by the public must be addressed by the petitioning group in the final petition for AVMA recognition.

6. Formal Petition for Recognition – A complete, formal petition for provisional recognition of the veterinary specialty, addressing all concerns identified during the period of public comment, must be submitted to the AVMA by November 1 for consideration during the next meeting of the CDNS. The petition must include a statement of approval from the proposed parent RVSO and contain the same elements as a petition for full recognition (see Section II, Parts B and D of the Policies of the ABVS). The ABVS will review the petition presented and may make appropriate suggestions to the organizing committee regarding additions or corrections. If the petition is found to be complete (as described in Section II Part D of the ABVS P&P) and the petitioning group is found to meet all of the standards in Section II, Part B of the ABVS P&P (with the exceptions noted above in Section III. B. 1. A.), the ABVS will forward the petition along with its recommendation for provisional recognition to the AVMA BOD.

7. The AVMA BOD will review the petition and the ABVS recommendation for recognition. If the BOD does not approve AVMA recognition of the petitioning organization, the petition will be returned to the ABVS with a statement of deficiencies identified.

8. If provisional recognition is granted by the Board of Directors, the new RVS may take any necessary steps to complete formalization of its structure and proceed to function under its constitution and/or bylaws. The specialty may examine and certify candidates, collect dues, and conduct other business as specified in its constitution and/or bylaws. After a veterinary specialty is recognized, its reports (interim and annual) are included in the reports of its parent RVSO. An RVS reports directly to the ABVS only by special request.

9. After a minimum of four years but not more than ten years under provisional recognition, a veterinary specialty may submit a request for full recognition to the ABVS through its parent RVSO. The ABVS may grant an extension of the 10-year time limit, if an extension is requested in writing. A request for full recognition of a veterinary specialty will undergo the same in-depth review process required of a RVSO (see Section VI, Part B of the Policies of the ABVS) and this review must indicate that the veterinary specialty is fully functional and fulfilling its stated objectives. An interim report (see Section VI, Part C of the Policies of the ABVS) is required in addition to the in-depth report.

10. The AVMA BOD makes the final decision to grant or not grant recognition to a veterinary specialty. Decisions of the Board of Directors are reported annually to the AVMA House of Delegates.
IV. Appeal Procedures

A. The AVMA House of Delegates has determined that each AVMA-recognized veterinary specialty organization must have a published procedure to ensure due process for appeal of adverse decisions.

B. The specific language of an acceptable appeal procedure is determined by the recognized veterinary specialty organization (RVSO, see Appendix E for suggested language).

C. Changes in appeal procedures must be reported to the AVMA in the RVSO’s annual report.

D. The appeal procedure must be a part of the constitution or bylaws of the RVSO. In addition, it must be included on forms used by candidates who apply for certifying examinations.

E. The body within the RVSO reviewing appeals must be distinct from that RVSO’s current executive committee, board, or examination and credentialing committees.

F. Recognized veterinary specialty organizations are responsible for full implementation of their appeal procedures to ensure due process. The criteria for veterinary specialty organizations recognized by the AVMA should guide procedures and influence decisions in disputes between specialty organizations and dissatisfied candidates. These procedures and decisions must be fair and reasonable for all parties, in keeping with the objectives of RVSOs and the goals of the AVMA.

V. Reports of AVMA-recognized Veterinary Specialty Organizations, Veterinary Specialties, and Veterinary Subspecialties

A. Annual reports

Each fully recognized veterinary specialty organization is required to provide an annual report for the ABVS. In the case of those RVSOs that have established an independent certification board, a report from that certification board will be required as a component of the annual report from the parent RVSO. A form for the annual report is provided (see Appendix B). Reports are necessary to gather statistical data and to identify issues and potential problems and to ensure continued compliance with ABVS Standards. Reports are due by November 1 for consideration during the annual meeting of the full ABVS. Reports for fully recognized veterinary specialties must be submitted in conjunction with the report of the parent RVSO.

B. Five-year in-depth reports

Each fully recognized veterinary specialty organization (and their independent certification board, where such an entity exists) is required to submit an in-depth report of its status and activities to the ABVS at five-year intervals following full recognition. The in-depth report must be organized as outlined in Appendix C. Reports are necessary to gather current information and to assess compliance with the standards in section II, part B of the Policies of the ABVS. Reports are due by November 1 for consideration during the annual meeting of the full ABVS. Reports for fully recognized veterinary specialties must be submitted in conjunction with the report of the parent RVSO.
C. Interim reports

Veterinary specialty organizations (including those with independent certification boards) with provisional or probationary recognition by the AVMA are required to submit an interim report each year. This report must address progress toward meeting criteria (described in section II, part B of the Policies of the ABVS) required for full recognition. Reports are due by November 1 for consideration during the spring meeting of the full ABVS. A form for interim reports is included (see Appendix D). Interim reports for veterinary specialties must be submitted in conjunction with the report of the parent RVSO.

VI. Disciplinary Actions

A. As a result of findings on review of an annual or five-year in-depth report of a recognized veterinary specialty organization (RVSO) or recognized veterinary specialty (RVS), or after appropriate investigation of a complaint by a third party, the ABVS may recommend withdrawal of recognition or assignment of probationary status to a RVSO or RVS. Such actions would automatically apply to any independent certification board which is affiliated with the parent RVSO or RVS. Causes for withdrawal of recognition or change of status are:

1. Failure to meet standards for an RVSO or RVS as listed in Sections II, III, or IV, respectively, of the Policies of the ABVS.

2. Failure to promptly address or correct deficiencies identified during an annual or five-year in-depth review.

3. Actions by an RVSO or RVS that are considered detrimental to the veterinary profession or the public interest.

4. Failure to submit required reports.

B. The following procedures shall apply in considering recommendation of disciplinary action by the ABVS:

1. Notice of the proposed disciplinary action will be delivered to the president and secretary of the RVSO involved no less than 30 days prior to a regularly scheduled or special meeting of the ABVS at which the matter is to be considered. This notice will include a detailed outline of the complaint(s) received or alleged deficiencies.

2. A meeting will be held at AVMA headquarters. A majority of representatives to the ABVS must be present.

3. Representatives of the RVSO will be given an opportunity to present relevant information and their views on the matter. Travel costs for representatives of the RVSO, other than their representative to the ABVS, will be at other than AVMA expense.

4. In executive session, and in the absence of all representatives of the RVSO involved, the ABVS will discuss appropriate action(s) to recommend. Possible actions include:

   a. Conclusion of the review with no further action.
b. Recommendation to the AVMA BOD that probationary recognition is assigned to the specialty organization.

c. Recommendation to the AVMA BOD that recognition of the specialty organization is withdrawn.

5. Any recommendation forwarded to the AVMA BOD must be approved by a two-thirds majority of ABVS members present and voting.

6. Any recommendation for action forwarded to the AVMA BOD must include a full description of the reasons for the recommendation.

7. A specialty organization assigned probationary recognition must be in full compliance with all criteria within a time frame directed by the ABVS. Failure to comply within this time frame will lead to withdrawal of AVMA recognition. Extensions of this time limit may, in rare circumstances, be considered by the ABVS in response to a written request if the organization has demonstrated significant progress to correct the deficiencies and has a solid, well-constructed plan to achieve full compliance.

C. The AVMA BOD will consider each recommendation for disciplinary action forwarded by the ABVS. The BOD may:

1. Return the recommendation to the ABVS for further consideration, indicating the reasons for return of the recommendation.

2. Request from the RVSO (or its affiliated independent certification board) a written presentation of its view on the matter and the reasons why it believes the ABVS recommendation should not be approved.

3. After reviewing any presentation from the RVSO (or its independent certification board), return the recommendation and related documents to the ABVS for further consideration, or approve the ABVS’s recommendations for disciplinary action.

D. The AVMA BOD will make the final decision regarding the status of the veterinary specialty organization. Decisions of the Board of Directors are reported annually to the AVMA House of Delegates.

VII. Definitions of Terms Applied to Veterinary Specialization

A. **Academy**—An exclusive body of learned persons with the objective of promoting scholarship and service. Membership is based on scientific or scholastic achievement and exercise of professional skills. An academy is not a recognized veterinary specialty organization.

B. **Active diplomate**—A diplomate of a recognized veterinary specialty organization (RVSO) who is in good standing with that organization through fulfilling specified requirements, including dues payments, and who is active in the practice of the recognized veterinary specialty (RVS).

C. **Association**—An organization of veterinarians with the objective of advancing mutual professional interest(s).

D. **Board**—A small group of members designated by a recognized veterinary specialty organization (RVSO) to conduct the examination of candidates, or an organization of specialists
having the objective of examining candidates for certification. Some RVSOs have used the term “board” synonymously with the broader concept of college. This use of the term has been accepted by the ABVS. This use is distinct from the more limited concept of “certification board” which are entities created by an RVSO solely for the purpose of credentialing candidates for the parent RVSO. In such a case, within the parent RVSO there may be both a “College” (the parent organization) and a “Certification Board” which is affiliated with the college and certifies candidates seeking diplomate status within the college.

E. Certificate—Various organizations issue documents (certificates) attesting to attendance or participation in an educational program or series of programs. Some certificates are awarded after an individual demonstrates accomplishment of intended learning outcomes of a specific topic or skill by passing an examination based upon the information provided by the organization. The issuance of these certificates should not be confused with the certification process (i.e., certificate holders are not ‘certified in’ the field) and is not comparable to the recognition of specialists in veterinary medicine.

F. Certification—The process of determining whether a veterinarian has successfully completed a training program and examination process designed to assess the knowledge and skills required for providing high quality professional services and patient care in a specialty.

G. Certified in—The AVMA limits the use of “certified in” to those individuals who have completed the certification process of an AVMA-recognized veterinary specialty organization, veterinary specialty, or veterinary subspecialty.

H. Certification Board—In some circumstances an RVSO may create an independent certifying agency, typically referred to as a board, which will be affiliated with the parent RVSO from the perspective of reporting to ABVS, but whose sole purpose is the credentialing and examination of candidates for the RVSO. The decisions and determinations of this certification board will be independent of influence from the associated RVSO.

I. Charter diplomate—A historical term used to indicate a member of an RSVO organizing committee that was granted diplomate status, generally without examination. Often referred to as “grandfathered” diplomates, the term became obsolete in 2017. See “Founder”.

J. College—An organization of veterinarians that has as its objectives the establishment of standards for the education and experience necessary for qualification as a specialist, and the examination and certification of veterinarians in the specialty. The term college is favored by the ABVS and is synonymous with specialty board in the designation of a recognized veterinary specialty organization (RVSO).

K. Criterion referencing—A criterion-referenced score interpretation involves comparing a test score to a cutoff score that represents a performance standard.

L. Degree program—A degree program is an educational program leading to an MS, PhD, or equivalent degree that may or may not be combined with residency training.

M. Diploma—A document awarded to an individual upon successful completion of the training and examination requirements established by a board of experts in a specific field of veterinary medicine, indicating that the individual has been board-certified in that field.

N. Diplomate—A veterinarian who is certified as a specialist in a particular discipline by one of the AVMA-recognized veterinary specialty organizations.

O. Diplomate in good standing—See active diplomate.
P. **Diplomate not in good standing**—A diplomate of a recognized veterinary specialty organization (RVSO) who has not complied with the specified requirements of a diplomate in good standing established by that organization, (e.g. failure to pay dues). A diplomate who is not in good standing typically may not participate in governance activities of the RVSO, but the lack of good standing does not change their status as a board certified specialist. A diplomate who does not successfully complete their maintenance of credential requirements does lose diplomate status and may no longer claim to be a board certified specialist.

Q. **Discipline**—A field of study or expertise definable as a distinct area of veterinary medicine.

R. **Distinguished member**—A diplomate of a recognized veterinary specialty organization (RVSO) who is acknowledged as distinguished based on criteria established by that organization.

S. **Emeritus diplomate**—A diplomate of a recognized veterinary specialty organization (RVSO) who either reaches an age designated by the RVSO or has retired from active practice of the recognized veterinary specialty.

T. **Examination eligibility**—A veterinarian is examination-eligible when he/she has successfully completed the established requirements of a recognized veterinary specialty organization (RVSO) and has been accepted to take its next certifying examination. Individuals must not use the term board-eligible as a descriptor in promotional materials directed toward other members of the profession or the public.

U. **Founder diplomat**—A member of the organizing committee as described in section II, part D1 of the Policies of the ABVS.

V. **Full recognition**—A classification assigned to a veterinary specialty organization that meets or exceeds all standards established by the ABVS for recognition by the AVMA.

W. **Honorary member**—RVSOs must not award a title of honorary diplomate but instead use honorary member. A veterinarian or non-veterinarian who is nominated by, meets criteria specified by, and is approved by the RVSO or an RVS. An honorary member shall be a nonvoting member and shall not hold office in the specialty organization and shall not claim certification status in the specialty.

X. **Internship**—An internship shall be one-year of flexible, rotating clinical training in veterinary medicine beyond the professional degree. It provides practical experience in applying knowledge gained during formal professional education and offers an opportunity for recent graduates to obtain additional training in the clinical sciences. An internship is composed of a broad range of supervised clinical assignments. This year of comprehensive, broad, postgraduate training and experience prepares a veterinarian for high-quality service in practice or for a decision on an area of specialization. It is important that an internship be truly a rotation, involving a wide range of clinical activities.

Y. **Job/task analysis**—A systematic procedure for defining the tasks required by a job and the knowledge, skills, abilities, and other personal characteristics required of individuals performing that job. The results of a job/task analysis form the basis for determining the examination contents necessary to test mastery of that field.

Z. **Letter of intent**—A letter from an organizing group which plans to submit a petition for recognition as either an RVSO or an RVS. This letter will indicate that the group has read and understands the standards of the ABVS which are applicable to their group, that they have read
and understand the procedures for obtaining AVMA-recognition, and that they have the agreement of the RVSO under which they will apply if they are applying as an RVS. It will provide a list of the members of the organizing committee and their credentials. It will specify if there is going to be an affiliated, independent certifying board and, if so, the proposed relationship between the RVSO or RVS and the certifying agency.

AA. Organizing committee—A group of individuals that must consist of no fewer than 16 members for a veterinary specialty organization or eight members for a veterinary specialty, that conduct the business of an emerging veterinary specialty seeking recognition by the AVMA.

BB. Probationary recognition—A classification assigned to a recognized veterinary specialty organization (RVSO) that meets most, but not all, of the established criteria for continued full recognition.

CC. Provisional recognition—A classification assigned to a new veterinary specialty organization, veterinary specialty, or veterinary subspecialty that has not applied for full recognition or has not met all the criteria pertaining to complete formalization of its structure and objectives.

DD. Qualifying routes—A qualifying route is a route established by the RVSO or RVS, through education, training, or experience to qualify candidates for examination in a timely manner. Qualifying routes can occur either within or outside a standard residency or degree program. Any experience requirements must be clearly defined, relevant to the objectives of the specialty, and amenable to evaluation and approval by the RVSO.

EE. Recognized veterinary specialist—A veterinarian who is certified by an AVMA-recognized veterinary specialty organization.

1. Recognized system specialist—A recognized specialist in a field that has as its primary emphasis a specific organ or body system within veterinary medicine (e.g., ophthalmology, neurology, dermatology). This field may involve different species, and may involve different medical and/or surgical disciplines within the representative body system or organ that is the primary area of specialization.

2. Recognized discipline specialist—A recognized specialist in a field that has as its primary emphasis a particular discipline within veterinary medicine (e.g., internal medicine, surgery, pathology, virology, toxicology, pharmacology, nutrition, preventive medicine and public health). This field may involve different species, and may involve different body systems or organs within the representative discipline that is the primary area of specialization.

3. Recognized species specialist—A recognized specialist in a field that has as its primary emphasis a particular species or group of species within veterinary medicine (e.g., laboratory animal medicine, zoological medicine, or canine and feline practice). This field may represent different medical or surgical disciplines, and may involve different body systems or organs within the representative species that are the primary focus of specialization.

FF. Recognized veterinary specialty—A clearly defined field of veterinary medicine comprising a species, discipline, or system within veterinary medicine and whose members acquire knowledge and skills through formal training, experimentation, and a standard approach to veterinary medicine. These focused areas of practice are under the umbrella of a parent AVMA-recognized veterinary specialty organization (see Figure 1). Examples include, but are not restricted to, the recognized veterinary specialties of neurology, cardiology, oncology, and internal
medicine within the ACVIM and the practice categories of avian, feline, equine, dairy, swine health management and food animal within the ABVP.

GG.  **Recognized veterinary specialty organization**—An organization that has been recognized by the AVMA as establishing standards for a specialty, certifying veterinarians who meet those standards, and serving as the organizational and administrative unit for one or more recognized veterinary specialties (see Figure 1). Veterinarians undergoing a formal program of credentialing and certification will be members of the RVSO and designated as a diplomate (a recognized specialist in one or more of the recognized veterinary specialties under the organizational umbrella).

HH.  **Recognized veterinary subspecialty**—A component of an RVS requiring the exercise of skills and the application of knowledge in a specific field but performance at a higher standard than that required for a veterinary recognized specialist functioning within an RVS (see Figure 1).

II.  **Residency**—A residency shall be advanced training in a specialty in veterinary medicine that is intended to lead to specialty certification in an AVMA-recognized veterinary specialty organization. A residency program is conducted under the supervision of a board-certified specialist. A residency is usually narrowly confined to a specific discipline. A residency may in some instances be related to an advanced degree program.

JJ.  **Society**—An organization of veterinarians and others having a common interest in a discipline of veterinary medicine. A society usually has as its objective the encouragement of scholarship, through educational programs, among those interested in the discipline. A society is not a recognized specialty certifying organization.

KK.  **Specialist**—See recognized veterinary specialist.

LL.  **Specialty**—See recognized veterinary specialty.

MM.  **Student associate**—A veterinary student who is interested in a particular RVS, but who is not a diplomate of that RVSO and thus not a voting member of that organization.

NN.  **Waiting period**—A waiting period is defined as a period of time between completion of a qualifying route and candidate eligibility to sit for the certifying examination that cannot be justified as necessary and relevant to the objectives of the RVSO. A waiting period is not permitted by the ABVS.

**VIII. Advertising and Directory Listings**

A.  Veterinarians may legally advertise in any way that is not false, misleading, or deceptive. Advertising guidelines and interpretations are discussed in the AVMA Principles of Veterinary Medical Ethics (https://www.avma.org/KB/Policies/Pages/Principles-of-Veterinary-Medical-Ethics-of-the-AVMA.aspx) and the AVMA Guidelines for the Identification of Board-certified Veterinarians (https://www.avma.org/KB/Policies/Pages/AVMA-Guidelines-on-the-Identification-of-Board-Certified-Veterinarians.aspx).

B.  Veterinarians must not in any way imply they are specialists unless they are certified by an AVMA-recognized veterinary specialty organization (i.e., board or college).

C.  The use of the terms “board eligible” or “board qualified” as an indication of special qualification is potentially misleading to the public and must not be used in any public communication or other solicitation.

D.  Individual RVSOs are encouraged to provide guidance to their members in matters
pertaining to advertising and directory listings. Diplomates may choose one of the following formats, as described in the AVMA Guidelines for the Identification of Board-certified Veterinarians. The appropriate format will depend on the number of recognized veterinary specialties and subspecialties.

1. Examples for members of an RVSO with one RVS:
   - Name, Diplomate, American College of Veterinary Dermatology or
   - Name, Diplomate, ACVD or
   - Name, DACVD (generally reserved for publication in professional journals)

2. Examples for members of an RVSO with more than one RVS:
   - Name, Diplomate, American College of Veterinary Internal Medicine (Cardiology) or
   - Name, Diplomate, ACVIM (Cardiology) or
   - Name, DACVIM (Cardiology)
I. Officers and Duties

A. Officers

The officers of the ABVS consist of the chair, the chair-elect, and the Executive Committee member-at-large. A slate of officers is developed and nominated by the Nominating Committee. Other nominations may come from the floor during the ABVS annual meeting. Elections are by a simple majority of the RVSO’s representatives attending the annual meeting of the ABVS. Officers serve a one (1) year term. The normal progression is from Member-at-Large to Chair-Elect to Chair in order to provide each individual with the experience necessary to appropriately administer the programs of the ABVS.

B. Duties

1. Chair—Conducts the meetings of the ABVS and the Executive Committee (EC), approves reports to the AVMA BOD, develops meeting agendas with the assistance of the EC and AVMA staff, and handles other matters as appropriate. Term of office is one (1) year, beginning at the close of the annual session of the House of Delegates, which is held in conjunction with the AVMA annual convention.

2. Chair-Elect—Serves as chair in the absence of the chair. Attends the annual meeting of the EC, and handles other matters as appropriate. He/she automatically becomes chair following his/her year as chair-elect, beginning at the close of the annual session of the House of Delegates, which is held in conjunction with the AVMA annual convention. The chair-elect will have at least two (2) years remaining on the term of appointment to the ABVS at the time of the election.

3. Executive Committee Member-at-Large—Serves as chair in the absence of the both the chair and the chair-elect. Attends the annual meeting of the EC and handles other matters as appropriate. The EC member-at-large is routinely nominated to chair-elect following the year as EC Member-at-Large.

II. Meetings

A. Annual Meeting

1. The ABVS holds one meeting per year in late winter or spring at which the representative or designated alternate from each AVMA-recognized veterinary specialty organization is in attendance.

2. An alternate or an officer of an RVSO may also attend the annual meeting as a guest, but not at the expense of the AVMA (i.e., the AVMA pays a portion of the expenses for only one representative from each RVSO). As per AVMA policy, attendance of guests (including RVSO alternates and RVSO officers) is subject to the approval of the ABVS chair.

3. The ABVS annual meeting is open to any interested AVMA member subject to approval of the ABVS chair.
4. Executive sessions during the ABVS annual meeting may be called by the chair at his/her discretion. During executive session, all guests will be excused from the meeting.

5. Unless otherwise approved in advance by the AVMA Board of Directors or Board of Governors, the annual meeting will be held at AVMA headquarters.

6. The agenda for the annual meeting will be developed by the ABVS chair and the ABVS EC in consultation with AVMA staff. Matters pertaining to recognition of veterinary specialty organizations, in-depth reviews, approval of annual reports, and other matters requiring approval of the AVMA BOD may only be acted upon at the annual meeting or teleconference/web conference in which a majority of the ABVS members are present.

B. The ABVS EC may meet at the request of the chair, once per year between annual meetings.

C. The ABVS Committee on the Development of New Specialties may meet once per year in conjunction with the EC.

III. Committees

A. Executive Committee

1. Membership—The chair, chair-elect, and one member-at-large from the ABVS comprise the EC. The EC member-at-large shall be elected annually for a one-year term.

2. Meetings—Meets annually in the fall after receipt of annual reports, five-year in-depth reports, and petitions. Other business is conducted via teleconference, electronic communication, or correspondence.

3. Charge
   a. Reviews policy and procedures.
   b. Develops recommendations for ABVS review.
   c. Serves as a long-range planning committee.
   d. Primarily responsible for developing the agenda for the annual meeting.
   e. Reviews the merits of complaints and makes recommendations to the RVSO and appellant.
   f. Addresses other matters referred to it by the ABVS, the COE, the chair of the ABVS, or staff between annual meetings.

B. Nominating Committee

1. Membership—Comprises three ABVS representatives appointed by the chair, with the advice of the EC, following the annual session of the AVMA House of Delegates. Terms are three years and are staggered so that one person is replaced each year.

2. Meetings—None; business is conducted by telecommunication, electronic communication, or correspondence.
3. Charge
   a. Submits a slate of officers to the chair for review at the Executive
      Committee meeting prior to consideration and approval by the full ABVS
      at the annual meeting.

C. Policies and Procedures Committee
   1. Membership—Comprises three ABVS representatives appointed by the chair,
      with the advice of the EC, following the annual session of the AVMA House
      of Delegates. Terms are three years and are staggered so that one person is
      replaced each year.
   2. Meetings—None; business is conducted by telecommunication, electronic
      communication, or correspondence.
   3. Charge
      a. Evaluates the Policies and Procedures of the ABVS for their applicability
         to current ABVS processes.
      b. Suggests changes or amendments to the Policies and Procedures of the
         ABVS to the EC.
      c. Drafts proposed changes to the Policy and Procedures of the ABVS as
         directed by the EC or the ABVS.

D. Committee on Development of New Specialties (CDNS)
   1. Membership—The ABVS chair shall also chair the CDNS, which consists of the
      EC, the COE representative to the ABVS, the representative of the AAVMC, and
      three ABVS representatives appointed by the chair following the annual session
      of the AVMA House of Delegates with the advice of the EC. Terms of appointed
      ABVS representatives are three years and are staggered so that one member is
      appointed annually.
   2. Meetings—May meet annually at the time of the EC meeting. Other business is
      conducted via teleconference, electronic communication, or correspondence.
   3. Charge
      a. Receives and reviews new petitions and advises the chair on assignment
         of liaison ABVS members to assist prospective veterinary specialty
         organizations with the recognition process.
      b. Solicits opinion and views about the proposed veterinary specialty
         organization from the following organizations and groups:
         i. AVMA membership through an announcement in the Journal of the
            American Veterinary Medical Association and on the AVMA Web
            site.
         ii. Existing RVSOs.
         iii. Appropriate veterinary societies and academies.
         iv. Appropriate educational, research, governmental, military,
             commercial, and public bodies.
      c. Collates information for action at the next committee meeting.
      d. Annually evaluates petitions from prospective veterinary specialty
         organizations as to their appropriateness for submission to the ABVS for
         action. When it is deemed by the CDNS that a petition is in order and the
         petitioning organization has fulfilled the current concepts for standards
and prerequisites for an emerging organization, the petition will be submitted to the EC for assignment of reviewers and inclusion in the ABVS agenda.

e. CDNS shall review the interim report for every provisionally recognized veterinary specialty organization. The committee shall prepare a recommendation, including a motion on the status and future development of each college, which is due at the AVMA on February 1 for consideration by the ABVS at its annual meeting. When a provisionally recognized veterinary specialty organization applies for full recognition, the interim report will be submitted along with its petition for full recognition.

f. Review and evaluate petitions for full recognition from provisionally recognized veterinary specialty organizations. The CDNS will consider the stage of development of the veterinary specialty organization and determine from the petition whether the organization is sufficiently mature and functional to be evaluated by the ABVS membership. The CDNS will make appropriate recommendations to the EC for further action on the petition and actions required by the veterinary specialty organization.

E. Postgraduate Program Evaluation Committee

1. Membership—Comprises three members of the ABVS, appointed by the chair with the advice of the EC following the annual session of the AVMA House of Delegates, plus the AAVMC representative. Terms are three years and are staggered so that one member is appointed annually.

2. Meetings—None; business is conducted via telecommunication, electronic communication, or correspondence.

3. Charge
   a. Consider matters as directed by the EC or the ABVS, such as training programs, and clinical experience evaluation criteria.
   b. Develop protocols for recertification.
   c. Report recommendations to the EC and the ABVS.

F. Annual Report Review Committee

1. Membership—Comprises three ABVS representatives appointed by the chair, with the advice of the EC, following the annual session of the AVMA House of Delegates. Terms are three years and staggered so that one member is appointed annually. At the chair’s discretion, two additional at-large members may be appointed to the Annual Report Review Committee. Terms for at-large members are one year.

2. Meetings—None; business is conducted by telecommunication, electronic communication, or correspondence.

3. Charge
   a. Reviews the annual reports of fully recognized veterinary specialty organizations and recognized veterinary specialties.

G. International Activities Committee

1. Membership—Comprises four ABVS representatives, appointed by the chair,
with the advice of the EC, following the annual session of the AVMA House of Delegates. Terms are four years and staggered so that one member is appointed annually.

2. **Meetings**—Business is conducted by telecommunication, electronic communication, correspondence or at the ABVS annual meeting.

3. **Charge**
   a. Be a conduit and clearinghouse of information between ABVS and specialty recognition organizations outside North America, and encourage collaboration between North American specialties and specialties in other countries.
   b. Report recommendations to the EC and the ABVS and other AVMA entities as appropriate.
   c. Consider matters as directed by the EC of the ABVS or the ABVS, such as topics relevant to international veterinary specialty recognition.

### IV. Reports—Review and Approval

#### A. Annual reports

1. AVMA staff will mail electronic copies of the annual report forms (see Appendix B) to the ABVS representative from each fully recognized veterinary specialty organization no later than September 1. It is the representative's responsibility to ensure that the annual report form is forwarded to the appropriate individuals for completion. This includes the liaison with an independent certifying board for those RVSOs that have separated the credentialing process from other activities of the RVSO. Completed forms must be received at the AVMA headquarters no later than November 1. To facilitate distribution of annual reports to the Annual Report Review Committee, each RVSO must submit an electronic copy of the completed annual report form.

2. A summary of annual reports, including statistical information, is developed by staff prior to the annual meeting of the ABVS and is included in the agenda for this meeting.

3. The Annual Report Review Committee reviews the annual reports of fully recognized veterinary specialty organizations and their affiliated certification board, where applicable. Reviewers complete a checklist and prepare a one- or two-page summary report for distribution to the ABVS. The composite review must be received at AVMA headquarters by January 15. Committee members are to attempt to seek clarification to questions they have raised from the RVSO prior to the meeting.

#### B. In-depth reports

1. Each RVSO (and their affiliated certification board, when applicable) is required to submit an in-depth report of its status and activities to the ABVS at five-year intervals following full recognition (see Appendix C). AVMA staff will remind the ABVS representative and administrative executive of each RVSO in writing of pending in-depth five-year reports no later than May 1. Completed in-depth reports must be received at AVMA headquarters no later than November 1. To facilitate distribution of in-depth reports to the reviewers, each RVSO must
submit an electronic copy of the completed report.

2. The chair designates two ABVS representatives to review each five-year in-depth report before the annual ABVS meeting.

3. Reviewers complete a checklist and prepare a one- or two-page summary report for distribution to the ABVS. The criteria found in section II, part B of the Policies of the ABVS are the primary basis for assessment of the completeness, clarity, and adequacy of the report. Reviews must be received at AVMA headquarters by January 15.

4. Reviewers initiate and lead discussions and questioning of the representatives of the RVSO under review.

5. One reviewer must be prepared to present a motion to the ABVS concerning the future recognition status of the RVSO under review.

6. Motions approved by the ABVS concerning the recognition status of an RVSO (and their affiliated certification board) shall be provided by the chair of the ABVS to that RVSO immediately so that any changes or explanations required by the ABVS can be acted upon. An addendum report by the RVSO (due by November 1) after the five-year in depth report shall be reviewed by the ABVS Executive Committee so that a final recommendation or report to and by ABVS on the status of the RVSO’s five-year review can be made.

C. Interim reports

1. Each RVSO with provisional or probationary recognition must submit an interim report (see Appendix D) each year that describes that RVSO's progress toward meeting the requirements for full recognition.

2. Completed forms must be received by AVMA no later than November 1.

D. Petitions from new veterinary specialty organizations, veterinary specialties, and veterinary subspecialties

1. Liaison representative(s) are designated as set forth in Section II Part C1, Section III Part B1, and Section IV Part B1 of the Policies of the ABVS to assist the prospective group with their petition. Petitioning veterinary specialty groups must consult their liaison representatives during preparation of the petition.

2. Petitioning veterinary specialty organizations and veterinary specialties should submit the information requested in Section II, Part C3 and Section III, Part B3, respectively, in the ABVS Policies within the first two years of submitting a letter of intent.
   a. The purpose is to begin the period of public comment so organizing committees have a chance to address public concerns prior to submitting the entire petition four years after submitting the letter of intent.
   b. The four year period begins November 1 in the year after the letter of intent was submitted.
   c. The requested information should be sent to the appointed liaisons no later than September 1 for comment prior to the November submission to the CDNS.
3. The information for public comment will be referred to the CDNS at its next annual meeting. The CDNS may:
   a. Determine that the information does not meet the criteria as outlined in the Policies and Procedures manual, at which point the submitted document is returned to the petitioning group with the CDNS comments.
   b. Determine that the information meets the criteria as outlined in the Policies and Procedure manual.

4. If the CDNS takes the action outlined in point 3b above, the chair will request AVMA staff to initiate a period of public comment through September 1.
   a. To provide additional information that will be linked within any call for public comments, the organizing committee of the proposed new specialty organization or specialty, may develop an informational single web page, to be approved by the CDNS, for posting on the ABVS web area of the AVMA web site. Content for this web page must be submitted electronically to the CDNS no later than January 1 and approved by the CDNS no later than February 1 for immediate posting.
   b. ABVS staff will forward to the CDNS and liaison representatives any public comments received regarding the proposed new specialty organization or specialty. In turn, the liaisons will communicate with the organizing committee of the proposed new specialty organization or specialty to address the concerns, answer questions, and further refine the petition.

5. Prior to submitting a complete formal petition to the ABVS, the petitioning veterinary specialty group must supply their liaison representative(s) with the entire petition addressing the criteria set forth in section II parts B and D, section III part B, or section IV part B for RVSOs, recognized veterinary specialties, and recognized veterinary subspecialties, respectively, of the Policies of the ABVS. If the RVSO intends to have certification performed by an affiliated certification board, the petition must clearly address the relationship between the parent RVSO and the certification board. The petition will be reviewed for format and content. This must be done in a timely manner by the organizing group, but no later than September 1, to permit the liaison representative(s) time to review the petition, to communicate their comments to the petitioning organization, and to allow time for revision of the petition prior to the submission deadline, should that be necessary.

Although the petitioning veterinary specialty group is not bound to accept the comments of the liaison representative(s), and the acceptance of any such comments does not ensure that the ABVS will accept the petition, it is generally believed that cooperation at this level will benefit the petitioning veterinary specialty group.

If applicable (e.g., for a petitioning new veterinary specialty or subspecialty under an existing RVSO or RVS, respectively) a statement of preliminary approval of the petition package by a proposed parent RVSO or RVS must be included at the time the petition is submitted to the ABVS (see Section III, Part B4 of the Policies)

6. Completed petitions must be received by the AVMA no later than November 1.

7. The petition will be referred to the CDNS at its next annual meeting. The CDNS may:
a. Determine that the petition does not meet submission criteria as outlined in the Policies and Procedures Manual, at which point the petition is returned to the petitioning group with the CDNS comments.

b. Determine that the petition meets submission criteria as outlined in the Policies and Procedures Manual.

8. If the CDNS takes the action outlined in point 4b above, the chair will assign two ABVS members to serve as reviewers of the petition, with at least one of the reviewers also being a member of the CDNS.

9. The reviewers will submit a report of the petition, to the AVMA/ABVS office no later than February 1 that will be forwarded to the CDNS and the organizing committee of the proposed new specialty organization, specialty, or subspecialty so that the organizing committee may address any questions or concerns. The criteria found in Policy sections II through IV form the basis for evaluating the petition.

10. The ABVS will consider the reviewers’ report at its next annual meeting. A representative of the organizing committee of the proposed new specialty organization, specialty, or subspecialty may also attend the ABVS annual meeting at their own expense.

11. The CDNS member who served as a reviewer will present the review of the organizing committee’s petition at the annual ABVS meeting.

12. If the ABVS votes to recommend provisional recognition of the proposed new specialty organization, specialty, or subspecialty, the recommendation is submitted to the AVMA BOD for final decision.

E. AVMA staff reports

After each annual meeting, AVMA staff submits one or more recommendations, which may be in summary form, on recognition status for RVSOs or RVSs under review for full or provisional recognition to the AVMA BOD. Recommendations are reviewed and approved by the ABVS chair prior to its submission to the AVMA BOD for approval. The AVMA BOD actions are then reviewed by the House of Delegates as part of the report of Board of Directors actions.

F. Other reports

AVMA staff prepares an annual summary of ABVS and RVSO activity, including the number of current active members in each RVSO, which is included as part of the administrative report to the AVMA House of Delegates for review at its annual session.

V. Statement on Integrity

To encourage ongoing confidence in the review and recognition process for veterinary specialty organizations, both the organizations and the ABVS must be assured that functions assigned to each entity are clearly understood. The following are some of the areas where special efforts must be made to assure integrity of the process:

A. Integrity—Veterinary Specialty Organizations
1. The veterinary specialty organization must present accurate information to the ABVS in its initial petition for recognition, its annual report, its five-year in-depth report, and any other report required in the ABVS Policies and Procedures manual.

2. The RVSO must refrain from misleading advertisement of the organization and must correct any inaccuracy.

3. If an RVSO releases information regarding its recognition status, the information must be correct. Should misinformation be released, the RVSO must correct the information in a timely manner.

B. Integrity – Independent Certification Boards

1. The independent certification board must present accurate information to the ABVS, through its parent RVSO in the RVSO’s initial petition for recognition, its annual report, its five-year in-depth report, and any other report required in the ABVS Policies and Procedures manual.

2. The independent certification board must refrain from misleading advertisement of the organization and must correct any inaccuracy.

3. If an independent certifying board releases information regarding its relationship with the parent RVSO or that RVSO’s status, the information must be correct. Should misinformation be released, the independent certification board, through its parent RVSO must correct the information in a timely manner.

C. Integrity—American Board of Veterinary Specialties

1. During the evaluation process, the ABVS must evaluate the veterinary specialty organization and veterinary specialty according only to the guidelines for recognition, which are outlined in the ABVS Policies and Procedures Manual approved by the AVMA Board of Directors. Application of these standard guidelines must be unbiased.

2. Review of all reports and deliberation toward the assignment of recognition status must be conducted with the highest ethical standards.

3. All material and discussion of the ABVS pertaining to recognition or discipline of veterinary specialty organizations or resolution of mediation must be confidential. This implies that such discussions may be held in Executive Session during the ABVS annual meeting, and all media considered “sensitive materials” must be disposed of in such a manner to maintain the confidentiality.

VI. Complaints Against a Diplomate of a College/Board

If the ABVS receives a complaint against a diplomate of an RVSO, the complaint will be referred to the executive director or secretary of the appropriate RVSO, and the person making the complaint will be notified of that referral. The complaint will be considered by the governing body of the RVSO. The RVSO will respond directly to the person issuing the complaint, with a copy of the response sent to the AVMA for ABVS records. A tally of complaints will be a part of the annual report of the RVSO.
VII. Procedures for Mediation of Adverse Decisions

If a dispute between a candidate/applicant for specialty certification and an RVSO remains unresolved after exhaustion of the appeal procedures established by the RVSO, the ABVS recommends that candidates and specialty organizations utilize a mediation process. Mediation is defined as “friendly intervention, usually by consent or invitation, between conflicting parties to promote reconciliation, settlement, or compromise.” The ABVS can assist with arrangements for mediation to occur at the AVMA headquarters, if desired by both parties, by contacting the AVMA ABVS staff consultant. The mediation should be conducted by a professional mediator, selected by mutual agreement between the parties, and all expenses incurred would be the responsibility of the parties involved.

VIII. Training Programs

A. RVSOs requiring residency training for certification eligibility must develop training program criteria in sufficient detail to enable an individual, with the assistance of the training institution, to meet the requirements for certification in that specialty. ABVS does not mandate the approval of veterinary residency programs and alternative qualifying routes by RVSOs and RVSs.

B. Individuals seeking to enter a training program must follow the guidelines of the particular RVSO with which he or she is concerned to develop a program that will fulfill the requirements for certification whether in a traditional residency or training program or an alternative qualifying route. The training program shall identify whether it is in compliance with the training requirements established by the RVSO before the individual embarks on it.

C. Criteria for internship and residency programs should be formatted as follows:

1. Brief description of the program.
2. Detailed educational objectives of the program.
3. Anticipated total time requirements.
4. Minimum requirements for facilities, equipment, and diagnostic laboratory capabilities.
5. A synopsis of the number and type of patients or cases that will be required and the emphasis and anticipated (or required) depth of study for each patient.
6. A synopsis of the level and frequency of interactions between the candidate, board-certified member(s), and others deemed necessary for the program.
7. Description of assessment methods.
FIGURE 1

RELATIONSHIPS OF ORGANIZATIONAL UNITS IN VETERINARY SPECIALIZATION

AVMA BOD

American Board of Veterinary Specialties (ABVS)

RVSO

RVSO

Recognized Veterinary Specialty Organization (RVS)

Recognized Veterinary Specialty (RVS)

RVS

RVS
SUGGESTED COMPONENTS FOR CURRICULUM VITAE

Name

Address

Date of Birth

Education
   Colleges
   Dates
   Degrees

Professional Activities

Scientific Organizations

Honors
   Professional
   Public Service

Offices Held
   Professional
   Public Service

Bibliography
   Most relevant (not to exceed 10 citations)
FOR EXAMPLE ONLY

ABVS Annual Report Form
Deadline for submission to ABVS: November 1
This form to be used by both RVSOs and their RVSs, if any. A separate RVS form for each RVS should be submitted to the respective RVSO and reviewed then included with their report.
All information reported may be made available to other RVSOs.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name of RVSO or RVS:</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Dates for ‘reporting year’:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Exam date:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The ‘reporting year’ for the ABVS annual report shall include a period of 365 days, such as calendar year or fiscal year, but reporting should be maintained to provide continual (not overlapping) data from year to year.

Policies and Procedural Information
(Place a check mark adjacent to each item in Table 1 if in compliance)


| Have RVS reports been reviewed by RVSO? | YES/NO |
| Job/Task Analysis performed? | (insert date of most recent) |
| Maintenance of Certification (MOC) is required | (insert year instituted) |
| Is RVSO incorporated | \_\_\_\_\_\_\_ |
| As 501c(3), 501c(6)? | \_\_\_\_\_\_\_ |
| Tax return filed? | \_\_\_\_\_\_\_ |
| Does RVSO have | \_\_\_\_\_\_\_ |
| D&O Insurance? | \_\_\_\_\_\_\_ |
| E&O Insurance? | \_\_\_\_\_\_\_ |

2. Changes in Policies or Procedures

| YES/NO Have there been any changes in your policies and procedures this year? | YES/NO |
| If yes, please describe | |

36
3. **Changes in by-laws/constitution**

Provide a current copy of your constitution and/or bylaws. **If there have been changes in your constitution or by-laws this year, please provide a second copy with deletions struck through and additions underlined.**

**II. Demographics and Information Tables**

1. **Number of Diplomates**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number of Diplomates:</th>
<th>Previous year</th>
<th>Last year</th>
<th>This year</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. New diplomates added:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Diplomates lost from active status due to:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a. Death</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b. Change in status to:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>i. Emeritus</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ii. Inactive</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>iii. Other (explain below)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Total diplomates lost from active status (sum of rows 2a-2b[iii])</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Diplomates in following categories:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a. Active</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b. Emeritus</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c. Honorary Members</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>d. Inactive</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>e. Other (explain below)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Total diplomates in all categories (sum of rows 4a-4e)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Number of diplomates participating in MOC</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Explanation of ‘other’ in table above:**

2. **Training Programs**

<p>| | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Number of ‘resident’ (i.e. most-time-efficient) training programs</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of residents currently in training programs</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of non-traditional training programs</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of non-traditional trainees currently in programs</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
3. **Complaints and Appeals**
The appeal procedure must be a part of the constitution or bylaws of the RVSO. In addition, it must be included on forms used by candidates who apply for certifying examinations.

**YES/NO.** The body within the RVSO reviewing appeals is distinct from that RVSO’s current executive committee, board, or examination and credentialing committees.

**YES/NO.** Has the RVSO received any complaints about diplomates or the RVSO?  **If yes,** please provide brief, general details while protecting all privacy concerns.

**YES/NO** Has the RVSO received any appeals against adverse decisions?  **If yes, how many?**

_________ related to credentialing

_________ related to exam

Please provide brief, general details while protecting all privacy concerns.

**YES/NO** Are there any unresolved appeals/complaints?  **If yes, please explain.**
4. **Credentialing Information**  
*Report credentialing data for full, consecutive 12 month cycles.*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Applicant Class</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Previous year</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>----------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A. Total number of applicants</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B. Number of applicants whose credentials were accepted</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C. Credentialing percentage (B/A x 100)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

For the current year, how many of the applicants above (row A) are repeat applicants (re-credentialing)?

- a. Number due to credentials denied?
- b. Number due to credentials expired?

5. **Examination Results**  
*Report examination results for full, consecutive 12-month cycles.*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Examination Results</th>
<th>Previous year</th>
<th>Last Year</th>
<th>Current year</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total number of candidates taking exam</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number successfully completing exam (i.e. became diplomates)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% successful</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% successful on first try</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% successful on second try</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% successful on third or subsequent try</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

6. **Comments from Previous ABVS Reviews**

**YES/NO**  Are there any issues raised during prior ABVS reviews that remain unresolved? If YES, please explain:

7. **Contact Information**
Include names and email addresses for:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Role</th>
<th>Name</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Executive Secretary/Director:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ABVS Representative:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alternate ABVS Representative:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

By submitting this report, the [insert name of the specialty organization] hereby agrees to defend, indemnify, and hold the AVMA harmless from and against all claims, damages, and expenses (including reasonable attorney’s fees) arising from any claim that the AVMA’s use of the name or acronym of [insert name of the specialty organization] or any of its specialties or subspecialties infringes the intellectual property rights of any third party.

Name:______________________________ Title:______________________________

Signature:________________________
APPENDIX C

AVMA-RECOGNIZED VETERINARY SPECIALTY ORGANIZATION
FIVE-YEAR IN-DEPTH REPORT

Report Due November 1

By submitting this report, the [insert name of the specialty organization] hereby agrees to defend, indemnify, and hold the AVMA harmless from and against all claims, damages, and expenses (including reasonable attorney’s fees) arising from any claim that the AVMA’s use of the name or acronym of [insert name of the specialty organization] or any of its specialties or subspecialties infringes the intellectual property rights of any third party.

Each recognized veterinary specialty organization (RVSO) is required to submit an in-depth review of its status and activities to the ABVS at five-year intervals after full recognition. The in-depth review should be organized according to the following outline.

A. History and progress of organization
   1. Summarize the history of the RVSO.
   2. Describe how the RVSO:
      a. Ensures improved veterinary medical services are offered to the public.
      b. Has a necessary number of potential diplomates to serve a clearly demonstrable need within the profession.
      c. Represents a distinct and identifiable specialty of veterinary medicine.
   3. Other aspects of the history and progress of the RVSO.

B. Candidate education, qualification, and evaluation
   1. Describe critical standards for admission to membership including:
      a. Education, training, and experience.
      b. Guidelines for approved routes for qualification.
      c. A summary of deficiencies in credentials that have led to failure to qualify for examination.
      d. How unsuccessful candidates are advised of deficiencies.
      e. The time limit for notifying candidates of acceptance or denial of credentials required for examination.
      f. Other guidelines used to assess candidate qualifications.
   2. Describe educational programs available to potential candidates and indicate how these activities are supported and encouraged by the RVSO.
   3. Examination procedures and policies
      a. Describe the nature and scope of the examination(s).
      b. Describe how you ensure that examination questions reflect the professional activities expected of diplomates.
      c. Describe how examination questions are developed, reviewed, graded, and evaluated.
      d. Indicate whether and how consultative resources are used.
      e. Describe the procedure used for establishing the pass point.
      f. Document the pass/fail experience of candidates with the examination, showing the past ten years of experience.
      g. List the primary reasons candidates fail.
h. List the time limit (in days) for reporting scores to candidates after the examination is administered.

i. If you use oral examinations, describe how they are structured and evaluated, and how you strive to maintain fairness and avoid personality conflicts.

j. Describe how unsuccessful candidates are advised of deficiencies on examination.

k. Describe other relevant aspects of your testing program.

4. Appeal procedures
   a. Include the formal appeal procedure used for candidates who receive adverse decisions.
   b. Include a complete application packet as it is sent to prospective diplomates.
   c. Include up to three examples of correspondence to and from unsuccessful candidates or applicants.

C. Describe any procedures for recertification of diplomates.

D. Describe any procedures and policies pertaining to specialization and the number of diplomates within a given recognized veterinary specialty (RVS) within your RVSO.

E. Statement concerning incorporation and liability insurance.

F. Current employment distribution of diplomates.

G. Major changes in concepts or policies during the past five years.

H. Problems perceived and proposed solutions.

I. Describe any activities outside the scope of the stated objectives of the specialty, including contracts or agreements.

J. Future plans.

K. Reactions of the profession and the public to the specialty organization.

L. Financial report.

M. Copy of current constitution and/or bylaws, with indicated changes, if any, since the last annual report. A “clean” copy of the constitution and/or bylaws must also be provided for ABVS records.

N. Copy of Policies and Procedures Manual, Standard Operating Procedures or other documentation that clarifies the operation of the specialty organization if such documents exist.
APPENDIX D

AVMA PROVISIONALLY RECOGNIZED VETERINARY SPECIALTY ORGANIZATION

Interim Report Form (Example only)

By submitting this report, the [insert name of the specialty organization] hereby agrees to defend, indemnify, and hold the AVMA harmless from and against all claims, damages, and expenses (including reasonable attorney’s fees) arising from any claim that the AVMA’s use of the name or acronym of [insert name of the specialty organization] or any of its specialties or subspecialties infringes the intellectual property rights of any third party.

An officer of the recognized veterinary specialty organization (RVSO) indicated below is responsible for completion of this form and its return to the AVMA Education and Research Division by November 1.

(Note: The form in this appendix is an example only. AVMA staff will update the dates listed on this form each year and send hard and electronic copies of the updated form to all ABVS representatives no later than September 1.)

RVSO _________________________________________________________________

1. Number of founders: ______

2. Number of years since provisional recognition: ______

3. Number of active diplomates January 1, 2017: ______

4. Has your RVSO accepted applications for membership? If not, when do you plan to do so?

5. Change in number of active diplomates:
   - Added ______
   - Lost ______
   - Net change ______

7. Number of active diplomates December 31, 2017: ______

8. Number of diplomates having a status other than active:
   - Honorary ______
   - Emeritus ______
   - Other (please indicate status and number) ____________________________

9. Total of all living diplomates December 31, 2017 ______

10. Complete the attached form on Credentialing and Examination Outcomes. Use the most current information for each class of candidates.

11. Number of active diplomates primarily associated with:
   a) Academia ______
   b) Industry ______
   c) Government ______
   d) Practice ______
   e) Other (please specify) ____________________________ ______

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12. Provide a current copy of your constitution and/or bylaws. If there have been changes in your constitution or bylaws this year, please provide a second copy with deletions struckthrough and additions underlined.

13. Describe how you ensure that examination questions reflect the professional activities expected of diplomates.

14. Do you provide candidates with a content outline and the format of the exam prior to the exam? If so, provide a copy.

15. Describe how unsuccessful candidates are advised of deficiencies on examination.

16. Provide the time limit (in days) for reporting scores to candidates after the examination is administered. Are examination results sent to all candidates on the same day?

17. Are all unsuccessful candidates informed of their remaining eligibility and reapplication procedures? How?

18. a. Number of residency/training programs (approved qualifying routes) existing at time of provisional recognition: _____________________
    b. Number of residency/training programs (approved qualifying routes) initiated this year: _____________________
    c. Number of residency/training programs (approved qualifying routes) December 31, 2016: _____________________
    d. Number of individuals in residency/training programs (approved qualifying routes) January 1, 2017 (if available): _____________________
    e. Number of individuals in residency/training programs (approved qualifying routes) December 31, 2017 (if available): _____________________

Job (task) analysis, test validation, and criteria referencing (for establishing cut scores) improve the fairness, accuracy, and legal defensiveness of the credentialing examination, and certification of specialists. The following questions (19-23) address these functions.

19. Has your RVSO conducted a job analysis to help substantiate entry-level requirements and examination? If not, is such an analysis planned?

20. How does your RVSO develop examination items? Is a professional examination consultant used? If so, to what extent?

21. How is your examination validated?

22. How do you set the pass point?

23. Have your testing methods been previously established and reported to the ABVS? If not, please describe them as a part of this report (e.g., 300 multiple-choice questions). Are
candidates notified of the passing point or the method of setting the pass point before the examination?

24. Describe any changes in your examination process occurring this year (e.g., type, validation, committee size).

25. Describe any advances in training programs, continuing education, or scientific programs made during the year.

26. Describe any other notable events occurring during the year, emphasizing those that demonstrate progress toward becoming “fully functional” and thus qualified for full recognition.

27. Provide names, addresses, phone and facsimile numbers, and e-mail addresses for current officers.

28. List any perceived or anticipated problems that might interfere with progress toward full recognition within the required time frame.

29. When do you intend to petition for full recognition?

30. If a determination has been made of the federal tax status of the organization was it:

   Tax exempt under 501(c)(3)
   Tax exempt under 501(c)(6)
   Other

31. Is there special assistance that your veterinary specialty organization desires from the ABVS?

   Name of person completing this form (please print) ____________________________

   Signature ____________________________

   Date ____________________________

THANK YOU
PLEASE RETURN TO THE AVMA BY NOVEMBER 1
10. CREDENTIALING/EXAMINATION OUTCOMES

For this report, the RVSO **MUST** group candidates by the year in which they initially applied for certification. Candidates should remain in their candidate class regardless of whether their credentials are initially rejected or whether they reapply at a later time. Each year, the RVSO **MUST** update information for each candidate class as additional candidates complete the credentialing or examination process. This will provide the ABVS with up-to-date information for the current and five preceding candidate classes. If information is not available at the time the Annual Report is submitted, the RVSO should indicate "NA" and provide a brief explanation.

A duplicate of this form **must** be completed and submitted for each recognized veterinary specialty or subspecialty within your organization.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Candidate Class (by year of original application)</th>
<th>2011</th>
<th>2012</th>
<th>2013</th>
<th>2014</th>
<th>2015</th>
<th>2016</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Total number of applicants in candidate class</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Number of candidates per class (ie, #1) for whom credentials were accepted, regardless of when accepted</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Credentialing percentage: (#2/#1) x 100</td>
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<td></td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Number of credentialed candidates (ie, #2) presenting for examination, regardless of previous examination attempts</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Number of candidates presenting for examination (ie, #4) who passed the certifying examination and became diplomates</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Of candidates who passed the examination (ie, #5), list number who were:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>a. successful on first attempt</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b. successful on second attempt</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c. successful on ≥3 attempts</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Diplomate percentage of candidate class (ie, cumulative exam pass rate for each candidate class = ([#5/#1] X100)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Diplomate percentage of credentialed candidates per class (ie, cumulative exam pass rate for candidates with accepted credentials = [#5/#2] X 100)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Diplomate percentage of those presenting for examination (ie, cumulative pass rate of candidates presenting for examination = [#5/#4] X 100)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
APPENDIX E

MODEL LANGUAGE FOR PROCEDURE FOR APPEAL OF ADVERSE DECISIONS

Adverse decisions by (name of recognized veterinary specialty organization [RVSO]) may include, but are not limited to:

**Denial of certification of an individual**
- Denial of adequacy of credentials
- Denial of approval of a residency program
- Suspension of certification

In the event of adverse decisions, the [RVSO] shall advise the affected person(s) of the procedure for appealing the adverse decision. An affected party desiring to appeal the [RVSO]'s adverse decision must adhere to the following procedure.

1. **Grounds for reconsideration or review**—The affected party may petition for reconsideration or review of the [RVSO]'s decision on the grounds that the [RVSO] has ruled erroneously by:
   a. Disregarding the established [RVSO] criteria for certification or approval.
   b. Failing to follow its stated procedures.
   c. Failing to consider relevant evidence and documentation presented.

2. **Petition for reconsideration**:
   a. An affected party may petition [RVSO] to reconsider its decision by filing with [RVSO] a written petition for reconsideration that shall include a statement of the grounds for reconsideration and documentation, if any, in support of the petition.
   b. Such petition must be received in the [RVSO] office within 30 days of the date [RVSO] announces its adverse decision.
   c. The affected party may, at the discretion of [RVSO], be invited to participate in the next regular meeting of the appeals committee of [RVSO].
   d. The appeals committee will meet in executive session to reach its final decision, which may then be forwarded to the governing body of [RVSO] for final action in accordance with the constitution/bylaws and articles of incorporation of [RVSO].
   e. The [RVSO’s] final action pertaining to the appeal will be delivered in writing by certified mail to the affected party not more than [30 to 120] days after the appeal was received by the [RVSO].
   f. Upon completion of steps (a) through (e), if the affected party is not satisfied with the final decision, he/she may request mediation facilitation by the ABVS.
MODEL LANGUAGE FOR REQUEST FOR SPECIAL ACCOMMODATIONS FOR THE CERTIFYING EXAMINATION

The NAME OF RVSO complies with the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (as amended). To ensure equal opportunities for all qualified persons, the RVSO will make reasonable accommodations for candidates when appropriate. If you require special accommodations related to a disability in order to take the examination, you must complete this form and return it with your examination application.

Please type or print all information.

Last Name ___________________________ First Name_________________________ Middle Initial __

Telephone number: (___)_____________________________ Anticipated Examination Date: ______

Have you previously taken the RVSO Certifying Examination? [ ] Yes [ ] No

If yes, on what date? __________

Please identify the disability that substantially limits one or more of your sensory, manual, or speaking skills (e.g. disability that impairs significantly your ability to arrive at, read, or otherwise complete the examination):

Will your disability require a special accommodation in order for you to take the RVSO Certifying Examination? [ ] Yes [ ] No

If yes, please list the special testing accommodation requested. Use a separate sheet if more space is needed.

Note: You must provide the RVSO with written documentation from an appropriate health care professional supporting the accommodation you are requesting. This documentation must include a diagnosis of your health condition and a specific recommendation and justification for the special testing accommodation that you require. This documentation must be included with the submission of your examination application. The RVSO will not pay any costs that you may incur in obtaining the required diagnosis and recommendation. However, the RVSO will pay for any reasonable accommodations that are provided for you.

Signature of Candidate __________________________ Date __________
**Glossary of Abbreviations**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Abbreviation</th>
<th>Full Name</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>AAVC</td>
<td>American Association of Veterinary Clinicians</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AAVMC</td>
<td>Association of American Veterinary Medical Colleges</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AAVSB</td>
<td>American Association of Veterinary State Boards</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ABVP</td>
<td>American Board of Veterinary Practitioners</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ABVS</td>
<td>American Board of Veterinary Specialties</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ABVT</td>
<td>American Board of Veterinary Toxicology</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ACAW</td>
<td>American College of Animal Welfare</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ACLAM</td>
<td>American College of Laboratory Animal Medicine</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ACPV</td>
<td>American College of Poultry Veterinarians</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ACT</td>
<td>American College of Theriogenologists</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ACVAA</td>
<td>American College of Veterinary Anesthesia and Analgesia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ACVB</td>
<td>American College of Veterinary Behaviorists</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ACVCP</td>
<td>American College of Veterinary Clinical Pharmacology</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ACVD</td>
<td>American College of Veterinary Dermatology</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ACVECC</td>
<td>American College of Veterinary Emergency and Critical Care</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ACVIM</td>
<td>American College of Veterinary Internal Medicine</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ACVM</td>
<td>American College of Veterinary Microbiologists</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ACVN</td>
<td>American College of Veterinary Nutrition</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ACVO</td>
<td>American College of Veterinary Ophthalmologists</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ACVP</td>
<td>American College of Veterinary Pathologists</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ACVPM</td>
<td>American College of Veterinary Preventive Medicine</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ACVR</td>
<td>American College of Veterinary Radiology</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ACVS</td>
<td>American College of Veterinary Surgeons</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ACVSMR</td>
<td>American College of Veterinary Sports Medicine and Rehabilitation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ACZM</td>
<td>American College of Zoological Medicine</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Abbreviation</td>
<td>Description</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--------------</td>
<td>--------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ADA</td>
<td>Americans with Disabilities Act</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ARRC</td>
<td>ABVS Annual Report Review Committee</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AVDC</td>
<td>American Veterinary Dental College</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AVMA</td>
<td>American Veterinary Medical Association</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BOD</td>
<td>AVMA Board of Directors</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CDNS</td>
<td>ABVS Committee on Development of New Specialties</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>COE</td>
<td>AVMA Council on Education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EC</td>
<td>ABVS Executive Committee</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ECFVG</td>
<td>AVMA Educational Commission for Foreign Graduates</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HOD</td>
<td>AVMA House of Delegates</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MOC</td>
<td>Maintenance of certification</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NBVME</td>
<td>National Board of Veterinary Medical Examiners</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P&amp;P</td>
<td>ABVS Policies and Procedures Committee</td>
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<tr>
<td>PPEC</td>
<td>ABVS Postgraduate Program Evaluation Committee</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RVSO</td>
<td>Recognized Veterinary Specialty Organization</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RVS</td>
<td>Recognized Veterinary Specialty</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Appendix H
Overview of Recognition Process for RVSOs and RVSs

Organizing Committee (OC) of a proposed new specialty organization/specialty

Letter of intent submitted to ABVS

Liaisons are assigned to the OC of a proposed new specialty organization/specialty to assist the OC in the development of the petition

Liaisons submit an annual report on the OC's progress developing a petition for recognition to the ABVS committee on the Development of New Specialties (CDNS). The annual report is also presented to the ABVS. [Full petition must be submitted no more than four years following the submission of the letter of intent]

Feedback provided from liaisons, CDNS, and ABVS to the OC

The OC submits the information required in the Policies of the ABVS to the CDNS by November 1 to initiate the period of public comment. This should be within two years of submitting the letter of intent

YES
Period of public comment in initiated for 6 months. OC may provide content for a single information webpage following CDNS approval of content. [Public comments forwarded to liaisons and OC during period of public comment.]

NO
Returned to OC for further development

CDNS reviews information and accepts

YES
OC of the proposed new specialty organization/specialty submits a complete petition by September 1 to the liaison for review and input.

NO
Returned to OC for further development

Organizing Committee of the proposed new specialty organization/specialty submits a complete petition by November 1 to the ABVS CDNS for review.

[Petition must contain all required information and must address concerns and issues raised during the period of public comment]

YES
The chair of the CDNS assigns two reviewers to evaluate the petition

NO
Returned to OC for further development

CDNS determines if criteria for recognition have been met

YES
The ABVS forwards the petition and a recommendation for provisional recognition to the AVMA Board of Directors (BOD)

NO
Returned to OC for further development

The petition and the reviewers' report are forwarded to the ABVS. ABVS determines if the petition meets the criteria for recognition and votes to recommend provisional recognition.

The petition and the reviewers' report are forwarded to the ABVS. If the ABVS determines that the petition meets the criteria for recognition, the ABVS forwards the petition to the AVMA BOD along with a recommendation for recognition.