



March 17, 2020

Dear Deans,

The Council on Education (COE) is aware of the colleges' concerns about the impacts on students' education resulting from measures colleges and universities are taking to mitigate the risks from the COVID-19 pandemic. In particular, questions have been posed about the communications required should colleges suspend students' participation in clinical rotations.

The curriculum and the requirements for graduation are the purview of the college faculty; however, there are 2 accreditation Standards that are relevant to determining if those requirements have been met.

[Standard 9 Curriculum](#) (Policies and Procedures section 7.9) states: "The curriculum shall extend over a period equivalent to a minimum of four academic years, including a minimum of one academic year of hands-on clinical education." The COE interprets one academic year to be a minimum of 30 weeks of instruction. If colleges can ensure that all students will receive at least 30 weeks of hands-on clinical education, whether that instruction is delivered on or off-campus, there is no need to communicate with the COE. If students will not receive 30 weeks of hands-on clinical education, colleges should inform the COE about how many students will be so affected, and to what degree, and what measures are being taken to compensate for the loss of hands-on training.

[Standard 11 Outcomes Assessment](#) (Policies and Procedures section 7.11) states: "The college must have processes in place whereby students are observed and assessed, formatively and summatively, with timely documentation to assure accuracy of the assessment for having attained the following competencies:

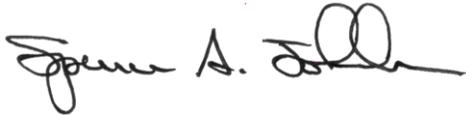
1. comprehensive patient diagnosis (problem solving skills), appropriate use of diagnostic testing, and record management
2. comprehensive treatment planning including patient referral when indicated
3. anesthesia and pain management, patient welfare
4. basic surgery skills and case management
5. basic medicine skills and case management
6. emergency and intensive care case management
7. understanding of health promotion, and biosecurity, prevention and control of disease including zoonoses and principles of food safety
8. ethical and professional conduct; communication skills including those that demonstrate an understanding and sensitivity to how clients' diversity and individual circumstance can impact health care
9. critical analysis of new information and research findings relevant to veterinary medicine."

Colleges must ensure that each graduate attains all of these competencies. If the college can ensure that each graduate has achieved these competencies through on or off-campus instruction, despite the programmatic changes enacted due to COVID-19, no communication with the COE is required. Should some students not achieve all competencies, colleges should inform the COE about how many students will be so affected, and to what degree, and what remediation measures are being taken for these students.

The COE shares the concerns for student, faculty, and staff safety during this challenging time. Recognizing that measures in response to COVID-19 mentioned above must be taken in a timely manner, the requirement to inform the COE in advance about substantive changes made in response to COVID-19 is waived. Colleges are expected to inform the COE of substantive changes and other measures taken in response to COVID-19 as soon as feasible, but within no more than 45 days of implementation.

Please direct any questions or concerns regarding accreditation matters to the COE through Dr. Karen Martens Brandt, Director of Education and Research, American Veterinary Medical Association Council on Education (kbrandt@avma.org).

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Spencer A. Johnston". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Spencer" and the last name "Johnston" being clearly legible. The middle initial "A." is also present.

Spencer A. Johnston VMD, Diplomate ACVS
Chair, Council on Education