



## AVMA-CVTEA® COVID-19 Policy

The provisions in the policy are for the sole purpose of management of the COVID-19 situation.

The provisions within this policy are in effect from November 7, 2020 (updated April 24, 2021) until, in the view of the American Veterinary Medical Association Committee on Veterinary Technician Education and Activities (AVMA-CVTEA, The Committee), the COVID-19 situation is considered resolved.

The Committee will reevaluate the plan on an as needed basis; however, no later than at each biannual meeting until the policy is no longer in effect.

The *Accreditation Policies and Procedures Manual of the AVMA-CVTEA* remains the primary source document for Policies and Procedures of the AVMA-CVTEA. The following policy modifications are designed for use in response to the COVID-19 situation only. All other aspects of the AVMA-CVTEA Policies and Procedures manual continue to apply.

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## Assignment of Site Visit Contingency Category

At the meeting of April 25, 2020, the AVMA-CVTEA adopted Site Visit Contingency Category Definitions. These definitions have been updated, as of November 7, 2020.

Contingency Category	Definition
Category 1	New programs, with no previous site visits.
Category 2	Existing programs with; <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Initial accreditation status</li> <li>- Probationary accreditation status</li> <li>- Full accreditation status for less than 10 years and/or VNTE 3-year pass rates ≤50%</li> <li>- Full accreditation status with unmet critical deficiencies and/or development of new issues of Standards non-compliance during the accreditation cycle.</li> </ul>
Category 3	Existing programs with full accreditation status for more than 10 years, and; <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Unmet major deficiencies and VTNE pass rates ≥50%</li> <li>- No deficiencies and VTNE pass rate ≥50%</li> </ul>
Category 4	New programs requesting initial accreditation, lacking a CVTEA approved application and confirmed site visit date.

Programs have been assigned a site visit contingency category based on the published AVMA-CVTEA accreditation status as of April 24, 2020, **and updated following each biannual meeting.**

The assigned site visit contingency category will be used by the AVMA-CVTEA during the COVID-19 situation for the purposes of site visit contingency planning.

## Site Visits

The following site visit provisions apply only to programs with site visits scheduled for 2020, ~~and 2021,~~ **and 2022.**

Upon authorization of the AVMA-CVTEA, a site visit may occur through audio and/or audio-visual means, in whole or in part.

Until early March 2020, the CVTEA site visit included CVTEA site teams physically at the site or sites of the visit. By mid- March 2020, COVID-19 caused the need for the CVTEA to conduct site visits that are audio and/or audio visual (“virtual site visits.”). The functions of the virtual comprehensive site visit and the special site visit are the same as those of the comprehensive site visit and the special site visit. Although the conduct of the virtual site visit is similar to that of the non-virtual site visit, it differs in adjustment to its modalities.

In the case where a virtual site visit is conducted, at the sole discretion of the Committee, an In-Person Site Visit may be required within a period not to exceed 18 months. The Committee may grant an extension of up to an additional 12 months to this time period for (COVID-19 related) cause.

If site visits are to be conducted virtually, AVMA-CVTEA staff, the Chair of the Site Visit team, and the Program will work collaboratively to determine the most appropriate modalities and Site Visit schedule to facilitate the visit.

Contingency Category	Site Visit
<b>Category 1</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• At 8 weeks prior to the scheduled site visit, the AVMA CVTEA will decide whether to proceed with planning for an In-Person site visit or to move to a virtual site visit. If a Virtual Site Visit occurs, an In-Person Site Visit is required within a period not to exceed 18 months. The Committee may grant an extension of up to an additional 12 months to this time period for (COVID-19 related) cause.</li> <li>• The accreditation decision may be made on the basis of the virtual site visit, or delayed until after the in-person visit, if the CVTEA requires further information to make an accreditation decision.</li> <li>• Once the accreditation decision is finalized, it may be made effective from the date of the virtual site visit.</li> </ul>
<b>Category 2</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• At 8 weeks prior to the scheduled site visit the AVMA CVTEA will decide whether to proceed with planning for an In-Person site visit, or to move to a virtual site visit, or postpone the site visit up to 18 months. If a Virtual Site Visit occurs, at the sole discretion of the Committee, an In-Person Site Visit may be required within a period not to exceed 18 months. The Committee may grant an extension of up to an additional 12 months to this time period for (COVID-19 related) cause.</li> <li>• The accreditation decision may be made on the basis of the virtual site visit, or delayed until after the in-person visit, if the CVTEA requires further information to make an accreditation decision.</li> <li>• Once the accreditation decision is finalized, it may be made effective from the date of the virtual site visit.</li> </ul>
<b>Category 3</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• At 8 weeks prior to the scheduled site visit the AVMA CVTEA will decide whether to proceed with planning for an In-Person site visit, move to a virtual site visit, or postpone the site visit up to 18 months.</li> <li>• If a Virtual Site Visit occurs, at the sole discretion of the Committee, an In-Person Site Visit may be required within a period not to exceed 18 months. The Committee may grant an extension of up to an additional 12 months to this time period for (COVID-19 related) cause.</li> <li>• The accreditation decision may be made on the basis of the virtual site visit, or delayed until after the in-person visit, if the CVTEA requires further information to make an accreditation decision.</li> <li>• Once the accreditation decision is finalized, it may be made effective from the date of the virtual site visit.</li> </ul>
<b>Category 4</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Defer Site Visit to 2022, or 2023, as scheduling allows.</li> <li>• Scheduling priority given to already accredited programs.</li> </ul>

## Site Evaluation Team

The *Accreditation Policies and Procedures of the AVMA Committee of Veterinary Technician Education and Activities (CVTEA)* sets out the makeup of a site evaluation team. Taking into account the COVID-19 situation, assembling a full site evaluation team may not always be possible. For the purposes of COVID-19 management, the minimum team shall consist of a chair, who is a CVTEA member, or past CVTEA member who has completed their term within the previous 3 years, one veterinarian, and one veterinary technician. The chair may fulfill the requirement for the veterinarian or veterinary technician. Thus, the minimum site evaluation team size will vary between two and three individuals. The site team will be supported by an AVMA staff member.

## Follow up In-Person Site Visits

In the case of programs in Category 1, where a follow up in-person site visit is required after a virtual visit, or for programs in Categories 2 or 3, where the committee, at its option, has required a follow up in-person site visit, the visit will be conducted in accordance with the provisions set forth in 'Section XI, Special Site Visit of the *Policies and Procedures of the AVMA-CVTEA*'.

## Accreditation Interval

For programs in Site Visit Contingency Category 2 and 3, the AVMA-CVTEA has authorized a temporary COVID-19 extension of the accreditation interval by a period not to exceed 18 months.

## Accreditation Status Definitions

The definitions of accreditation status remain as per the *Policies and Procedures of the AVMA-CVTEA*, with the one exception as per below:

The time period of resolution for deficiencies may be extended for (COVID-19 related) cause, by up to 18 months under the COVID-19 Policy.

## Essential Skill Acquisition

The Committee has made no changes to the requirement that all graduates of accredited programs must complete all essential skills prior to graduation.

In this unprecedented time, the Committee acknowledges that the most challenging skills to ensure student acquisition are the essential skills that are *italicized* and denoted by an asterisk\* in *Appendix I, Veterinary Technology Essential and Recommended Skills List of the Accreditation Policies and Procedures of the AVMA-CVTEA*.

For students graduating in Fall **2021** (on or before December 31<sup>st</sup>, 2021), the AVMA-CVTEA has made the following accommodation regarding the evaluation of essential skills.

If skills have been performed on live animals at clinical experience sites previously, but not assessed by program personnel, the AVMA-CVTEA will accept alternative documentation of skill evaluation as outlined below.

1. Attestation

Attending licensed veterinarian or credentialed veterinary technician that has graduated from an AVMA-CVTEA accredited program at Program approved/affiliated clinical sites signs a written statement to attest that the student completed the task on a live animal consistent with the program's established standardized criteria.

**COMBINED WITH**

2. Summative Assessment of Essential Skills by program personnel

Signed attestation is combined with a summative assessment where the student demonstrates competency following established standard criteria for each essential skill. Summative assessments must be evaluated by program personnel. Examples may include the student using a model to demonstrate the procedure to Program personnel in real time.

The AVMA CVTEA requires programs to maintain documentation as evidence of skill completion and assessment for future accreditation reporting.

[The allowance for the attestation pathway will sunset as of December 31, 2021.](#)

## Delay to Implementation Deadline for Standard 11d.

Standard 11d. of the *Accreditation Policies and Procedures Manual of the AVMA-CVTEA* currently states:

*The program's three year rolling average VTNE pass percentage for first time test takers must be 50% or higher. (\*Compliance with 11d. is expected by September 1, 2020. Programs not in compliance at this time may be subject to adverse accreditation status.*

The AVMA-CVTEA has delayed the implementation of Standard 11d. until [September 1, 2021](#). This decision is due to AVMA-CVTEA graduates' inability or delay in completing the Veterinary Technician National Exam for the spring 2020 testing period, during the COVID-19 pandemic.

## Reporting to the AVMA CVTEA

### Substantive Change Reports

The CVTEA has made the following temporary COVID-19 changes to substantive change reporting

- **temporary** changes to the method of delivery of learning in relation to management of COVID 19 requires notification within 30 days, not pre-approval.
- **temporary** changes to the student clock hours for completion in relation to management of COVID 19 requires notification within 30 days, not pre-approval.

Ends