

Appendix 2

Procedures for obtaining AVMA recognition of a veterinary specialty organization

Groups seeking ABVS recognition as a veterinary specialty organization should consult the timeline in Appendix 7 for important dates related to that process. Procedures include submission of a letter of intent and information to support a call for public comment, at least one period of public comment, submission of the results of a job task analysis and preliminary petition, and submission of a complete, formal petition for provision recognition. Provisional recognition will be for no less than four and no more than 10 years during which a request in support of full recognition will be submitted.

The ABVS will not recognize more than one specialty organization in a substantially similar field of veterinary medicine. 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 encourage the two groups to communicate to determine if the groups will work together to create a unified petition for submission. Similarly, a group approaching the ABVS for recognition in a field of veterinary medicine that overlaps substantially with an already existing RVSO/RVS will be directed to contact that organization to determine future direction or viability, if any.

1. A group of veterinarians seeking AVMA recognition for a veterinary specialty organization must submit a letter of intent before the date listed in the timeline in Appendix 7 containing the following information:
 - a. Acknowledgement that the organizing group has read and understands the standards that the ABVS uses as basis for AVMA recognition.
 - b. A statement that the organizing group has read the procedures for obtaining AVMA recognition.
 - c. A brief (1 paragraph) description of the scope of practice intended for recognition as well as justification that the proposed specialty organization is distinct from presently recognized RVSOs or their RVSS.
 - d. 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.
 - e. A list of the organizing committee members and their qualifications based upon the criteria below (including current CV). A separate letter of agreement to serve on the organizing committee from each individual identified should accompany the letter of intent.

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 practicing or teaching the proposed specialty in a college or department of veterinary medicine.
- b. Be an author of important publications relevant to the emerging specialty resulting from research or practice in the specialty.
- c. Have at least 10 years of 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.

Members of the organizing committee:

- a. Should be no fewer than 30 for a veterinary specialty organization and no fewer than 18 for a veterinary specialty.
 - b. Should include representatives from academia, research, industry, government, and the private sector where appropriate.
 - c. Should come from diverse geographical areas.
 - d. 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.
 - e. Will be "founders" of the RVSO 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.
2. Organizations seeking ABVS recognition must submit yearly progress reports until submission of their petition. Petitions for provisional recognition must be submitted to the ABVS within four years of receipt of the letter of intent.
3. VSOC liaisons and public comment:
Upon acceptance of a letter of intent from an emerging new specialty, the chair of the ABVS will encourage the emerging specialty to work with VSOC-appointed liaisons who will help the organizing committee of the emerging specialty to prepare the petition. The organizing committee will be asked to submit a one-page description of the proposed specialty organization that will serve as the basis for solicitation of public comment. The primary purposes of public comment are to gauge both the distinctiveness of the proposed specialty from currently recognized RVSOs and RVSs as well as the public need for, and potential acceptance of, a veterinary specialty in the intended facet of veterinary medicine.
- a. The ABVS will review the letter of intent at their spring meeting and, if accepted, the period of public comment will begin shortly thereafter. The ABVS 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 ABVS will review the information and opinions gathered by public comment and forward it to the petitioning veterinary specialty organization. Concerns and issues raised by the public must be addressed by the petitioning organization in the formal petition for AVMA recognition. The period of public comment is used to gauge the need for, and public acceptance of a new veterinary specialty from diverse stakeholders.

4. Submission of an initial petition for provisional recognition of a veterinary specialty or specialty organization.
 - a. Once the proposed specialty organization is ready to move forward with their petition, the organizing committee of the petitioning veterinary specialty organization must submit the information specified below in the contents for a petition for recognition by the deadline shown in Appendix 7.
 - b. If the petition is complete, a second period of public comment may be initiated at ABVS discretion before the complete, formal petition is submitted.

5. Contents for a petition for recognition of a new veterinary specialty organization
 - a. The petition must contain a curriculum vitae for each member of the organizing committee.
 - b. The petitioning organization must document that it meets the standards for a veterinary specialty organization recognized by the AVMA as specified in the Policies and Procedures of the ABVS. Each item must be specifically addressed.
 - c. The petitioning organization must document the number of individuals anticipated to pursue diplomate status of the specialty 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, industrial, or governmental veterinary medicine and the public.
 - d. 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.
 - e. 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:
 - i. Define the scientific basis of the proposed specialty, and particularly the evidence supporting efficacy for petitioning organizations with a clinical basis.
 - ii. Relate the subject matter to current professional and postgraduate veterinary medical curricula.
 - iii. 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).
 - iv. Describe current or proposed continuing education programs.
 - f. There must be a description of relationships and commonalities with existing RVSOs.
 - g. 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.
 - h. There must be a job task analysis. This information will be used to determine the breadth and depth of the proposed specialty; how much, if any, overlap there may be with an existing recognized veterinary specialty; and to establish that the proposed specialty will provide a veterinary need.

- i. 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:
 - i. The name of the RVSO/RVS.
 - ii. A statement of objectives.
 - iii. Titles, election procedures, and duties of officers.
 - iv. A description of membership categories, including duties, privileges, and method of selection for each.
 - v. 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).
 - vi. A description of the scope and nature of certifying examinations.
 - vii. Procedures for establishing and amending dues and fees.
 - viii. Causes and procedures for censuring or suspending diplomates or canceling certification.
 - ix. Procedures for appealing adverse decisions.
 - x. Procedures for conducting business and meetings.
 - xi. Procedures for amending the constitution and/or bylaws.
 - xii. A letter of intent regarding creation of an RVS 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.

- j. 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 the RVS or their independent certification board if one is to be created.

- k. 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.

- l. 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.

- m. There must be a financial statement.

- n. 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.

6. Submission of the final petition for provisional recognition of a veterinary specialty or specialty organization.
 - a. The final petition must be submitted to the ABVS within four years of receipt of the letter of intent. It must be submitted by the deadline shown in Appendix 7 to be included at the next meeting of the ABVS.
 - b. The petition will consist of the contents of the initial petition, with revisions noted to address concerns addressed by ABVS review and concerns raised through the public comment period.
 - c. 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.

7. Provisionally recognized veterinary specialty organizations
 - a. If provisional recognition has been granted, the newly recognized veterinary specialty organization may be given direction by the ABVS for future growth and enhancement of processes and should 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/RVS (or their independent certification board) may examine and certify candidates, collect dues, send a representative to VSOC meetings, and conduct other business as specified in its constitution and/or bylaws, and/or other policies and procedures documents.
 - b. 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. This includes founders.
 - c. Provisionally recognized RVSS or RVSOs will be required to submit interim progress reports (Appendix 11) to the ABVS on an annual basis.
 - d. After provisional recognition is awarded, only those individuals completing the credentialing requirements and certification examinations as stipulated in the petition shall be considered board certified specialists in the RVSO field of veterinary medicine. In no case shall individuals be 'chartered' as diplomates without meeting the examination requirements of other candidates for board-certification in that specialty.
 - e. 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 ABVS.
 - i. The ABVS may grant an extension of the 10-year time limit, if an extension is requested in writing.
 - ii. A petition for full recognition must be organized in the format described under the guidelines above and must indicate that the organization is fully functional and fulfilling its stated objectives.
 - iii. The ABVS will review the request for full recognition and either consider granting full recognition or make appropriate suggestions to the provisionally recognized veterinary specialty organization in regard to areas of concern.

8. Adverse decisions regarding recognition of veterinary specialty organizations.
 - a. At any point after receipt of a letter of intent or during review of a petition

for recognition of a veterinary specialty organization adverse decisions may be rendered.

- b. The ABVS 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 appellate procedures of the ABVS.
- c. The organization may: take action to correct, when possible, the deficiencies identified and resubmit a revised petition for recognition within a 5-year period after submission of the letter of intent; petition the ABVS for reconsideration; or appeal under the appellate procedures of the ABVS.
- d. Petitions for reconsideration or additional review must be made in accordance with the established appellate procedures described in Appendices 4 or 5 of the ABVS P&P.