

TFFVSA final report as Approved

by the Task Force 3 19 2013



History of the Formation of the AVMA Task Force on Foreign Veterinary School Accreditation

In July 2011, the AVMA House of Delegates (HOD) passed Resolution #5, Formation of Foreign Accreditation Task Force. This resolution recommended that the AVMA Executive Board form a task force to perform a peer review of the accreditation of foreign veterinary schools, addressing the impact of the AVMA Council on Education (COE) procedure and the consequences of this program on the veterinary profession in the United States and the quality of standards for the veterinary profession in the United States.

In August 2011, the AVMA Executive Board created the AVMA Task Force on Foreign Veterinary School Accreditation, to consist of 11 forward-thinking individuals able to participate in critical thought and discussions, ask elucidating questions and challenge assumptions, and engage positively and proactively as team members to accomplish the charge of the Task Force. Collectively, Task Force members were to have an understanding of veterinary medical education, educational accreditation processes, educational equivalency certification, and public and private practice needs. Task Force members were to represent diverse experiences, disciplines, and employment both inside and outside the veterinary profession. The appointees were to include diversity among gender, generation, ethnicity, and geographic region. An appointing body composed of the Executive Board Chair, President, President-Elect, Executive Vice President, House Advisory Committee Chair, SAVMA President, and the Task Force on Foreign Veterinary School Accreditation Chair reviewed applicants and selected the members of the Task Force.

Members of the Task Force

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Charge of the Task Force

The Foreign Veterinary School Accreditation Task Force is charged with evaluating the following issues, given the current environment projected over 10 years:

- The impact of foreign veterinary school accreditation on the US veterinary profession and the quality of standards for the US veterinary profession.
- The impact of not requiring certification by the Educational Commission for Foreign Veterinary Graduates (ECFVG) or the Program for the Assessment of Veterinary Medical Education (PAVE) for graduates of AVMA COE–accredited foreign schools.
- How foreign veterinary school accreditation serves the needs and interests of the public.
- How foreign veterinary school accreditation serves the needs and interests of AVMA members.
- The existence of any international pressure on the AVMA COE to accredit foreign veterinary schools.
- The logistics of accrediting foreign veterinary schools.

The Task Force is also charged with preparing a written informational report of these issues, without prejudice, for submission to the Executive Board. The Task Force will sunset upon receipt of its report by the Executive Board.

Materials and Methods

The Task Force held one in-person meeting at AVMA Headquarters in March 2012. This meeting consisted of reviewing materials, meeting with AVMA volunteers and staff, and determining additional information needed. The materials reviewed included the following:

- AVMA COE Standards of Accreditation
- Accreditation Policies and Procedures of the AVMA COE
- Multiple *JAVMA* articles addressing foreign school accreditation
- AVMA aggregate data on member's schools of graduation, both foreign and domestic
- North American Veterinary Licensing Examination (NAVLE) technical reports (2009 to 2011)

Representative members of the AVMA COE and ECFVG and their staff met with the Task Force to enable it to better understand the entities and how they relate to accreditation. At this meeting, the Task Force also decided to conduct a survey of all the currently accredited foreign veterinary schools to better understand their desire to become accredited. After this meeting, the Task Force members continued to communicate through email list software applications and conference calls to gather remaining information and develop the final report.

Overview



In addressing the specific elements of its charge, the Task Force recognizes that, as with all things, there are challenges and opportunities associated with accreditation of foreign veterinary schools. Globalization is occurring worldwide within and outside of the veterinary profession, as evidenced by multiple international veterinary medical organizations. Accreditation of foreign schools of veterinary medicine is consistent with the concept of One World, One Health, One Medicine and the growing importance of veterinary medicine in public health, food safety, and emergent disease control. Accreditation of foreign veterinary schools by the AVMA currently fills a need for accreditation at the world level that recognizes public health, food safety, and emergent diseases cross borders. Increasing the quality of veterinary medicine globally improves veterinary medicine at all levels, and many members believe AVMA leadership in foreign veterinary school accreditation is important. However, such an undertaking is complex and changes over time. Given diversity across countries, accreditation of foreign veterinary schools encounters ever wider programmatic variety in schools and ever greater complexity of applying a common set of standards to them. The Task Force spent a great deal of time discussing the challenges of accrediting increasingly diverse veterinary school programs globally.

Relevant to the globalization of veterinary medicine and the value of AVMA leadership in accreditation, the Task Force conducted a survey of accredited foreign veterinary schools and those currently seeking accreditation (Addendum 1). Respondents stated their motivation for seeking AVMA COE accreditation is that AVMA COE accreditation provides recognition of the highest standard of veterinary education worldwide and along with it the highest level of educational quality. Enhanced opportunities for collaboration, recruitment of international students, and the need for international cooperation on foreign and emerging disease control also are deemed important by survey respondents.

The AVMA COE, with its responsibilities for accreditation of schools and colleges of veterinary medicine, operates within a context shaped by the US Department of Education (USDE), the Council on Higher Education (CHEA), the AVMA, and the state veterinary medical licensing boards. Recognition by the USDE designates the COE as a competent accrediting body of veterinary schools. The CHEA provides third party verification of the quality of the COE accreditation process, consistent with national accepted standards. The COE is positioned as a council within the governance of the AVMA, but unlike other aspects of AVMA governance, the COE is separated from the rest of the AVMA organization by an information barrier (ie, an ethical wall) to prevent conflicts of interest. The AVMA provides staff support to the work of the COE, and the AVMA HOD elects the majority of COE members. However, accreditation assessment and determination are made confidentially by the COE and independently from the AVMA. The AVMA controls whether the COE exists and is in the business of accrediting veterinary schools, but the operation otherwise occurs solely within the COE. State veterinary medical licensing boards generally specify that graduates of accredited veterinary schools are eligible to sit for their licensing examination or have other provisions for applicants from veterinary schools not accredited by the COE, along with any other requirements. The states have recognized COE accreditation as fulfilling their educational requirement.



Four organizations influence the shape and function of the COE (Figure 1). The USDE is headed by the Secretary of Education, a political appointee, with new appointments made at various times, most commonly with each presidential election cycle. Such changes can and do bring about transitions in emphasis within USDE policy, although the Secretary of Education works within guidelines laid out by Congress in the Higher Education Act. One example is the recent increased emphasis on outcomes assessment, which has come to play a major role in the work of the AVMA COE in foreign school accreditation.

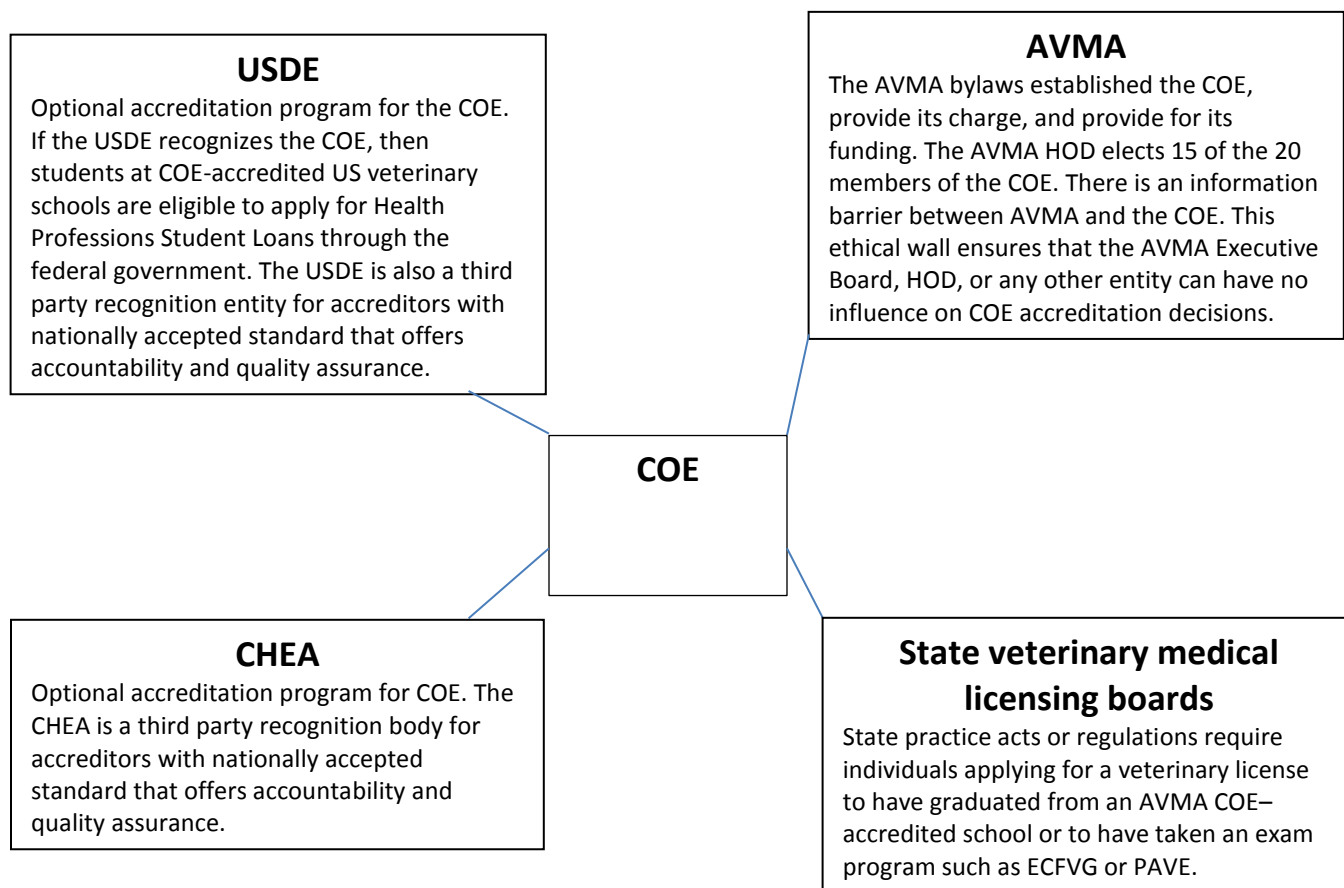


Figure 1

Although the Secretary and USDE recognition staff certainly have some impact on the recognition process, Congress is the entity responsible for periodically renewing the Higher Education Act (HEA), the authorizing legislation the USDE uses to promulgate the regulations governing the recognition of accrediting agencies.



The following three paragraphs are taken directly from the USDE website (www.usde.gov) and provide additional background on the role of the USDE in accreditation within the United States:

The U.S. Department of Education does not accredit educational institutions and/or programs. However, the Secretary of Education is required by law to publish a list of nationally recognized accrediting agencies that the Secretary determines to be reliable authorities as to the quality of education or training provided by the institutions of higher education and the higher education programs they accredit.

Please note, the Secretary of Education's recognition of accrediting agencies is limited by statute to accreditation activities within the United States. Although many recognized agencies carry out accrediting activities outside the United States, these actions are not within the legal authority of the Department of Education to recognize, are not reviewed by the Department, and the Department does not exercise any oversight over them. (Consequently, institutions and programs outside the United States that are accredited by recognized agencies are not included in the USDE database.)

The goal of accreditation is to ensure that education provided by institutions of higher education meets acceptable levels of quality. Accrediting agencies, which are private educational associations of regional or national scope, develop evaluation criteria and conduct peer evaluations to assess whether or not those criteria are met. Institutions and/or programs that request an agency's evaluation and that meet an agency's criteria are then "accredited" by that agency.

An important aspect of USDE policy is that the COE must be free of any outside influence with regard to application of its standards in assessing a school for accreditation. Thus, the COE performs its work independently from the AVMA. Although state veterinary licensing bodies acknowledge and accept the authority of AVMA COE accreditation, the COE receives recognition as an accrediting body from the USDE (USDE recognition is voluntary and provides student access to the federal Health Professions Student Loan under title VII of the Public Health Services Act; Figure 1). The one functional point of connection in ongoing operations between the AVMA and the COE is the support of AVMA staff, who serve as liaisons between the two. In addition, it is important to note that 15 of the 20 members of COE are elected by the AVMA HOD (one member is appointed by the American Association of Veterinary Medical Colleges, one member is elected by the Canadian Veterinary Medical Association, and three public members are elected by the Council). Accreditation decisions can be influenced only by the quality of a program under consideration as measured against COE standards. Workforce and economic issues, specifically the impact of accreditation or failure of accreditation on the veterinary professional workforce and the resulting economic impact of increasing or decreasing numbers of veterinarians entering the profession, cannot influence the accreditation evaluation process. Factoring workforce and



economic issues into the accreditation decision would quickly erode the high credibility of COE accreditation.

In the press recently, economic and workforce concerns have been raised regarding the accreditation of foreign veterinary schools, increased class sizes in current American schools, as well as the addition of new schools within the United States. Regarding foreign schools, concerns raised in the press include governmental support of the veterinary students, larger class sizes, and the speculation that funding of a small animal hospital on one foreign campus by a US-based corporate practice, could mean that veterinarians would be entering the United States to practice in this corporate setting. While economic and workforce concerns cannot be considered in the accreditation process, this fact is not always in the minds of veterinarians when reading these recent articles. Although USDE and CHEA recognition require the COE to apply accreditation standards consistently across schools, these issues were complicated by the lack of clarity to the profession at large about the application of standards in an increasingly diverse array of accredited foreign institutional schools and programs. However, it is clear that the COE can only consider the quality of the foreign veterinary school program in terms of applying its standards to the competence of that foreign veterinary school program's graduates as entry-level veterinarians in the United States.

The Accreditation Policies and Procedures of the AVMA COE manual in section 4.2. Scope and Purpose states,

It is the objective of the AVMA COE to ensure that each graduate of an accredited college of veterinary medicine will be firmly based in the fundamental principles, scientific knowledge, and physical and mental skills of veterinary medicine. Graduates should be able to apply these fundamentals to solving veterinary medical problems for different species and types of domestic animals. The fundamentals with which each graduate leaves the college are expected to provide a basis for a variety of career activities including clinical patient care, research, and other non-clinical options relevant to animal and human health. These fundamentals should be the basis for a lifetime of learning and professional development. The Council attempts to conduct all activities in ways that best serve the interests of the veterinary profession, veterinary students, and society, without discrimination on the basis of age, race, gender, or creed. While recognizing the existence and appropriateness of diverse institutional missions and educational objectives, the Council subscribes to the proposition that local circumstances do not justify accreditation of a substandard program in veterinary education leading to a professional degree.

Thus, as the COE assesses whether a foreign school of veterinary medicine is prepared to produce a competent entry-level veterinarian, the COE uses the qualifications of an entry-level veterinarian in the



United States as the standard and does not adjust for the qualifications of an entry-level veterinarian in the country where the school is located. This is the same standard that the COE applies to all accredited schools, foreign or domestic.

Strict confidentiality on the part of the COE is essential, but unfortunately, it also adds to the level of confusion and potential suspicion when issues such as foreign veterinary school accreditation are discussed within the AVMA membership.

Accreditation by the COE does not indicate equivalency, but rather provides assurance that a school or college of veterinary medicine meets a minimum standard for the creation of an entry-level veterinarian, and some schools exceed the standard more than others. This has created some misperceptions that the COE standards are not being applied consistently to all institutions that have been accredited. All COE-accredited foreign schools meet the baseline standard, and the degree to which the schools exceed the standard ranges from little to large.

Addressing the Questions in the Task Force's Charge

What is the impact of foreign veterinary school accreditation on the quality and standards of the US veterinary profession?

The Task Force believes the impact of foreign veterinary school accreditation on the quality and standards of the US veterinary profession has three components:

- Providing a leadership role in shaping world veterinary medical standards to the benefit of the entire profession including the United States.
- Improving human and animal health in the United States by addressing global emergent and zoonotic diseases, food safety, and public health.
- Improving the overall veterinary infrastructure around the globe.

The Task Force believes that veterinary medicine in the United States sets the highest veterinary professional standards in the world. Based on responses to a survey conducted by the Task Force of foreign veterinary schools currently accredited by the AVMA COE and those seeking accreditation (Addendum 1), the primary reason foreign veterinary schools seek accreditation by the AVMA COE is to obtain recognition that their educational program has attained the highest veterinary medical education standards worldwide.

As opposed to following standards that might be imposed by other organizations, countries, or regions, the AVMA COE provides leadership and allows the veterinary profession within the United States to set the standard for veterinary professional standards to the highest quality.



Globalization of veterinary medicine in the areas of emerging and zoonotic diseases, food safety, and public health is a critical issue, based on both the experience of the past 20 years and looking to the future. Emergent diseases and import and export of animal food and fiber products pose well-known hazards. The ability to connect to a network of veterinary medical facilities and personnel around the world that have the effective capacity to coordinate with the United States in responding to these issues is of growing importance. But this aspect of veterinary medicine can be addressed most effectively in veterinary schools with institutional access to robust research programs and strong basic science programs and that have the diagnostic capacity to collaborate with governmental and private sector organizations that deal with emergent and zoonotic diseases, food safety, and public health.

The Task Force believes those accredited schools that are part of a larger institution of higher learning with strong basic sciences, robust research activity, and effective diagnostic laboratories are in a better position to collaborate with government entities and other schools in dealing with human and animal health threats that cross borders. Those schools that do not have these capacities can produce veterinarians that are competent as entry-level practitioners, but they cannot participate as effectively in meeting these particular challenges. Certainly, foreign schools that exceed the COE standards in these areas are a major asset for collaborating with veterinary medicine in the United States.

The Task Force recognizes that it is the role of accreditation to ensure the production of a veterinarian capable of entering private or public practice. However, given the benefits of international collaboration, the Task Force believes that the standard on research in conjunction with the supporting language in the COE Policy and Procedure Manual should be reviewed to determine whether there is a role for the COE accreditation process to encourage the capacity for international collaboration. Furthermore, the Task Force believes that the COE should clarify the criteria for determining whether a veterinary school is part of a larger institution of higher learning as required by Standard 1 or is a free-standing institution and thus not eligible for accreditation.

What is the impact of not requiring certification by the ECFVG or PAVE for graduates of AVMA COE–accredited foreign schools?

The two procedures used by state licensing boards to assess entry-level clinical competency for graduates of both foreign and domestic schools are reliance on the COE accreditation process to ensure thorough and effective clinical education, including hands-on competence, and for graduates of foreign schools not accredited by the COE, the ECFVG or PAVE certification process. In addition, some foreign schools are part of an accreditation process in their own country as well. Generally speaking, state examining boards do not include practical examinations, either written or hands-on, in the licensing process. All 50 states recognize ECFVG certification, a four-step educational equivalency assessment certification program that includes a basic and clinical veterinary sciences knowledge exam,



documentation of English language competence, and a hands-on clinical assessment. The PAVE is another certification program, which is recognized by 38 state licensing boards.

Certification by the ECFVG or PAVE for graduates of AVMA COE–accredited foreign or domestic veterinary schools has never been required. The Task Force was asked to assess the impact of not requiring such certification for graduates of AVMA COE–accredited foreign schools. Consequently, the Task Force determined there are insufficient data to make an assessment. Those individual veterinarians pursuing US licensure who graduated from foreign veterinary schools prior to such schools receiving COE accreditation would have sought certification through the ECFVG or PAVE. Those results are not known by the Task Force. The absence of any domestic graduate data makes comparison of foreign and domestic graduate results an impossibility.

Currently, the only uniform standard for licensure in the United States is the NAVLE. The COE reviews any available student NAVLE scores during the school accreditation evaluation process; however, completion of the NAVLE by students is not a requirement for accreditation by the COE. The COE does require as one aspect of maintaining accreditation that, if students of the school take the NAVLE, 80% of senior students or graduates taking the NAVLE must pass it. However, many foreign schools do not have enough graduates taking this test to produce useful numbers for evaluation. The COE uses a 95% confidence interval to determine the probability that the pass rate of a small sample size would fall below 80% if the entire graduating class had taken the NAVLE and are considering a 95% confidence interval based on the mean pass rate among accredited schools. For example, the Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México graduated 350 veterinarians in its most recent class but very few, if any, have taken the NAVLE.

However, two issues must be considered beyond this conclusion.

The first is that, whereas the ECFVG and PAVE certification programs required of graduates from veterinary programs not accredited by the COE verify hands-on clinical knowledge and skills, the NAVLE, by definition, does not test for hands-on clinical skills. In the absence of ECFVG or PAVE for graduates of accredited foreign schools, the assurance for student preparation in clinical skills is left to the COE in its accreditation procedures. The COE requires that all accredited schools must document that they have directly assessed each student’s clinical competence relative to the nine clinical competencies, found in COE Standard 11 (Outcomes Assessment), as part of the accreditation process. Because the COE cannot test each student, it ensures that each foreign (and domestic) school maintains a process for appropriate clinical training that includes hands-on clinical skills. The required seven-year visits and annual reports are part of these procedures. A computer-based simulation that re-creates the Clinical Competency Test (which was used in conjunction with the superseded National Board of Veterinary Medical Examiners National Board Examination until 1980) has been suggested as



potentially useful; however, the original test was discontinued due to a lack of efficacy. More importantly, such speculation is relevant to licensing issues, rather than accreditation.

The second issue that must be considered is that although the NAVLE does not assess hands-on clinical skill level, it does test for clinical knowledge in a broader sense. Thus, it does provide an important monitor of clinical education training. However, as noted above, exposure to the NAVLE is very mixed among foreign schools. The majority of those COE-accredited foreign veterinary school seniors who take the NAVLE are US citizens educated at Ross University School of Veterinary Medicine or St. George's University School of Veterinary Medicine, where education includes a final clinical year at a US veterinary school. Regardless, the NAVLE does provide some insight into how effectively the accreditation process for foreign schools reflects the quality of education, at least in comparison to domestic schools. Based on recent data (Addendum 2), the percentage of examinees who fail is much higher for senior students and graduates of veterinary schools not accredited by the COE than for senior students in COE-accredited veterinary schools who are taking NAVLE for the first time under standard testing conditions. This strongly suggests that foreign school accreditation accurately identifies schools with a high quality of education, as measured by the NAVLE. This is an important point because the NAVLE is the national threshold examination in the licensure process in the United States. The COE is working on ways to compensate for the uneven NAVLE participation among foreign schools, and the Task Force believes that this issue could potentially be alleviated by requiring all graduates of COE-accredited foreign schools to take the NAVLE. However, the COE believes that unless standardized exams are taken with high stakes, which is the case with US graduates and seniors seeking licensure and would not be the case with foreign graduates only taking the test as a requirement for their school's accreditation, the results would not likely be reliable as an indicator of student achievement. The COE also makes the point that the NAVLE is only one among many ways clinical education is assessed in accreditation and that it is easy to place too much importance on NAVLE scores. According to the COE, outcomes assessment plays a major and identical role in the accreditation of domestic and foreign schools and all schools are required to produce several direct and indirect measures of student achievement of the nine clinical competencies. All accredited colleges are required to collect multiple forms of outcomes assessment data, and they are required to demonstrate that they have analyzed and used the results to address curricular deficiencies.

The Accreditation Policies and Procedures of the AVMA COE manual in section 12.11.1c Outcome Assessments states that

the learning objectives for each of the nine listed competencies, and a summary of the analysis of evidence-based data collected for each of the nine listed competencies [are] used to ensure that graduates are prepared for entry-level practice (please note that a listing of core and elective blocks does not constitute evidence of learning). Evidence of student learning outcomes for clinical competencies must be obtained by direct measures.



These may include capstone experiences, student portfolios, standardized clinical proficiency exams, or other evaluations of clinical performance based on measurable and published program objectives. Indirect measures should not be used as the sole determinants of clinical competency outcomes. Examples include employer surveys and student course or rotation grades...

How does foreign veterinary school accreditation serve the needs and interests of the public and AVMA members?

Emerging and zoonotic diseases cross borders, and the globalization of public health threats continues to rise. Veterinary schools are in a critical position to provide research and diagnostic services and to support governmental entities in this area. The accreditation of foreign schools contributes to networking among institutions and to the collective level of expertise around the world. By definition, this constitutes a key contribution to the realization of the concept of One World, One Health, One Medicine. The international collaboration that attended the foot-and-mouth disease outbreak in Great Britain in 2001 was an important example of this.

From an altruistic point of view and central to the Veterinarian's Oath, AVMA COE accreditation of foreign schools contributes to the quality of practicing veterinarians over time. As a result, animals and their owners are ever better served. Indeed, this is the most common reason stated either directly or indirectly, that foreign schools seek accreditation. To the extent animal health and well-being are attached to human health and nutrition, this emphasis is even more important.

Is there any evidence of international pressure on the AVMA COE to accredit foreign veterinary schools?

The potential for international pressure on the AVMA COE to accredit foreign veterinary schools was discussed by the Task Force at length with input from representatives of the COE. The Task Force found no evidence of international pressure on the AVMA COE to accredit foreign veterinary schools. Since 2008, the COE has been approached by 1 to 2 foreign veterinary schools annually inquiring about accreditation. In that same five-year time period, the COE has accredited 4 foreign veterinary schools; however, 2 of the 4 schools approached the AVMA and began the accreditation process well over five years ago.

The Task Force also discussed with COE representatives whether the question of international pressure should be extended to include any legal pressure from the foreign schools seeking accreditation. Again, the COE did not feel that legal pressure from any school seeking accreditation had been applied to them. In one instance, an appeal was filed but was dropped when the COE vacated its earlier adverse decision due to a change in the USDE requirements of due process, which mandate the COE allow schools that



are subject to an adverse accreditation action the opportunity to respond in writing to the deficiencies leading to the adverse action. In this case, it was necessary to conduct a second site visit to validate the evidence submitted in the school's response. Once the evidence was validated, the school was found to be in compliance with the standards and granted accreditation.

What are the logistical resources required to accredit foreign veterinary schools?

Volunteer and staff representatives of the COE indicate that the accreditation of foreign schools of veterinary medicine is designed to be resource neutral.

This finding was detailed in the November 2011 report *AVMA's Current Role in Global Veterinary Activities*, prepared by the AVMA Office of the Executive Vice President. The report concluded that all of the AVMA's international efforts (not limited to foreign veterinary school accreditation) are a small part of the overall resources (in terms of both money and staff and volunteer time) expended to advance the AVMA's strategic plan and mission to improve animal and human health and advance the veterinary medical profession. From a purely economic point of view, these efforts represent less than 2.5% of the AVMA's overall budget. At the same time, internationally focused activities contribute positively to the AVMA's budget; international income in 2011 and 2012 represented nearly 2.0% of annual income. The following is an excerpt from the report regarding the resources involved in accrediting foreign veterinary schools:

Veterinary Education—In compliance with the *Accreditation Policies and Procedures of the AVMA Council on Education* (www.avma.org/education/cvea/coe_pp.asp), site-visit (on-site evaluation) expenses associated with accrediting veterinary medical schools/colleges outside the United States and Canada are borne by the international school seeking such accreditation and not by the AVMA. These expenses include airfare, lodging, and meal costs for all volunteer site-team members and AVMA staff.

In addition to payment of all site-visit related expenses, each international school evaluated by the COE is charged an administrative fee (in US dollars) prior to each on-site evaluation; current administrative fees (2011–2012) are indicated below:

Consultative site visit: \$10,000
Consultation with an accredited college: \$2,000
Comprehensive site visit: \$15,000
Focused site visit: \$2,750

Once accredited, each international veterinary medical school must also pay an annual administrative fee of \$1,000.



The administrative fee structure is designed to defray AVMA overhead costs associated with international accreditation activities, and is reviewed annually by the COE and subject to change based upon the rate of US inflation and/or other factors.

Veterinary schools within the United States and Canada are responsible for site-visit expenses (e.g., travel, lodging, meals) required for assessment of new veterinary schools seeking a status of reasonable assurance or with a provisional accreditation status. In addition, should an accredited school within the US or Canada request COE consultation on program development not directly related to an accreditation decision, the school pays for all such site-visit expenses.

Once accredited, the costs of site visits for US and Canadian veterinary schools are shared by those schools, the AVMA, and the Canadian Veterinary Medical Association (CVMA) through payment by each school of a once-every-seven-years administrative fee of \$10,000 (US). This seven year period coincides with the normal site visit and accreditation cycle. The AVMA then pays for site-visit expenses (e.g., travel, lodging, meals) for the COE, AVMA staff, and local veterinary medical association members of the site team; the CVMA pays the travel expenses for its member of the site team.

For both US and international site visits, volunteer team members are reimbursed for their expenses, but no honorariums are paid.

The text of the entire report can be found on the AVMA website and is available to the public.

The COE currently accredits 46 veterinary schools. The COE conducts a maximum of 12 site visits annually. The current number is typically seven per year, including one or two foreign veterinary school site visits. United States and Canadian schools have first priority on site visit dates. Site visits are required once every seven years to maintain accreditation.

For the future, if all foreign colleges that have expressed interest and appear to have a realistic expectation of meeting the standards were accredited, the total number of accredited programs would increase to 51 (including two domestic schools that have expressed interest), with the COE conducting a mean of seven to eight site visits annually. The number of foreign veterinary colleges capable of meeting the COE standards is limited due to divergent societal needs around the globe.

Conclusion

The Task Force on Foreign Veterinary School Accreditation has thoughtfully reviewed the elements of its charge and fully recognizes there are opportunities and challenges inherent to AVMA COE accreditation of foreign veterinary schools. The following items warrant further consideration:



- Increasing the quality of veterinary medicine globally improves veterinary medicine at all levels, and many members believe AVMA leadership in foreign veterinary school accreditation is important. In fact, those foreign veterinary schools that are accredited and those seeking accreditation stated that AVMA COE accreditation provides recognition of the highest standard of veterinary education worldwide and along with it the highest level of educational quality.
- The Task Force agrees that veterinary medicine in the United States sets the highest veterinary professional standards in the world. Accreditation of foreign schools adds a network of veterinary schools outside the United States that are increasing the knowledge base within and outside of the US veterinary profession. The ability for the United States to connect to a global network of veterinary medical facilities and personnel with the effective capacity to coordinate with the United States in responding to emerging and zoonotic diseases, food safety, and public health is of growing importance. Yet the Task Force believes this aspect of veterinary medicine can be addressed most effectively in veterinary schools that include institutional access to robust research programs and strong basic science programs and that have the diagnostic capacity to collaborate with governmental and private sector organizations that deal with emerging and zoonotic diseases, food safety, and public health. There should be a role in COE accreditation to encourage greater capacity for international collaboration.
- Recognition as a competent accrediting body of veterinary schools by the USDE and CHEA requires the COE to apply accreditation standards consistently across schools. The diversity among countries suggests that the COE encounters an ever wider programmatic variety in schools and ever greater complexity of applying a common set of standards to them. Lack of familiarity with the intricacies of the accreditation process can contribute to individual perceptions of uneven application of accreditation standards, and such misunderstanding can be exacerbated by the necessary confidentiality adhered to by the COE.
- The Task Force believes that the COE should clarify the criteria for determining whether a veterinary school is part of a larger institution of higher learning as required by Standard 1 or is a free-standing institution and thus not eligible for accreditation.
- Because the Task Force finds it is unclear how clinical education and outcomes assessment standards are met across diverse institutions, the Task Force believes it is unclear how the COE–accredited foreign veterinary schools consistently matriculate graduates that are equal to US entry-level veterinarians.
- Accreditation by the COE provides assurance of a minimum standard for the creation of an entry-level veterinarian, and some schools exceed the standard by a large margin. This has created some misperceptions that the COE standards are not being applied consistently to all institutions that have been accredited. All COE-accredited foreign schools meet the baseline standard, and the degree to which the schools exceed the standard ranges from little to large.
- The two procedures used by state licensing boards to assess entry-level clinical competency for graduates of both foreign and domestic schools are reliance on the COE accreditation process to



ensure thorough and effective clinical education including hands-on competence and the ECFVG or PAVE certification process for graduates of foreign schools not accredited by the COE. Certification by the ECFVG or PAVE for graduates of AVMA COE-accredited foreign or domestic schools has never been required. Aside from the overall accreditation process, objective data to measure competency of graduates of accredited foreign and domestic programs are lacking.

- The Task Force sees a contradiction in the role of the NAVLE in accreditation. Although the NAVLE is not required for accreditation, there is a pass-fail threshold for those schools whose graduating seniors generally take the NAVLE. The Task Force believes that this use of the NAVLE creates an inconsistency that the COE should address.
- The NAVLE cannot provide comparative data across all COE-accredited veterinary schools because it is not a requirement for accreditation. With the exception of Ross University and St. George's University, most graduates from accredited foreign schools do not take the NAVLE because they are not pursuing licensure in the United States or Canada. However, for schools whose graduating senior students normally take the NAVLE, the COE expects a pass rate of 80% or more.
- Emerging and zoonotic diseases cross borders, and the globalization of public health threats continues to rise. Veterinary schools are in a critical position to provide research and diagnostic services and to support governmental entities in this area. The accreditation of foreign schools contributes to networking among institutions and to the collective level of expertise around the world.
- The potential for international pressure on the AVMA COE to accredit foreign veterinary schools was discussed by the Task Force at length with input from representatives of the COE. The Task Force found no evidence of international pressure on the AVMA COE to accredit foreign veterinary schools.
- Volunteer and staff representatives of the COE indicate that the accreditation of foreign schools of veterinary medicine is designed to be resource neutral.



Addendum 1

The following questionnaire was sent to each of the AVMA COE–accredited foreign veterinary schools as well as those foreign veterinary schools currently seeking AVMA COE accreditation. Unless indicated as unanimous, respondents’ answers have been compiled into common themes. Responses were received from 11 of the 13 foreign veterinary schools currently accredited by the AVMA COE and from two foreign veterinary schools currently seeking accreditation.

1. What are the most important reasons your institution sought, or is seeking, accreditation by the AVMA COE? (Please list up to 3 main reasons)

- To increase the quality of our education.
- COE accreditation is the international benchmark of quality.
- Veterinary colleges accredited by the AVMA COE represent a coalition of world-leading institutions.
- To promote collaborative relationships with other AVMA COE–accredited institutions.

2. Do you have any major concerns about the process for accreditation or reaccreditation?

- All respondents answered “no.”

3. Apart from your own institution’s interests in veterinary school accreditation what are your views as to the most important benefits and/or concerns as accreditation relates to the veterinary medical profession at large?

Benefits:

- Accreditation is recognized as the gold standard for veterinary medical colleges.
- Accreditation increases the overall quality of the global veterinary infrastructure.
- Accreditation qualifies international schools for membership in AAVMC and the AAVMC network of sharing best practices in veterinary medical education.
- Accreditation increases global dialogue and continued improvement in animal health, welfare, and public health worldwide.

Concern:

- The lack of one global accreditation system.

4. How many US citizens are enrolled in your veterinary college?

- Answers ranged from 0 to 173.

5. What percentage of your students are US citizens?

- Answers ranged from 7% to 97%.

6. What is the size of the graduating classes at your veterinary college?

- Answers ranged from 84 to 375.

7. What additional comments, if any, would you like to share with us regarding the accreditation process?

- High-quality global veterinary medical education improves the health of global populations.
- Control of transboundary diseases, international livestock trade, and One Health issues will only be addressed if we apply the highest standards to veterinary education worldwide.

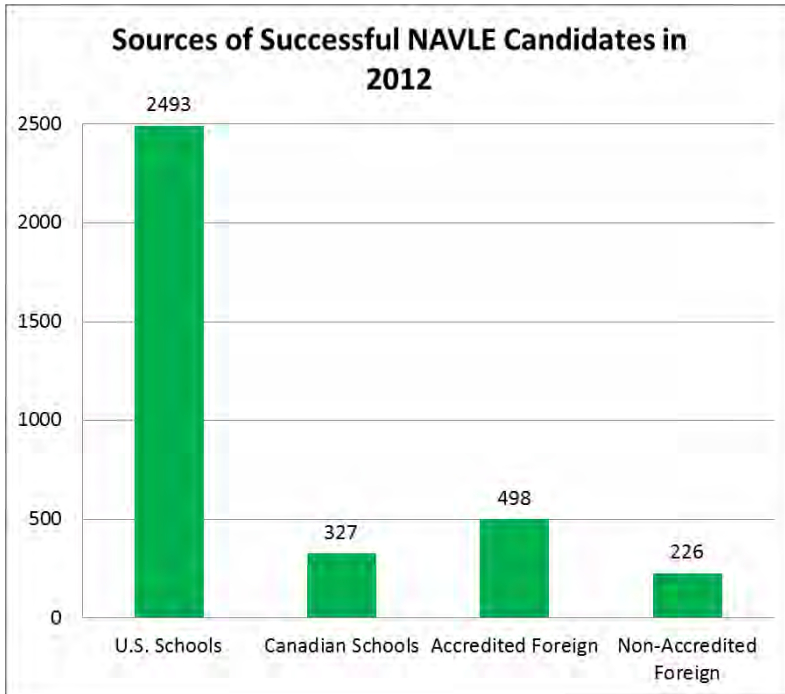


- Accreditation of foreign veterinary schools by the AVMA COE is a robust tool for ensuring high quality for veterinary education all over the world, thereby protecting the human and animal population.



Addendum 2

Sources of Successful NAVLE Candidates in 2012			
	Total Examinees	Number that passed	Pass Rate
COE Accredited Graduates	3603	3318	92.1%
U.S. Schools	2707	2493	92.1%
Canadian Schools	355	327	92.1%
Accredited Foreign *	541	498	92.1%
Non-Accredited Foreign	611	226	37.0%

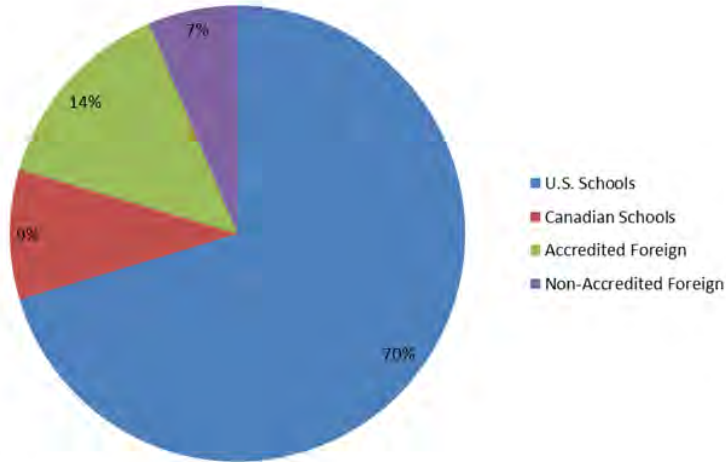


***Foreign universities with AVMA COE–accredited schools or college of veterinary medicine**

- Massey University
- Murdoch University
- Ross University
- St. George’s University
- State University of Utrecht
- Universidad Nacional Autonoma de México
- University College Dublin
- University of Edinburgh
- University of Glasgow
- University of London
- University of Melbourne
- University of Queensland
- University of Sydney



Sources of Successful NAVLE Candidates in 2012



The Technical Report provided to the Task Force does not break down the pass rate of individual schools. As a group, COE Accredited Graduates (U.S. Schools, Canadian Schools, and Accredited Foreign) had an average pass rate of 92.1% and this percentage was applied to the known number of examinees in each cohort. Therefore, the values represented in these graphics are calculated estimates and not actual reported figures.

Sources: 2011-2012 North American Veterinary Licensing Examination Technical Report
American Veterinary Medical Association Aggregate Data on Member's Schools of Graduation both Foreign and Domestic



Addendum 3

April 2012

7. Requirements of an Accredited College of Veterinary Medicine

The AVMA COE Standards of Accreditation

7.1. Standard 1, Organization

The college must develop and follow its mission statement.

An accredited college of veterinary medicine must be a part of an institution of higher learning accredited by an organization recognized for that purpose by its country's government. A college may be accredited only when it is a major academic administrative division of the parent institution and is afforded the same recognition, status, and autonomy as other professional colleges in that institution.

The chief executive officer or dean must be a veterinarian, and the officer(s) responsible for the professional, ethical, and academic affairs of the veterinary medical teaching hospital must also be (a) veterinarian(s).

There must be sufficient administrative staff to adequately manage the affairs of the college as appropriate to the enrollment and operation.

7.2. Standard 2, Finances

Finances must be adequate to sustain the educational programs and mission of the college.

Colleges with non DVM undergraduate degree programs must clearly report finances (expenditures and revenues) specific to those programs separately from finances (expenditures and revenues dedicated to all other educational programs).

Clinical services, field services, and teaching hospitals must function as instructional resources. Instructional integrity of these resources must take priority over financial self-sufficiency of clinical services operations.

7.3. Standard 3, Physical Facilities and Equipment

All aspects of the physical facilities must provide an appropriate learning environment. Classrooms, teaching laboratories, teaching hospitals, which may include but are not limited to ambulatory/field services vehicles, seminar rooms, and other teaching spaces shall be clean, maintained in good repair, and adequate in number, size, and equipment for the instructional purposes intended and the number of students enrolled.



Administrative and faculty offices, and research laboratories must be sufficient for the needs of the faculty and staff.

An accredited college must maintain an on-campus veterinary teaching hospital(s), or have formal affiliation with one or more off-campus veterinary hospitals used for teaching. Appropriate diagnostic and therapeutic service components, including but not limited to pharmacy, diagnostic imaging, diagnostic support services, dedicated isolation facilities, intensive/critical care, ambulatory/field service vehicles, and necropsy facilities must be provided to support the teaching hospital(s) or facilities with operational policies and procedures posted in appropriate places.

Facilities for the housing of animals used for teaching and research shall be sufficient in number, properly constructed, and maintained in a manner consistent with accepted animal welfare standards. Adequate teaching, laboratory, research, and clinical equipment must be available for examination, diagnosis, and treatment of all animals used by the college. Safety of personnel and animals must be assured.

7.4. Standard 4, Clinical Resources

Normal and diseased animals of various domestic and exotic species must be available for instructional purposes, either as clinical patients or provided by the institution. While precise numbers are not specified, in-hospital patients and outpatients including field service/ambulatory and herd health/production medicine programs are required to provide the necessary quantity and quality of clinical instruction.

It is essential that a diverse and sufficient number of surgical and medical patients be available during an on-campus clinical activity for the students' clinical educational experience. Experience can include exposure to clinical education at off-campus sites, provided the college reviews these clinical experiences and educational outcomes. Further, such clinical experiences should occur in a setting that provides access to subject matter experts, reference resources, modern and complete clinical laboratories, advanced diagnostic instrumentation and ready confirmation (including necropsy). Such examples could include a contractual arrangement with nearby practitioners who serve as adjunct faculty members and off-campus field practice centers. The teaching hospital(s) shall provide nursing care and instruction in nursing procedures. A supervised field service and/or ambulatory program must be maintained in which students are offered multiple opportunities to obtain clinical experience under field conditions. Under all situations students must be active participants in the workup of the patient, including physical diagnosis and diagnostic problem oriented decision making.

Medical records must be comprehensive and maintained in an effective retrieval system to efficiently support the teaching, research, and service programs of the college.

7.5. Standard 5, Library and Information Resources



Libraries and information retrievals are essential to veterinary medical education, research, public service, and continuing education. Timely access to information resources, whether through print, electronic media, or other means, must be available to students and faculty. The library shall be administered by a qualified librarian. The college shall have access to the human and physical resources necessary for development of instructional materials.

7.6. Standard 6, Students

The number of professional degree students, DVM or equivalent, must be consistent with the resources and the mission of the college.

Colleges should establish post-DVM/VMD programs such as internships, residencies and advanced degrees (e.g., MS, PhD), that complement and strengthen the professional program.

Student support services must be available within the college or university.

In relationship to enrollment, the colleges must provide accurate information for all advertisements regarding the educational program by providing clear and current information for prospective students. Further, printed catalog or electronic information must state the purpose and goals of the program, provide admission requirements and procedures, state degree requirements, present faculty descriptions, clearly state information on tuition and fees along with procedures for withdrawal, give necessary information for financial aid programs, and provide an accurate academic calendar. The information will include national and state requirements for licensure.

Each accredited college must provide a mechanism for students, anonymously if they wish, to offer suggestions, comments, and complaints regarding compliance of the college with the Standards of Accreditation. These materials shall be made available to the Council annually.

7.7. Standard 7, Admission

The college shall have a well-defined and officially stated admissions policy. The policy shall provide for an Admissions Committee, a majority of whom shall be full-time faculty members. The Committee shall make recommendations regarding the students to be admitted to the professional curriculum upon consideration of applications of candidates who meet the academic and other requirements as defined in the college's formal admission policy.

Subjects for admission shall include those courses prerequisite to the professional program in veterinary medicine, as well as courses that contribute to a broad general education. The goal of preveterinary education shall be to provide a broad base upon which professional education may be built, leading to lifelong learning with continued professional and personal development.

Factors other than academic achievement must be considered for admission criteria.



7.8. Standard 8, Faculty

Faculty numbers and qualifications must be sufficient to deliver the educational program and fulfill the mission of the college. Participation in scholarly activities is an important criterion in evaluating the faculty and the college. The college shall give evidence that it utilizes a well-defined and comprehensive program for the evaluation of professional growth, development, and scholarly activities of the faculty.

Academic positions must offer the security and benefits necessary to maintain stability, continuity, and competence of the faculty. Part-time faculty, residents, and graduate students may supplement the teaching efforts of the full-time permanent faculty if appropriately integrated into the instructional program.

7.9. Standard 9, Curriculum

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 curriculum and educational process should initiate and promote lifelong learning in each professional degree candidate.

The curriculum in veterinary medicine is the purview of the faculty of each college, but must be managed centrally based upon the mission and resources of the college. There must be sufficient flexibility in curriculum planning and management to facilitate timely revisions in response to emerging issues, and advancements in knowledge and technology. The curriculum as a whole must be regularly reviewed and managed by a college curriculum committee. The majority of the members of the curriculum committee must be full-time faculty. Curriculum evaluations should include the gathering of sufficient qualitative and quantitative information to ensure the curriculum content provides current concepts and principles as well as instructional quality and effectiveness.

The curriculum shall provide:

- a. an understanding of the central biological principles and mechanisms that underlie animal health and disease from the molecular and cellular level to organismal and population manifestations.
- b. scientific, discipline-based instruction in an orderly and concise manner so that students gain an understanding of normal function, homeostasis, pathophysiology, mechanisms of health/disease, and the natural history and manifestations of important animal diseases, both domestic and foreign.
- c. instruction in both the theory and practice of medicine and surgery applicable to a broad range of species. The instruction must include principles and hands-on experiences in physical and laboratory diagnostic methods and interpretation (including diagnostic imaging, diagnostic pathology, and necropsy), disease prevention, biosecurity, therapeutic intervention (including surgery), and patient management and care (including intensive care, emergency medicine and isolation procedures) involving clinical diseases of individual animals and populations.



Instruction should emphasize problem solving that results in making and applying medical judgments.

- d. instruction in the principles of epidemiology, zoonoses, food safety, the interrelationship of animals and the environment, and the contribution of the veterinarian to the overall public and professional healthcare teams.
- e. opportunities for students to learn how to acquire information from clients (e.g. history) and about patients (e.g. medical records), to obtain, store and retrieve such information, and to communicate effectively with clients and colleagues.
- f. opportunities throughout the curriculum for students to gain an understanding of professional ethics, delivery of professional services to the public, personal and business finance and management skills; and gain an understanding of the breadth of veterinary medicine, career opportunities and other information about the profession.
- g. knowledge, skills, values, attitudes, aptitudes and behaviors necessary to address responsibly the health and well-being of animals in the context of ever-changing societal expectations.
- h. fair and equitable assessment of student progress. The grading system for the college must be relevant and applied to all students in a fair and uniform manner.

7.10. Standard 10, Research Programs

The college must demonstrate substantial research activities of high quality that integrate with and strengthen the professional program.

7.11. Standard 11, Outcomes Assessment

Outcomes of the DVM program must be measured, analyzed, and considered to improve the program. Student achievement during the pre-clinical and clinical curriculum and after graduation must be included in outcome assessment. New graduates must have the basic scientific knowledge, skills, and values to provide entry-level health care, independently, at the time of graduation.

The school/college must develop relevant measures and provide evidence that graduating students have attained the following competencies:

1. comprehensive patient diagnosis (problem solving skills), appropriate use of clinical laboratory testing, and record management
2. comprehensive treatment planning including patient referral when indicated
3. anesthesia and pain management, patient welfare
4. basic surgery skills, experience, and case management
5. basic medicine skills, experience and case management
6. emergency and intensive care case management
7. health promotion, disease prevention/biosecurity, zoonosis, and food safety
8. client communications and ethical conduct
9. critical analysis of new information and research findings relevant to veterinary medicine.

