

Veterinary Accreditation

In 1921, the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) established the veterinary accreditation program so private practitioners could assist Federal veterinarians in controlling animal diseases. Today, USDA's Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS), accredited veterinarians, and State animal health officials work cooperatively in the National Veterinary Accreditation Program (NVAP). The goal of the NVAP is to protect and improve the health, quality, and marketability of U.S. animals by preventing, controlling, and eradicating livestock and poultry diseases that negatively affect producers and consumers in the United States.

On November 23, 1992, APHIS established accreditation on a national rather than on a State-by-State basis. Creating a national system helped APHIS ensure that enough accredited veterinarians are available across the country. The national system also standardized accreditation procedures and requirements, allowing for more uniform administration of the program. APHIS replaced the qualifying exam with an orientation program that consists of a core orientation and a supplemental orientation.

Accredited veterinarians are the backbone of U.S. regulatory programs for livestock and poultry diseases. The United States depends extensively on accredited veterinarians for official functions, such as inspecting, testing, and certifying animals. More than 80 percent of all U.S. veterinarians are accredited.

Businesses that transport and export animals also rely on the expertise of accredited veterinarians to help ensure that exported animals will not introduce diseases into another State or country. The accreditation program continues to be an integral part of U.S. animal industries.

Working Together in Regulatory Medicine

The NVAP is based on the mutual respect and the professional partnership between APHIS, accredited veterinarians, and State animal health officials. With the trend toward a global economy, these partners work increasingly closer to support American agriculture by:

- Understanding the responsibilities of the program,
- Administering the program uniformly and consistently, and
- Preserving the integrity of the program.

Benefits of Accreditation

By becoming accredited, you can offer more services to your clients. For example, large-animal practitioners can use their accreditation to help contain disease outbreaks and to assist producers with selling, buying, and transporting healthy animals. Accredited small-animal practitioners certify companion animals and birds for domestic and international movement.

Participating in NVAP

Veterinary accreditation is a voluntary program; it is not mandated by the Federal Government. Accredited veterinarians participating in NVAP must carry out their duties according to the Standards for Accredited Veterinarian Duties in Title 9, Code of Federal Regulations, Part 161.

Becoming Nationally Accredited

Before performing duties under this program, you must become accredited through APHIS Veterinary Services (VS). You must meet certain requirements (see table) for national accreditation, and you must be authorized to perform accredited work in other States. National accreditation is the status you are given after you have met the requirements and the approval process is complete.

Completing Orientation—To become accredited, you must complete the core orientation that covers:

- Federal animal health laws, regulations, and rules;
 - Interstate movement requirements for animals;
 - Import and export requirements for animals;
 - USDA control and eradication programs for animal diseases;
 - Laboratory support in confirming animal disease diagnoses;
 - Ethical and professional responsibilities;
 - Animal health information relating to the State where you are seeking accreditation; and
 - State initiatives, regulations, and programs.
- VS provides the core orientation at veterinary colleges or VS Area Offices. To schedule a core orientation, contact the VS Area Office nearest you.

Before becoming accredited, you may be required by the APHIS Area Veterinarian In Charge (AVIC) of a State to attend a supplemental orientation. The supplemental orientation covers that State's specific animal disease issues.

Applying for Accreditation—For national accreditation, you must apply using VS Form 1–36A, Application for Veterinary Accreditation. Contact the nearest Area Office for an application. When completing the application, you must certify that you are able to:

- Physically examine individual animals and visually inspect herds or flocks;
- Recognize common breeds of livestock and poultry;
- Identify animals in interstate commerce by recognizing brucellosis tattoos, calfhood vaccination tags, and State- of-origin eartags;
- Estimate the age of livestock using a dental formula;
- Apply an eartag, tattoo, backtag, and legband;
- Certify the disease status of a flock of birds for shipment;
- Properly complete certificates for domestic and international movement of animals;
- Apply and remove official seals;
- Necropsy livestock;
- Recognize signs and lesions of exotic animal diseases;
- Plan a disease control strategy for a livestock unit;
- Vaccinate for brucellosis and fill out the vaccination certificate;
- Draw and ship blood for testing;
- Perform a caudal-fold test for bovine tuberculosis;

- Develop cleaning and disinfection plans to control the spread of communicable livestock diseases; and
- Explain the basic principles used in APHIS or APHIS-State cooperative programs for control of diseases (such as brucellosis, pseudorabies, and tuberculosis).

After you complete the application, send it to the AVIC of the State where you are applying.

Notification of National Accreditation—Before issuing national accreditation, VS will verify that all requirements have been met and that your application information is correct. If approved, the AVIC will send you a letter of approval. You must receive that letter before you can perform accredited work. You will receive an official certificate of veterinary accreditation later under separate cover.

Performing Accredited Work in Other States—If you are nationally accredited and want to perform accredited work in another State, you do not need to reapply. However, you do need to notify the Area Office in that State, and you may be required to attend a supplemental orientation covering specific animal health issues for that State. Before you can begin accreditation work in that State, you must receive a letter of authorization from the AVIC.

This table shows the basic requirements for national accreditation and for authorization in other States:

| Requirements for Veterinary Accreditation | | |
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| Requirements | For National Accreditation | For Authorization in Other State |
| Complete a core orientation program | Yes | No |
| Complete a supplemental orientation program | A supplemental orientation may be required to address specific animal health issues for a State. | A supplemental orientation may be required to address specific animal health issues for a State. |
| Have a Doctor of Veterinary Medicine degree or an equivalent degree from an accredited school of veterinary medicine | Yes | Yes |
| Be licensed or legally able to practice without supervision in the State | Yes | Yes |
| Submit a completed application, VS Form 1-36A | Yes | No |
| Notify the AVIC of each additional State where seeking to do accredited work | NA | Yes |

The NVAP is undergoing a comprehensive review. If you have any questions or comments regarding the program you can contact the Program Manager at the address listed below.

Additional Information

To learn more about the NVAP, contact your local VS Area Office or the NVAP coordinator:

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