

## AVMA-COE COVID-19 Policy

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

The provisions within this policy are in effect from March 23, 2020, until, in the view of the American Veterinary Medical Association Council on Education (AVMA-COE, The Council), the COVID-19 situation is resolved.

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reevaluate the plan on an as-needed basis; however, no later than at each biannual Council meeting until the policy is no longer in effect.

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

This policy was written consistent with the United States Department of Education (USDE) guidance issued to USDE Recognized Accreditors dated [March 17, 2020](#), and the communication from the Commission for Higher Education Accreditation (CHEA) dated March 18, 2020.

## Assignment of an Accreditation Risk Category

At the Council meeting of March 23, 2020, the AVMA-COE adopted the following Accreditation Risk Category Definitions:

### **Risk Category 1**

New colleges on the AVMA-COE pathway to receipt of a Letter of Reasonable Assurance

### **Risk Category 2:**

Colleges on Provisional Accreditation  
Colleges on Probationary Accreditation  
Colleges Accredited with Minor Deficiencies  
Colleges on Terminal Accreditation  
Colleges with focused site visits scheduled by the AVMA-COE

### **Risk Category 3**

Accredited Colleges

### **Risk Category 4**

Colleges outside of the US and Canada seeking accreditation

Colleges of Veterinary Medicine have been assigned an accreditation risk category based on the published AVMA-COE accreditation status and schedule of site visits as of March 17, 2020.

The AVMA-COE will use the assigned risk category during the COVID-19 situation for risk-based contingency planning.

## Site Visits

The following site visit provisions apply only to colleges with site visits scheduled for 2020.

On March 23, 2020, the AVMA Council on Education adopted the following site visit policy and rationale:

Upon authorization of AVMA Council on Education, a site visit may occur through audio and/or audiovisual means, in whole or part.

Rationale: Until March 2020, the AVMA-COE site visit included AVMA-COE personnel physically at the site or sites of the visit. In March 2020, COVID-19 caused the need for the AVMA-COE to conduct site visits that are audio and/or audiovisual (“virtual site visits.”). The functions of the virtual comprehensive site visit and the focused site visit are the same as those of the comprehensive site visit and the focused 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, an in-person site visit will occur at the College within a period not to exceed 18 months.

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

### **Risk category 1**

The AVMA-COE will work individually with the College to address accreditation issues.

Options include:

- Delay of the scheduled site visit
- Virtual site visit to be followed by an in-person site visit within 18 months

The AVMA-COE will discuss the options with the College and decide how to proceed.

### **Risk category 2**

Options are:

- Delay of the scheduled site visit
- Virtual site visit to be followed by an in-person site visit within 18 months

The AVMA-COE will discuss the options with the College and decide how to proceed.

### **Risk category 3**

Options are:

- Delay of the scheduled site visit
- Continued planning of site visit at currently scheduled date if COVID-19 situation allows

### **Risk category 4**

Options are:

- Delay of the scheduled site visit
- Continued planning of site visit at currently scheduled date if AMVA-COE schedule and COVID-19 situation allows
- Colleges in Risk Categories 1, 2, and 3 will have scheduling preference over Colleges in Risk Category 4

## Accreditation Interval

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

## Reporting to the AMVA-COE

### Self-Study Reports

For colleges who have submitted self-study reports up to and including March 23, 2020, the submitted self-study can form the basis of the self-study report for the rescheduled site visit, with updates to the self-study where appropriate.

### Substantive Change Reports

The AMVA-COE granted a temporary waiver of the requirement for prior approval for the following substantive changes related to the COVID-19 situation (Letter to Deans of March 17, 2020);

- The addition of courses or programs that represent a significant departure, either in content or method of delivery, from those that were offered when the AVMA-COE last evaluated the institution
- A change in the clock hours (student contact hours) to credit hours ratio
- A substantial change in the number of clock hours (student contact hours) or credit hours awarded for successful completion of the program

Colleges will be expected to update the AMVA-COE in the annual interim report for all changes related to the COVID-19 situation.