

Appendix 3

Procedures for obtaining AVMA recognition of a veterinary specialty (RVS) within an RVSO

Groups seeking ABVS recognition as a veterinary specialty should consult the timeline in Appendix 7 for important dates related to that process.

1. A veterinary specialty seeking recognition as an RVS under the auspices of an existing RVSO may:
 - a. Be recognized by the ABVS under the procedures described for recognition of an RVSO in Appendix 2 with the following exceptions to those procedures:
 - i. An RVS need not be incorporated separately.
 - ii. An RVS is represented on VSOC by the representative of the parent RVSO.
 - iii. An RVSO with one or more RVSs may have
 - a) One constitution delineating the operations of the RVSO and separate bylaws delineating the functions and operations of each RVS, or
 - b) A single constitution and bylaws clearly delineating the operations of the RVSO and the functions and operations of each RVS, or
 - c) A single bylaws clearly delineating the operations of the RVSO and the functions and operations of each RVS.
 - b. The petitioning organization must identify members of the organizing committee, which should be at least 18 individuals but limited in number to those essential to conduct the business of the veterinary specialty and to achieve provisional approval. Each founding member must:
 - i. Be a diplomate of the parent RVSO, or
 - ii. Be a diplomate of another RVSO recognized by the AVMA, or
 - iii. Have demonstrated competency through teaching, research, or practice of the veterinary specialty and meet the criteria for members of an organizing committee as specified in Section II, Part D1 of the Policies of the ABVS.
 - c. A petition for immediate full recognition may be submitted by a veterinary specialty arising from a restructuring of a parent RVSO or a parent RVS. Petitions for immediate full recognition may be submitted by veterinary specialties arising from a restructuring of a parent RVSO. The petition for full recognition will undergo the same review process required for an RVSO. Results of this review must indicate that the veterinary specialty is immediately able to become fully functional and can fulfill its stated objectives. The petition must:
 - i. Provide a statement outlining the reasons for, and benefit(s) of restructuring the RVSO or the RVS into the described veterinary specialties.
 - ii. Describe the process by which existing RVSO diplomates may be

- reclassified into the respective veterinary specialty(ies).
- iii. Include an organizational chart showing the present and proposed relationships of the veterinary specialties within the RVSO.
2. Letter of Intent - Veterinarians seeking AVMA recognition of a new specialty organization wishing to be incorporated as a veterinary specialty within existing RVSO must submit a letter of intent to the ABVS. The letter should contain a statement that the organizing group has read and understands the standards that the ABVS applies for recognition of an RVS (Appendix 1); that the organizing group has read the procedures for obtaining AVMA-recognition; that the organizing group has the agreement of the RVSO under which they will organize; a brief (1 paragraph) description of the scope of practice intended for recognition as well including justification that the proposed specialty organization is distinct from presently recognized RVSOs or their RVSs; and a list of the members (and their credentials) of the organizing committee.
 3. 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.
 4. 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.
 5. Submission of an initial petition:
 - 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 in order to be included on the agenda of an ABVS late fall meeting.
- 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.
6. Contents for a petition for recognition of a new veterinary specialty:
- 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 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 must 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.
 - o. 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.
7. A complete, final petition must be submitted to the ABVS within four years of receipt of the letter of intent.
- a. The final petition should be submitted as indicated in the timeline in Appendix 7.
 - 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.

- d. If provisional recognition is granted, the newly recognized veterinary specialty organization may 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.
- e. 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.

8. Provisionally recognized veterinary specialties

- 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 ABSO meetings, and conduct other business as specified in its constitution and/or bylaws, and/or other policies and procedures documents.
- b. Provisionally recognized RVSO's or RVS will be required to submit interim progress reports (Appendices 11 and 12) to the ABVS on an annual basis.
- c. 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.
- d. 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 for three-year in-depth reviews (see Appendix 10) 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 make appropriate suggestions to the provisionally recognized veterinary specialty organization concerning any necessary additions or corrections. If the documentation indicates that the organization meets all of the standards for recognition described in Appendix 1, the ABVS will consider granting full recognition.

9. Adverse decisions regarding recognition of veterinary specialties

- a. At any point after receipt of a letter of intent or during review of a petition for recognition of a veterinary specialty organization or review of an existing AVMA-recognized 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 request for recognition; 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 appellate procedures described in Appendices 4 or 5 of the ABVS P&P.