North American Veterinary Licensing Examination

Practice Analysis Executive Summary

September 22, 2017

To ensure licensure examinations required for the practice of veterinary medicine remain highly job-related, the International Council for Veterinary Assessment (ICVA) has periodically conducted practice analyses, with the most recent completed in 2003 and in 2010. Those studies administered questionnaires to large samples of veterinarians regarding the types of diagnoses they typically encounter and the frequency with which they perform various activities. The present analysis updates previous studies by asking an even larger, more representative sample of North American veterinarians about the species they see in their practices and the diagnoses they are required to manage. In addition, the present study extends previous practice analyses in two important ways: (1) by incorporating elements of competency modeling and (2) by systematically identifying the basic science knowledge foundational to all of veterinary medicine.

Subject Matter Experts (SMEs) and project staff worked over the course of several months to develop the practice analysis survey. The final practice analysis survey consisted of three distinct sections: Demographics and Practice Characteristics, Species and Diagnoses, and Clinical and Professional Competencies. Each respondent was asked to complete only a fraction of the entire survey. Individuals were asked to evaluate specific species and/or competency statements based on their responses to demographic questions located at the beginning of the survey. A decision was made to not include any foundational veterinary science components on the main survey instrument and to address them in a later supplemental activity completed by SMEs in the foundational sciences.

The Practice Analysis survey was administered via the web in 2016 to a sample of 19,829 licensed veterinarians throughout the United States and Canada. The web-based survey delivery facilitated using the responses from the demographic questions to tailor the survey content to respondents' areas of practice. A total of 6,975 responses were determined to be complete enough to contribute to survey analysis. The overall response rate for this practice analysis was 35% which is a significant increase over the previous studies.

In addition to the Practice Analysis survey, several supplemental activities were completed to further refine the North American Veterinary Licensing Examination (NAVLE) specifications. SMEs were surveyed about the criticality of the competencies and the criticality of diagnoses by species. The same SME group that evaluated the criticality of the competencies was asked to engage in a "card sorting" activity where they were asked to sort the competencies into meaningful groups based on their similarities. This information was used to determine subgroupings of competency statements. A final SME meeting was convened to further review and refine the new NAVLE specifications. The results of that meeting were presented and approved by the ICVA board in June of 2017.

Based on the results of these activities, a blueprint for the future NAVLE was developed. The blueprint consists of three dimensions: (1) Diagnoses (nested within Species), (2) Competencies, and (3) Foundational Veterinary Sciences. The most notable change in the blueprint is the representation of Public Health; it was removed from the species dimension and integrated into the competency dimension since many public health activities are tran-species. In addition, Camelids and Cervidae were combined into one category, similar to how Ovine and Caprine are currently combined. The decision was also made to separate the current "Other Small Animal" category into two groups: Other Small Mammals and Reptiles. The new blueprint will also incorporate a new content area to address Aquatics. SMEs and NBME staff will begin to recode the item bank in the fall of 2017.

NAVLE Specifications Based on Species

Species	Target Blueprint %
Canine	25.6
Feline	24.3
Equine	14.7
Bovine	13.3
Porcine	5.0
Other Small Mammals	3.3
Ovine/Caprine	3.3
Pet Bird	2.3
Poultry	2.0
Non Species Specific	2.0
Camelid/Cervidae	1.7
Reptiles	1.5
Aquatics	1.0

NAVLE Specifications Based on Competencies

Competency Domain	Target Blueprint %
Clinical Practice	**70**
Data Gathering and Interpretation	35
Health Maintenance and Prevention	35
Communication	**8**
Communication with Clients	5
Communication with Veterinary and other Professionals	3
Professionalism, Practice Management, and Wellness	**7**
Professional Development and Life-Long Learning	3
Veterinary Practice Management	4
Preventive Medicine and Animal Welfare	**15**
Environmental Health and Safety	5
Veterinary Public Health	4
Animal Welfare Issues and Concerns	6