

International Council for Veterinary Assessment

Veterinary Educational Assessment

Bulletin of Information

2017-2018 Testing Cycle

The policies, procedures, requirements and other information in this bulletin pertain to the 2017-2018 Veterinary Educational Assessment (VEA) testing cycle. This bulletin contains important information. Please use it for reference throughout the testing and score reporting process.

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General Information

This bulletin contains procedural and policy information for the Veterinary Educational Assessment (VEA). Examinees and school officials should become familiar with all aspects of this bulletin. While every attempt has been made to provide accurate and definite information, the International Council for Veterinary Assessment (ICVA) may need to change or revise policies and procedures that affect the VEA program. Changes will be posted on the ICVA's web site (www.icva.net) as soon as they are determined.

Test questions for the VEA are written by faculty members at American Veterinary Medical Association (AVMA) accredited veterinary schools in North America, and by other content experts. All of the questions are reviewed prior to appearing on the VEA. The VEA is prepared in a manner to meet the testing standards of the American Psychological Association.

All test questions used in the VEA are owned solely by the ICVA and are copyrighted. Any reproduction by any means or distribution of VEA questions without the express written authorization of the ICVA is prohibited.

Objective of the Veterinary Educational Assessment

The objective of the Veterinary Educational Assessment is to provide a comprehensive objective assessment of basic veterinary medical science knowledge, for use by veterinary schools.

Description of the Examination

The VEA consists of 200 multiple-choice questions administered in two blocks of 100 questions each. Examinees will have a total of four hours and forty minutes to complete exam, with one hour and fifty minutes dedicated to each block. There is optional fifteen minute tutorial and a forty-five minute break between blocks.

The VEA is designed to assess a student's knowledge of basic veterinary medical sciences as taught during the pre-clinical portion of the curriculum at schools accredited by the Council on Education of the American Veterinary Medical Association. Approximately 15 - 20% of the VEA questions will include graphic or pictorial information (such as a chart, photograph or radiograph).

Registration Procedures for the VEA

Veterinary schools wanting to use the VEA will prepare candidate rosters and forward them to the ICVA office approximately 40 days prior to the first day of each test administration window. The fee for the VEA is \$60 per candidate. The ICVA will invoice schools for the number of candidates submitted to take the examination.

Candidates with Documented Disabilities

Individuals with disabilities may be entitled to accommodations under federal and state law, including the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). If an examinee applies for test accommodations, the school will determine whether any accommodations are warranted, decide what specific accommodations may be reasonable for a particular examinee, and bear all costs associated with any such accommodation. . The ICVA will make a good faith effort to provide such reasonable test accommodations that the school determines are warranted for the examinee.

Extra Testing Time and Text Enlargement for Web Examinations

All examinees approved for extra testing time will receive 2x the standard timing to complete the VEA. Examinees with visual impairments may use their own screen magnification software or use the browser's test size feature to enlarge the font.

Preparing for the Examination Administration

Each school using the VEA is responsible for arranging for a secure proctored location for the examination. Schools will work with the ICVA to set dates for their test administration during any of three testing windows available within the 2017-2018 academic year. The testing windows for the 2018-2019 VEA are: August 28 - September 8, 2017; January 8-19, 2018; and May 2-15, 2018. Testing will not be available during weekends or Federal holidays during those windows.

Administering the VEA

Policies and procedures governing the administration of the examination have been established to ensure that no candidate or group of candidates receives unfair advantage on the examination, inadvertently or otherwise. Efforts are made to ensure that the examination is administered under standard conditions and is consistent with the principles on which the examination is developed and scored. However, if the integrity of the examination process is jeopardized, the ICVA reserves the right to invalidate all or any part of an examination.

Preparing for Test Administration

Each school must also identify a Chief Proctor to monitor examination administration at your institution. The chief proctor is essentially responsible for ensuring that all needs for providing the exam at their institution are met, including but not limited to registering all examinees, securing computer lab/testing room for exam administration, certifying computer work stations, administering the exam that day. There must be a proctor for every 20 to 25 examinees. An assistant proctor is required if number of examinees at a test center exceeds 25.

The Chief Proctor must have a dedicated computer workstation during the entire test session in each testing room. The chief proctor will assign seats on a random basis; examinees should not be allowed to select their own seats.

Web-based Delivery of the VEA

The NBME provides the tools necessary to administer a web-based exam in a secure, proctored setting. These features include:

- A centralized Chief Proctor Resource Site that provides resources to support all tasks associated with the test administration cycle. This includes access to the Chief Proctor's Manual, tutorials, a practice exam, and features for managing the test session online.
- Software that "locks down" the browser during testing, preventing examinees from accessing any other applications (such as e-mail or notepad), during the test session.
- An automated compatibility check that ensures every computer used for testing purposes is properly configured to deliver the exam.
- Before examinees can take the VEA, a web-based utility that checks both hardware and software configurations and downloads a plug-in that "secures" the browser.

A variety of test-delivery environments are supported: both wired and wireless networks, PC and Mac operating systems, and laptops or fixed workstations. Also, it is possible to schedule multiple separate testing sessions on the same day or to run testing sessions in different buildings at the same time.

The VEA may be taken on school computers or on an examinee's personal computer. Technical requirements for computers used to deliver the VEA are provided to the schools prior to the administration.

Personal Items in the Testing Room

Examinees are not permitted to bring personal items to their workstations, unless they are required for medical reasons. Non-permitted items include, but are not limited to, the following:

- iPads/tablets
- Cell phones
- Paging devices
- iPod, radio, or media devices
- Calculators (a calculator is built into the exam for examinee use)
- Recording/filming devices
- Reference materials (books, notes, papers)
- Watches with alarms, computer or memory capability
- Backpacks, briefcases, or luggage
- Coats, outer jackets, or headwear
- Beverages or food of any type

Examination Day Procedures

Examinees should arrive at the test site 30 minutes before the scheduled test time. If an examinee arrives late, school officials have the right to not admit them for the test.

When examinees arrive at the test site, they will need to sign in on the log sheet, and they may need to present appropriate identification (such as a driver's license or school ID).

After check-in, examinees will be seated at their assigned testing station and given brief instructions on the use of the computer equipment. Next, they will enter the Examinee Start-up code received from the proctor and their biographic information, which includes both Candidate ID and date of birth.

All examinees will have the same number of questions and the same time allotment. Within each block, examinees may answer questions in any order and review and/or change any answers. When they exit a block, or when time expires, no further review of questions or changing of answers within that block is possible. When examinees start a block of questions, no clock-stopping breaks are provided during that block. Time taken by the computer to download test items and images is not counted in the testing time. If an examinee leaves their testing station during a block, the proctor will report it as an irregular incident.

The maximum allotted break time between blocks is 45 minutes. If an examinee completes the tutorial or the first block in less time than allotted, the extra time will not be available as additional break time. Each time an examinee takes an authorized or unauthorized break during the testing day, they will be required to sign out when leaving and sign in when returning. The examination ends when both blocks have been completed or the total testing time for the day expires. Examinees must sign out as they leave the test site. Once an examinee starts the examination, they cannot cancel or reschedule unless a technical problem requires rescheduling.

Test Administration Issues

If an examinee experiences a computer problem during the test, they should notify test site staff immediately. The testing software is designed to allow the test to restart at the point it was interrupted. However, in the rare event that a technical problem occurs that does not permit school or an examinee to complete their examination, school officials should notify the ICVA immediately.

If an examinee believes that the administration of the examination or the examination conditions adversely affected your performance, they should report the issue to the proctor immediately and request that the chief proctor file an incident report. Each incident report will be evaluated. If the issue cannot be substantiated through analysis, or if it is determined that the examinee's performance was not adversely affected, the score as reported will stand. However, if the examinee's complaint can be supported, appropriate corrective action will be taken.

Irregular Behavior

All VEA examinees must agree with the following statement that will appear on the computer monitor before they will be able to take the examination:

“This examination contains test materials that are owned and copyrighted by the International Council for Veterinary Assessment (ICVA). Any reproduction of these materials or any part of them, through any means, including, but not limited to copying or printing of electronic files, reconstruction through memorization and/or dictation, and/or dissemination of these materials or any part of them is strictly prohibited.”

Irregular behavior is defined by the ICVA as any behavior that undermines the application, assessment, or certification processes of the ICVA. Anyone having information or evidence that suspected irregular behavior has occurred should submit a written, signed statement to the ICVA providing a detailed description of the incident and/or circumstances and copies of any supporting documentation and evidence. Insofar as possible, such reports will be handled confidentially; however, the ICVA will not investigate and/or act on unsigned or verbal reports. Irregular behavior may occur prior to, during, and/or following examination application and administration.

Failure to adhere to the instructions of the proctors during the examination may result in a determination of irregular behavior. Examinees observed engaging in possible violation of test administration rules or other forms of irregular behavior during an examination will not necessarily be told of the observation by the proctors at the time of the examination.

Specific examples of conduct that may be deemed to be irregular behavior include, but are not limited to, the following:

- seeking, providing, and/or obtaining unauthorized access to examination materials
- providing false information or making false statements on or in connection with application forms, scheduling permits, or other VEA-related documents
- taking or attempting to take an examination for which you are not eligible
- taking an examination for someone or engaging someone to take an examination for you
- seeking, providing, or obtaining unauthorized assistance during the examination or attempting to do so
- making notes of any kind while in the secure areas of the test center, except on the writing materials provided at the test site for this purpose
- failing to adhere to any VEA policy, procedure, or rule, including instructions of the test center staff
- verbal or physical harassment of test site staff or other examination staff, or other disruptive or unprofessional behavior
- possessing any unauthorized materials, including, but not limited to, photographic equipment, communication or recording devices, fitness and tracking monitors, and cell phones, in the secure testing areas

- unauthorized reproduction by any means, including, but not limited to, reconstruction through memorization and/or dissemination of copyrighted examination materials by any means, including the Internet
- communicating or attempting to communicate about specific test items, and/or answers with another examinee, potential examinee, or formal or informal test preparation group at any time before, during, or after an examination
- failure to cooperate fully in any investigation of a violation of the VEA rules

Any irregular behavior will be reported to the ICVA and will constitute grounds for the ICVA to:

- bar an examinee from one or more future examinations or permanently; and/or
- terminate an examinee's participation in the examination; and/or
- invalidate the results of the examinee's examination and any prior examinations; and/or
- withhold an examinee's scores; and/or
- fine an examinee in an amount that reflects damages suffered by ICVA, including its costs of investigation and the costs of replacing any items that must be removed from the item bank; and/or
- censure the examinee; and/or
- sue the examinee for damages and civil remedies; and/or
- pursue prosecution of the examinee for any conduct that constitutes a criminal or civil violation; and/or
- take any other appropriate action.

Examinees also understand and agree that the ICVA may withhold their scores if the ICVA is presented with evidence demonstrating to the ICVA, in its sole discretion, that the security of the examination has been compromised, notwithstanding the absence of any evidence of their personal involvement in the compromising activities. Examinees have an affirmative duty to cooperate in any investigation conducted by or on behalf of the ICVA, including but not limited to providing written or oral statements to ICVA and providing copies of documents and items in their possession, custody or control. This duty to cooperate exists whether or not the examinee is a specific target of the investigation or is merely a potential witness to the irregular conduct of others. Examinees further understand and agree that the examination and related materials utilized in the ICVA's examinations are copyrighted as the sole property of the ICVA and must not be removed from the test site or reproduced in any way, and that reproduction of copyrighted material, in whole or in part, is a federal offense and may subject them to the sanctions listed above.

Any irregular behavior or violation of the test administration rules may, in the sole discretion of the ICVA, be reported to the school. In addition, if the ICVA has reason to believe that an examinee may have engaged in irregular behavior, it may notify the school, even if the investigation is ongoing and no findings have been made.

If anyone has any questions or doubts about whether an activity might constitute irregular behavior, they should contact Dr. Heather Case, the ICVA Chief Executive Officer for clarification.

The ICVA retains the right to discontinue use of the VEA for an entire school in the event of a breach or suspected breach in the security of test materials.

Scoring and Score Reporting

All examinee responses are transmitted to the NBME for scoring after testing is complete. In the scoring of the VEA, one point is awarded for each correct answer. Test questions are not weighted, and additional points are not subtracted for incorrect responses. If examinee comments indicate the need, specific questions are reviewed again by one or more content experts to ensure that the answer key is correct. Any question that fails to perform acceptably may be dropped from both the current scoring key and from the test item pool.

Uniform and precise procedures ensure that the score reported for each candidate is an accurate reflection of the responses recorded by the computer, and the validity of scores has been historically verified. School officials may confirm with the ICVA that the score reported to the school is indeed the identical score as reported to the ICVA by the testing vendor. VEA examinees are not permitted to review their examinations.

A VEA score report will be sent to the school approximately two weeks after the close of the testing window and the school will report the score to the examinee. Each score report will show the examinee's overall score and a breakdown of the score over the five main content areas. In addition, each school will receive a roster containing the scores for all examinees who took the VEA from their school.

VEA scores may be used by the ICVA for research and may be released to third parties provided all candidate identification has been deleted prior to release.

Examination Content

The VEA is constructed using the following examination blueprint.

Content Area	Topics Covered	% of Exam
Anatomy	gross and microscopic anatomy, developmental anatomy, physical examination, and principles of radiology and diagnostic imaging	22%
Physiology	organ physiology, physiological chemistry, genetics, nutrition, and breeding	23%
Pharmacology	pharmacokinetics, pharmacodynamics, therapeutics, toxicology, and anesthesia/analgesia	14%
Microbiology	bacteriology, mycology, virology, parasitology, immunology, diagnostics, and public health (regulatory, epidemiology, and zoonoses)	20%
Pathology	general pathology, gross pathology, histopathology, pathogenesis, and clinical pathology (cytology and data analysis/diagnostics)	21%

Faculty Review

Veterinary school faculty or other institution staff may preview an exam to determine if it is appropriate for use. Contact the ICVA at if your school is interested in reviewing the VEA.

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Test Question Format

The VEA includes only single questions with one best answer. They consist of a statement or question followed, in most cases, by five options arranged in alphabetical or logical order (a few items may have four or six options). The response options for all questions are lettered (e.g., A, B, C, D, E). Examinees are required to select the best answer to the question. Other options may be partially correct, but there is only one best answer.

Preparing for the VEA

A set of 20 sample test questions has been incorporated into a web-based practice version of the VEA. The practice test uses the same tutorial and general software interface that is used to deliver the actual examination. This software includes, among other features, a clickable icon for marking questions to be reviewed, a clock indicating the time remaining in the test, and a help application. An examinee will also have the opportunity to review marked and incomplete questions provided that they have time remaining to complete their review. Although the software is simple and intuitive, it is highly recommended that examinees practice before their test date, because practice at the test site will be limited to a 15 minute [tutorial](#).