



American College of Veterinary Behaviorists

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ACVB RESIDENT PACKET

Effective September 1, 2026 – August 31, 2031

The ACVB Resident Packet provides information about the certification process by the American College of Veterinary Behaviorists (ACVB, or the “College”).

The ACVB Resident Packet represents the current ACVB Resident Packet, which contains policies, procedures, and requirements for individuals interested in receiving certification by the American College of Veterinary Behaviorists. While every reasonable attempt has been made to ensure accuracy, Supervising Diplomates and/or candidates should contact the ACVB Executive Director if any questions arise.

Furthermore, ACVB policies, procedures and certain key terms are subject to periodic review and change. Candidates will receive 6 months’ notice before any significant changes are implemented. Reasonable accommodations, which are consistent with the previous year’s Resident Packet, may be granted upon written request to the executive director and review by the Board of Regents (“Board”) or committee thereof.

All questions and/or concerns on the current packet, proposed changes, and impact on residents (specifically or in general) should be directed to:

American College of Veterinary Behaviorists

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MISSION AND VISION OF THE ACVB

ACVB Mission

To advance the behavioral health of animals through the certification of veterinary behavioral specialists and the provision of science-based education.

ACVB Vision

To act as a catalyst in facilitating an inclusive community of science-based experts in veterinary behavioral medicine through which we lead and inspire the preservation of the human animal bond, enhance welfare, and increase the betterment of our members, animals, society, and the environment.

TERMINOLOGY

Supervising Diplomate (SD): The term *Supervising Diplomate (SD)* refers to the mentor.

Resident: The term *Resident* refers to veterinarians who have registered with the ACVB in accordance with the ACVB Residency Documents, and they are enrolled in an ACVB-approved Institutional or Individual Behavior Residency Program.

Candidate: The term *Candidate* refers to a veterinarian who has completed their residency training program but has not yet passed their board-certification exam.

STC: The term *STC* refers to the Specialty Training Committee.

Exam: The term *Exam* refers to the examination that Candidates must take and pass to become Board Certified through the ACVB.

Registered Residency Packet: The term *Registered Residency Packet* refers to the packet selected by the resident and registered with the ACVB executive director that governs the terms of the residency.

Institutional Behavior Residency Program: The term *Institutional Behavior Residency Program* refers to a residency at an institution or private practice that has already had the program evaluated and approved by the STC.

Individual Behavior Residency Program: The term *Individual Behavior Residency Program* refers to a residency submitted to the STC for an individual who is not completing the residency at a private practice or institution, with prior approval of the residency program.

Residency Documents: All documents pertaining to the administration of approved ACVB Behavior Residencies. See the list at the end of this document.

IMPORTANT DOCUMENTS

This packet is one of several important documents for the successful completion of an ACVB Behavior Residency Program. Residents are encouraged to review each document thoroughly as each complements the other, and each has unique information. Other documents governing ACVB residents and residencies are not included in this packet. They do, however, govern ACVB residencies and outline the essential requirements for a resident to become board-certified. Residency Documents are available on the ACVB website under “Certification.” A list of documents is at the end of this packet.

REGISTERED ACVB BEHAVIOR RESIDENCY PACKET

Each resident must have a registered packet. See the ACVB Residency Policy for more information.

TRAINING PROGRAM

1. This section describes qualifications that must be met for a Resident's credentials to be considered acceptable by the American College of Veterinary Behaviorists program.
2. To begin the process of Board Certification in the American College of Veterinary Behaviorists, an individual must satisfy the following minimum requirements:
 - a. Register with the ACVB
 - b. Provide a letter of verification from the ACVB Supervising Diplomate (SD)
 - c. Submit all required Training Program Fees. See the ACVB Resident Fee Schedule available online.
 - d. Must either: Enroll in an approved Institutional Behavior Residency Program OR an approved Individual Residency Program.
3. To become a diplomate, a resident must meet the following criteria:
 - a. Submit the ACVB Resident Continuation of Residency Form in the current accepted submission format each year during their residency as directed in the documents found under “Certification” on the ACVB website.
 - b. Have published a research paper as outlined in the ACVB Residency Documents.
 - c. Have published a case report as outlined in the ACVB Residency Documents.
 - d. Have completed their approved residency program.
 - e. Present certification of completing the approved program.

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4. A person is an “ACVB Resident” when:
 - a. They have registered with ACVB in accordance with the ACVB Residency Documents, and they are enrolled in an ACVB-approved Institutional or Individual Behavior Residency Program.
5. During the residency, the following designations are permitted for use by Residents:
 - a. “ACVB resident in private practice training.”
 - b. “ACVB resident at ‘XXX’ University or Practice.”
 - c. “ACVB resident in the Military Behavioral Residency Program.”
 - d. Upon completion of the residency program, the individual may not use the designation “resident” but instead can use “candidate.”
 - e. The AVMA considers veterinarians to be either board-certified or not board-certified. There is NO “board-eligible” designation for individuals who have completed their program but have not yet passed a specialty examination. ACVB prohibits the use of the designation “board eligible” in all communications (e.g., print, electronic, text, internet, etc.) by a resident, candidate, or diplomate.

TYPES OF RESIDENCIES

1. There are two types of ACVB Behavior Residencies: Individual and Institutional
2. Institutional
 - a. Residents enrolled in an approved Behavior Residency Program at an institution or private practice that has already had the program evaluated and approved by the STC. The details of each program are contained in the program application to the STC and should meet the requirements set forth in the ACVB By-Laws and Policies.
3. Individual
 - a. Residents enrolled in an approved Individual Behavior Residency Program. The details of the program are contained in the resident's individual application submitted to the STC and should meet the requirements set forth in the ACVB By-Laws and Policies.

SUPERVISING DIPLOMATE (SD)

1. Institutional
 - a. The SD must be a board-certified member of the ACVB. A resident may be

supervised by more than one ACVB Diplomat; however, only one can serve as primary supervisor and SD.

2. Individual

- a. Individuals intending to apply for the Individual Behavior Residency Program must register their intent with the ACVB and include a letter signed by the SD stating that the SD has agreed to mentor the resident.
- b. The SD must be a board-certified member of the ACVB. It is up to the resident to find an ACVB Diplomat who is willing to serve as their SD. A resident may be supervised by more than one ACVB Diplomat; however, only one can serve as primary supervisor and SD.
- c. Properly supervising a resident through a training program requires significant resources. Compensation to the SD for this service may vary widely based upon the specific situation of the diplomat. A financial arrangement may be established and documented between the resident and the SD and does not need to be submitted to the ACVB or STC.
- d. The ACVB will not arbitrate, mediate or resolve any financial disputes between a Resident and his or her SD.

FEES

1. See the ACVB Resident Fee Schedule online

SUBMISSION OF FORMS AND DOCUMENTS TO THE ACVB

1. Documents and forms should be submitted via the current submission system. For more information, contact the Executive Director and refer to the ACVB Residency Documents.
2. Any e-mail correspondence from the ED must be acknowledged by the Candidate or Resident in order to be considered valid.

INDIVIDUAL RESIDENCY PROGRAMS

1. Detailed materials for the intended training program should be submitted electronically to ACVB using the current approved system and forms as early in the program as possible.
2. The burden of proof that the Resident's program meets the ACVB requirements lies with the Resident. It is expected that each item will be discussed and documented in detail to ensure the program meets the guidelines.

3. Residents applying for approval of Individual Behavior Residency Programs have 18 months from the date they register with the ACVB as a resident to submit a proposed training program.
4. The STC will return reviewed programs to the candidate with the outcome and any requested changes by May 1st and November 1st, depending on when the application was submitted. If minor revisions are needed, no reapplication fee will be required if the candidate returns the changes to the STC within thirty (30) days of receiving the outcome. Should significant revisions to the program be needed, or if the candidate does not resubmit within thirty (30) days of receiving the outcome letter, a reapplication fee will be required, and the new application will not be reviewed until the next review date.

SUBMISSION OF COMPLETED RESIDENCY PROGRAMS (INDIVIDUAL AND INSTITUTIONAL)

1. All submissions must be completed by the published due date and accompanied by the required fees to be considered. Refer to the ACVB Residency Documents.
2. Upon completion of a program, the Resident shall submit a copy of the materials that include the originally accepted proposed program and a detailed, side-by-side comparison of the actual completed training program, noting any variations from the proposed program and how the specific ACVB requirements were met.
3. One highly detailed electronic copy of all materials should be submitted via the current accepted process.
4. The Resident should allow sixty (60) days for the STC to review the completed program.
5. From the time of registration, a resident in an approved Individual Residency program must submit the completed program documentation within five (5) years, in accordance with the most recently approved submission guidelines, by the outlined due date, along with any accompanying fees.

DEVIATIONS FROM APPROVED PROGRAMS

1. Deviations from the original approved program **MUST** be evaluated, including their impact on the entire program. It is the Resident's responsibility to provide all information about program changes.
2. ACVB reserves the right to reject an application if the Resident has modified a previously approved program and that modification has not been approved by ACVB.
3. It is strongly recommended that any deviations be submitted for evaluation prior to their occurrence so the Resident can ensure they continue to meet the standards set by the STC and their previously approved program.

RESIDENCY POLICY

1. The Residency Policy is part of the ACVB Residency Documents.
2. In the event of a conflict between the terms of this Resident Packet and ACVB's Residency Policy, ACVB's Residency Policy shall govern and control.

APPLICATION FOR BOARD CERTIFICATION

1. It is the responsibility of the Candidate to ensure that they submit the most recent forms using the accepted way of submission with the correct fee when applying to sit for the Exam. See the ACVB Residency Documents.
2. Correspondence, particularly that requiring Credentials Committee assessment, must be sent at least six (6) weeks before any deadlines to enable the Credentials Committee to review and consider it. The Candidate will receive a written reply from the Credentials Committee through the ED.
3. Exam Applications of residents in an approved residency program cannot be made earlier than eighteen (18) months after acceptance into the residency program and not before October of the second year of their residency.

SUBMISSION OF APPLICATION MATERIALS FOR EXAMINATION AND BOARD CERTIFICATION

1. Candidates must show that the following items have been satisfactorily completed by including the materials listed below to be considered for Board Certification by the ACVB.
2. It is the Candidate's responsibility to see that the following items are submitted by the indicated deadlines, with any appropriate fees and in the way outlined by the most current ACVB Residency Policy.
3. Failure to do so could result in not being credentialed, which would prevent the Candidate from qualifying to take the Examination that year.
4. Items to be submitted
 - a. One (1) electronic copy of the Candidate's:
 - i. Diploma from a school or college accredited or approved by the American Veterinary Medical Association (AVMA), **OR**
 - ii. Certificate of Accreditation in Veterinary Medicine from the Educational Commission for Foreign Veterinary Graduates (ECFVG) of the AVMA, **OR**
 - iii. Legal document of qualification to practice veterinary medicine in some state, province, territory, or possession of the United States, Canada, or

other country.

- iv. The Resident will be informed electronically that their program has passed and is complete.
 - v. The accepted case report/case series manuscript, along with the acceptance letter provided by the journal and the assigned DOI.
 - vi. The accepted scientific paper manuscript, along with the acceptance letter from the journal and the assigned DOI.
 - vii. One (1) copy of the Resident Evaluation Form from each of three (3) different evaluators. Each letter of evaluation will be reviewed by the Credentials Committee, which will score it as acceptable or unacceptable. ACVB may directly contact individuals who wrote letters of evaluation prior to accepting the Exam Application.
 - viii. Completed Resident Evaluation Forms must be received from at least three (but not more than five) evaluators who can assess the candidate's performance in clinical animal behavior. At least one of these veterinarians MUST be an ACVB diplomate. Other evaluators should be either a board-certified specialist or hold a PhD. Each evaluator MUST send one (1) electronic copy of the completed Resident Evaluation Form in the way outlined by the current residency policy and any other ACVB Behavior Residency Documents.
- b. Additions or substitutions (or the like) to the Exam Application sent under separate cover will NOT be accepted.
 - c. ACVB reserves the right to solicit information from individuals other than those provided by the Candidate but will notify the Candidate if it does so.

REQUIREMENTS FOR EXAMINATION COMPLETION

1. The current application fee will be charged each time an application to sit the exam is submitted.
2. If a Candidate must delay taking the Exam after being notified that their application is acceptable, the ACVB Executive Director must be notified.
3. No portion of the required fee(s) will be refunded.
4. A Candidate who wishes to take the Exam following a delay or to retake the Exam MUST notify the ACVB Executive Director of such intent in writing through accepted channels as outlined in the ACVB Residency Policy and include all current contact information. This notification, the administration fee, and the examination fee must be received by the Executive Director's office by the currently accepted deadline.

5. ACVB will NOT send reminders to people who may wish to re-sit the Exam.
6. A Candidate must achieve a designated passing score on the entire Examination.
7. If the Candidate does not pass any section of the Exam, the Candidate will be required to retake the entire Exam at the Candidate's next attempt.
8. When applying to retake the Exam, a new Exam Application must be submitted to the Credentials Committee for review, along with the administration fee and the current examination fee, by the currently published deadlines.
9. The ACVB complies with the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, as amended by the Americans with Disabilities Act Amendment Act of 2008 (the "ADA"). If the Candidate has a disability/impairment which may require special accommodation(s) to take the Exam, they must complete the ACVB Exam Accommodations Request Form which can be found on the current electronic submissions system and return it with their Examination Application form by the required due date. If accommodation(s) is (are) not requested in advance of the Exam's date, ACVB cannot guarantee the availability of accommodation(s) on site at the Exam. Accommodation cannot be granted retroactively, so if a candidate informs ACVB of an impairment or disability after the Exam has been completed, there can be no changes made in that candidate's Exam results or changes in how that candidate's Exam is graded in comparison to other candidates.
10. A candidate who does not pass the examination in the required timeline (see the ACVB Residency Policy) must begin the Board Certification process again in its entirety, from registration to passage of the examination.

APPLICATIONS FOR EXAMINATION AND BOARD CERTIFICATION

1. Each Exam Application will be reviewed by the ACVB Executive Director for accuracy and completeness, and then by the Credentials Committee, which will determine whether it is acceptable or unacceptable.
2. All parts of the Exam Application must be satisfactory for such application to be accepted. If any part of the Exam Application is not acceptable, the entire application will be rejected.
3. The Candidate will be notified of the acceptance or rejection of their exam application within ninety (90) days of submission. It is the Candidate's responsibility to notify the ACVB Executive Director in writing of any change in address, email address, or telephone number. A Candidate's failure to notify the ACVB Executive Director of current contact information may result in misdirected communications and significant delays in reporting results.

REAPPLICATION AFTER REJECTED APPLICATION

1. If the Application for Examination was previously rejected, an ENTIRE, COMPLETE application packet must be resubmitted except as indicated in writing from the ACVB

Executive Director and listed below.

APPEALS PROCEDURE

1) General Appeals Procedure Information

- a. The procedures for appealing an adverse decision are covered in Section 2 of the ACVB Discipline and Appeals Procedure Policy (Appeals Policy). If there is a conflict between the terms of this packet and the Appeals Policy, the Appeals Policy controls and governs. It is the candidate's responsibility to be familiar with the Appeals Policy and to confirm that they are referring to the most current version of the document.

2) Purpose of Appeals Process.

- a. The appeals process is limited to the review of due process. The purpose is to ensure that the appealing individual has been treated in accordance with all policies and procedures of ACVB and that no mathematical errors have been made in scoring. The appeals process is not intended to re-grade examinations.

3) Procedure for Appeal of Adverse Decision

- a. Adverse decisions by ACVB may include, but are not limited to:
 - i. Denial of certification of an individual;
 - ii. Denial of adequacy of exam application;
 - iii. Denial of a proposed residency program;
 - iv. Suspension of certification; or
 - v. Failure of the examination.
- b. In the event of an adverse decision by ACVB, ACVB shall advise the affected person or the SD of the affected residency program of the procedure for appealing the adverse decision. An affected party desiring to appeal the adverse decision must adhere to the following procedure:

4) Grounds for Reconsideration or Review

- a. The affected party may petition for reconsideration or review of ACVB's decision on the grounds that ACVB has ruled erroneously by:
 - i. Disregarding the established ACVB criteria for certification or approval;
 - ii. Failing to follow its stated procedures; or
 - iii. Failing to consider relevant evidence and documentation presented.

5) Petition for Reconsideration

- a. An affected party may petition ACVB to reconsider its decision by filing a written petition for reconsideration with ACVB, which shall include a statement of the grounds for reconsideration and any supporting documentation.
- b. Such petition must be received in the ACVB Executive Director's office within 30 days of the date the adverse decision is announced.
- c. The President shall name an Appeals Panel of three (3) diplomates, including a Chair of the Appeals Panel, to review the petition. Diplomates named to this panel must have no conflict of interest with the appellant and may not be current BoR committee members. The Panel may review only written materials, meet by telephone conference, in person or electronically, or, at the discretion of the Chair of the Appeals Panel, may call a special meeting to hear arguments from both sides of the issue. Travel for the affected party will be at the other party's expense.
- d. The Appeals Panel will meet in executive session to reach a final decision. This decision will be sent to the Board of Regents for information. The decision will then be delivered in writing by certified mail to the appellant, within 30 days of the date that the appeal was received by the office of ACVB's Executive Director.

DOCUMENTS ON [ACVB CERTIFICATION PAGE](#)

1. 2026-2031 Applicant Packet
2. Case Summary Report Example
3. Certification Policies and Procedures
4. Code of Ethics and Professional Conduct for the Board Examination
5. Credentials Committee Frequently Asked Questions
6. Examination Blueprint
7. Examination Committee Frequently Asked Questions
8. Program Logs
9. Residency Module Sheet
10. Residency Policy
11. Rotation, Class, or Self-study Completion
12. Specialty Training Committee Approved Courses List
13. Specialty Training Committee Frequently Asked Questions
14. Recommended Reading List
15. Case report and scientific publication requirements for ACVB residents