

**U.S. Department of Education Office of Postsecondary Education
Accreditation Group**

GUIDELINES

for

**REQUESTING AN ACCEPTABILITY DETERMINATION
FOR A FOREIGN VETERINARY ACCREDITING AGENCY**

Effective January 2015

OVERVIEW

Effective July 1, 2015, the U.S. Department of Education (Department) is charged with determining whether a foreign accrediting agency or organization (agency) is acceptable to the Secretary of Education for the purpose of evaluating veterinary programs (See Appendix, Section 600.56(a)(4) for guiding regulation).

In making this determination, the Department developed and uses the following Guidelines for evaluation of foreign accrediting bodies for veterinary medicine using commonly accepted practices of accrediting agencies. The Department is concerned with the quality assurance processes that an agency uses to accredit its veterinary schools. These processes should include the application of widely-accepted standards, and the review of licensure, as defined in the attached glossary.

GENERAL INSTRUCTIONS

- **The application is arranged in three parts:**
 - Part 1 requests information about the structure of the system that the agency uses to authorize the establishment of veterinary schools and subsequent oversight of the quality of the veterinary education program.
 - Part 2 requests information about the standards and requirements the agency uses to evaluate the quality of veterinary education.
 - Part 3 requests specific information regarding the evaluation process and application of the agency's quality standards, including the qualifications of evaluators, quality controls against conflict of interest, monitoring, and verification of compliance.

- **Please provide a narrative response for each individual subsection of the application.**

- **Please provide documentation for each individual subsection of the application. Provide documents to verify each response and demonstrate application of the process or procedure, as appropriate. Suggested documentation includes:**
 - Copies of relevant laws
 - Copies of regulations, standards, or other authoritative documents
 - Copies of accreditation standards
 - Copies of accreditation processes and procedures documents
 - Samples of self-study reports produced by the schools
 - Samples of site visit reports produced by the agency

- **Please provide English translations of all documents that are submitted with the application.**

- **Before completing each subsection, first carefully read the standard (indicated in bold print) and answer each question that follows within the context of the Guidelines and the definitions and concepts provided below:**

GLOSSARY:

Accreditation: The act or process of confirming compliance with developed standards in order to attest that a designated level of operational capacity exists within veterinary school educational facilities and processes so as to assure its ongoing ability to function and to provide for the future competence of its students.

Accrediting Agency/Organization: A legal entity, or that part of a legal entity, that conducts accrediting activities by qualified individuals and makes decisions concerning the accreditation or preaccreditation status of veterinary programs or schools.

Evaluation: The act or result of judging, appraising and/or rating the operational characteristics, capacities and performance of a veterinary school, which generally results from the on-site and paper review of a whole group of operational requirements and provides a de-facto statement about the relative merit of the veterinary school's processes. The significance of evaluations for purposes of acceptability depends on the standards being applied. Sometimes such evaluations only state that a veterinary school has met the minimal requirements, but does not further rate the performance, a so-called "pass/fail." In other circumstances the evaluation may produce a gradation such as unsatisfactory, satisfactory, and exemplary.

Licensure: The granting of licenses and/or permits in accordance with established standards to allow legal operation of a veterinary school or veterinarian within a country.

On-Site Review: During an on-site review, a team representing the agency visits all of the veterinary school's sites (including all clinical sites) and evaluates strengths, areas of noncompliance with accreditation standards, and any areas in transition (activities currently in progress whose outcome could affect compliance with the accreditation standards). The on-site review team writes a site visit report of its findings and presents the report to the agency for its use in determining the accreditation status of the veterinary education program.

Self-Study: During a self-study, a veterinary school brings together representatives of the administration, faculty, student body, and other constituencies to: (1) collect and review data about the veterinary school and its educational programs; (2) identify strengths and issues requiring action; and (3) define strategies to ensure that the strengths are maintained and any problems are addressed.

Standards: Uniform performance specifications established by authority, custom, or general consent, and used as a model or an example to be followed to ensure operational capacity within the veterinary school's processes. Standards provide measures of performance and reflect carefully thought-out methods of performing tasks, which may then be inspected and/or audited.

Substantive Change: A change that is impactful to the educational mission or program after the agency has accredited or preaccredited the veterinary school that could adversely affect the capacity of the veterinary school to continue to meet the agency's standards. Examples of substantive changes include change of mission or objectives; change in legal status, form of control, or ownership; additional locations, etc.

PART 1: ACCREDITATION SYSTEM AND AUTHORITY

(a) The agency should be a clearly designated entity responsible for evaluating the quality of veterinary education in each country that it operates, and it should have clear authority to accredit veterinary schools in each country.

- Provide documentation of the functional authority of the agency.

(b) The agency should have a clearly defined accreditation system in place for veterinary schools.

- Describe how the agency works with the approval/licensing entity in each country to ensure an acceptable system for the establishment and oversight of quality veterinary education programs and how the governmental entities work in relationship with the agency to establish and ensure a system of quality veterinary education.

PART 2: ACCREDITATION STANDARDS

The agency should demonstrate that it has standards for accreditation, and preaccreditation, if offered, that effectively address the quality of the veterinary programs it accredits in the following areas:

(a) Mission and Objectives.

The veterinary school's educational program should be appropriate in light of its mission and objectives of the school. An essential objective of a program of veterinary education should be to prepare graduates to enter and complete graduate veterinary education, qualify for licensure, provide competent veterinary care, and have the educational background necessary for continued learning.

- What are the agency's requirements related to how veterinary schools should prepare graduates to qualify for licensure and to provide quality veterinary care?

(b) Governance.

The veterinary school should be legally authorized to provide a program of veterinary education in the country in which it is located. (See Appendix, Section 600.56(a)(1) for guiding regulation.)

- What, if any, are the requirements for veterinary schools to be legally authorized or licensed to provide a program of veterinary education in each country?

(c) Administrative and fiscal capacity.

The administration and fiscal capacity of the veterinary school should be effective and appropriate in light of the school's mission and objectives.

- What are the agency's requirements regarding how veterinary schools are to be administered? What are the agency's requirements regarding fiscal capacity of the veterinary school?

(d) Faculty.

Members of the veterinary school's faculty should be appropriately qualified to teach in a veterinary program and effective in their teaching. The faculty should be of sufficient size, breadth, and depth to provide the scope of the educational program offered. (See Appendix, Sections 600.56(a)(1) & (3) for guiding regulations.)

- What are the agency's requirements related to the size of the faculty a veterinary school is required to have? What are your agency's requirements regarding the qualifications for appointment to the faculty?

- What are the agency's requirements regarding the relationship between the instructional staff at remote sites and clinical locations and the veterinary school? For example, do you require that clinical site instructors or supervising teachers are members of the veterinary school faculty?

(e) Curricula.

The curricula should meet the mission and educational objectives of the veterinary school and lead to the Doctor of Veterinary Medicine (DVM) degree, or equivalent. (See Appendix, Section 600.56(a)(1) for guiding regulation.)

- What are the agency's requirements with regards to the design, implementation, and evaluation of a veterinary school's curriculum? Does the agency require a specific program length? If yes, provide the requirement.

The curricula should include ethics, and require its students to exhibit scrupulous ethical principles in caring for animals and to others involved in patient care.

- What requirement does the agency place on veterinary schools regarding the extent and nature of the educational experience in teaching ethics? What are the agency's standards for evaluating the mechanisms a school has in place to monitor and evaluate the success of the instruction in ethics?
- What are the agency's requirements to ensure the humane care of animals when animals are used in teaching and research?

The curricula should include clinical training. (See Appendix, Sections 600.56(a)(1) and 600.56(b) for guiding regulations.)

- Provide the standards your agency has in regards to clinical training. If you have any postgraduate program offerings, please explain. (For example: internships, residencies, and advanced degrees).

(f) Student achievement.

The veterinary school should establish principles and methods for the evaluation of student achievement, including the criteria for satisfactory academic progress and the requirements for graduation. The veterinary school's evaluation of student achievement should employ a variety of measures of student knowledge, competence, and performance, systematically and sequentially applied throughout the veterinary program.

- Does the agency set requirements by which veterinary schools are to evaluate student achievement? If yes, provide the requirement. In the alternative, are veterinary schools free to

establish their own methods of evaluating student achievement? If yes, provide the requirement.

- What are the agency's requirements, if any, to prepare U.S. students for taking and passing the North American Veterinary Licensing Examination? (NAVLE)?

The veterinary school should collect and use a variety of outcomes data, including national norms of accomplishment, to demonstrate the extent to which its educational program objectives are being met. Veterinary schools should collect outcomes data on student performance during and after school as appropriate to document and report on the achievement of the school's educational program objectives.

- Does the agency establish student performance outcomes measures, benchmarks, or requirements for schools, such as acceptable numbers of graduates from the school passing a licensing examination, to determine whether to grant accreditation or approval to the school? If yes, provide the outcomes requirements. Describe the agency's collection and use of the data.

(g) Admissions and recruiting.

The veterinary school should have written admission and recruiting requirements.

- Does the agency establish requirements for admission to the veterinary school? If yes, provide the requirements.
- How does the agency evaluate the quality of the veterinary school's admission practices?
- Are there admissions requirements set by any country in which the agency operates? If yes, provide the requirements.

(h) Facilities.

The veterinary school should have adequate facilities, equipment, and supplies to fulfill its educational objectives. (See Appendix, Section 600.56(a)(1) for guiding regulation.)

- What are the agency's requirements related to the types and quality of facilities a veterinary school should have to ensure that adequate care is provided?
- Do any veterinary schools offer all or part of the veterinary education program at geographically-separated locations? If yes, what are the agency's requirements to ensure that the quality of education at geographically-separated sites is comparable to the main campus and that students are evaluated in a comparable manner at all sites?

The veterinary school should have written arrangements with each teaching hospital or clinical facility it uses that define the responsibilities of each party.

- How does the agency ensure an appropriate level agreement between veterinary schools and clinical teaching sites? Describe in detail.
- What are the agency's criteria for determining that there is sufficient access to the resources and authority needed to effectively instruct students at affiliated locations? (See Appendix, Section 600.56(b) for guiding regulation)

(i) Student complaints.

The veterinary school should have written policies for addressing student complaints related to the areas covered by the agency's accreditation standards and processes.

- What are the agency's standards or procedures regarding how veterinary schools should address student complaints?

PART 3: ACCREDITATION PROCESSES AND PROCEDURES

(a) The agency should use competent and knowledgeable individuals, who are qualified by experience and training in the basic or clinical sciences, for on-site evaluations of veterinary schools, policy-making, and decision-making.

- Provide the agency's requirements regarding the qualification and training of the individuals who participate in on-site evaluations of veterinary schools, the individuals who establish the accreditation standards for veterinary schools, and the individuals who decide whether a specific veterinary school should be accredited.

(b) The agency should have clear and effective controls against conflicts of interest by those individuals involved in the accreditation evaluation and decision process.

- Provide the agency's policies regarding conflict of interest and the procedures the agency uses to ensure the individuals involved in the accreditation process do not have a conflict of interest.

(c) The agency should have effective controls against the inconsistent application of the agency's standards.

- Describe how the agency ensures that its standards are applied consistently to all veterinary schools that seek accreditation.

(d) The agency should conduct a comprehensive on-site review of each veterinary school to include all of the training/clinical sites (if any), during which sufficient information is collected to determine if the school is operating in compliance with the agency's standards.

- Provide documentation of the application of the on-site review process such as examples of self-study reports and an example of a site visit report prepared by on-site evaluators.

(e) The agency should regularly reevaluate veterinary schools, and provide for the monitoring of veterinary schools throughout any period of accreditation granted to ensure continued compliance with the agency's standards.

- Provide documentation to demonstrate ongoing monitoring and regular reevaluation of veterinary schools.

(g) The agency should require veterinary schools to notify the agency of any substantive change to their educational program. The substantive change process should provide for a

review of the substantive change by the agency to determine if the school remains in compliance with the standards.

- Provide the agency's substantive change policy and procedures.

(h) The agency should base decisions regarding accreditation and preaccreditation on compliance with the agency's published standards decisions. These accreditation decisions should be based, in part, on the effective use of data in evaluating the performance of students after graduation from the veterinary school.

- Provide the procedures used to ensure that accreditation decisions are based on the agency's standards.

APPENDIX – FOREIGN VETERINARY SCHOOL ELIGIBILITY REGULATION

Title 34: Education

PART 600—INSTITUTIONAL ELIGIBILITY UNDER THE HIGHER EDUCATION ACT OF 1965, AS AMENDED

Subpart E—Eligibility of Foreign Institutions To Apply To Participate in the Federal Family Education Loan (FFEL) Programs

§600.56 Additional criteria for determining whether a foreign veterinary school is eligible to apply to participate in the Direct Loan Program.

(a) The Secretary considers a foreign veterinary school to be eligible to apply to participate in the Direct Loan Program if, in addition to satisfying the criteria in this part (except the criterion in §600.54 that the institution be public or private nonprofit), the school satisfies all of the following criteria:

(1) The school provides, and in the normal course requires its students to complete, a program of clinical and classroom veterinary instruction that is supervised closely by members of the school's faculty, and that is provided in facilities adequately equipped and staffed to afford students comprehensive clinical and classroom veterinary instruction through a training program for foreign veterinary students that has been approved by all veterinary licensing boards and evaluating bodies whose views are considered relevant by the Secretary.

(2) The school has graduated classes during each of the two twelve-month periods immediately preceding the date the Secretary receives the school's request for an eligibility determination.

(3) The school employs for the program described in paragraph (a)(1) of this section only those faculty members whose academic credentials are the equivalent of credentials required of faculty members teaching the same or similar courses at veterinary schools in the United States.

(4) Effective July 1, 2015, the school is accredited or provisionally accredited by an organization acceptable to the Secretary for the purpose of evaluating veterinary programs.

(b)(1) No portion of the foreign veterinary educational program offered to U.S. students, other than the clinical training portion of the program as provided for in paragraph (b)(2) of this section, may be located outside of the country in which the main campus of the foreign veterinary school is located;

(2) (i) For a veterinary school that is neither public nor private nonprofit, the school's students should complete their clinical training at an approved veterinary school located in the United States;

(ii) For a veterinary school that is public or private nonprofit, the school's students may complete their clinical training at an approved veterinary school located—

(A) In the United States;

(B) In the home country; or

(C) Outside of the United States or the home country, if—

(1) The location is included in the accreditation of a veterinary program accredited by the American Veterinary Medical Association (AVMA); or

(2) No individual student takes more than two electives at the location and the combined length of the elective does not exceed eight weeks.

(Authority: 20 U.S.C. 1002 and 1092.)
[75 FR 67197, Nov. 1, 2010]