

# **American College of Veterinary Sports Medicine and Rehabilitation**

## **Admission Requirements for ACVSMR**

The ACVSMR will certify only veterinarians who have demonstrated, by meeting established training and/or experience requirements and by attaining acceptable scores on comprehensive examinations administered by the ACVSMR, their fitness and ability to practice the specialty. The prerequisites and experience requirements for taking the examination have been based on those of other established RVSOs.

Candidates must:

Be a graduate of a college or school of veterinary medicine accredited by the AVMA; or possess a certificate issued by the Educational Commission for Foreign Veterinary Graduates (ECFVG) or by the PAVE program; or be legally qualified to practice veterinary medicine in some state, province, territory, or possession of the United States, Canada, or other country

Demonstrate unquestionable moral character and ethical professional behavior.

Fulfill the requirements for the academic path or non-academic/private practice path: There are three paths by which a veterinarian can become qualified to take the certifying examination: the Academic path, the Practice Experience path and the Nontraditional Residency path. These criteria were established to help this new specialty develop a critical mass of well-trained and experienced Diplomates and will be the criteria for the next five years. After 5 years, these criteria will be reevaluated by the ACVSMR membership.

### **1. Academic Path**

An approved three year residency program in either an academic institution or a multispecialty practice with board certified specialists in surgery, medicine or rehabilitation with educational and clinical focus on sports medicine and rehabilitation OR a post DVM doctoral graduate program with the focus on sports medicine and rehabilitation. A candidate must be the first or senior author on a published peer reviewed, hypothesis driven manuscript in a refereed journal. An acceptance letter indicating "in press" status will be accepted.

### **2. Practice Experience Path**

The Practice Experience Path that does not incorporate a formal residency or graduate training program is available for veterinarians who have gained experience and expertise in sports medicine and rehabilitation in a private practice setting. This would require documentation of a minimum of 5 years with at least a 50% time commitment to clinical cases of equine or canine sports medicine and/or equine or canine rehabilitation. A candidate must be the first or senior author on a published peer-reviewed, hypothesis-driven manuscript in a refereed journal.

### ***3. Nontraditional Residency Path***

A nontraditional residency pathway is available for those veterinarians who are not able to commit to the traditional residency. It has the same requirements as the traditional residency but can be performed over an extended time period. The candidate will select or can be matched with one or more Diplomate(s) of the American College of Veterinary Rehabilitation and Sports Medicine. The selected Diplomate(s) will submit the candidate and a proposed training program to the Credentials Residency Committee for approval to proceed in a nontraditional residency. The residency cannot start until the proposed training program is approved by the Credentials Residency Committee. Yearly progress reports must be submitted to the Credentials Residency Committee to evaluate the candidate's development and progress. The Credentials Residency Committee has the authority to assess the candidate's progress and grant approval to continue with the program, or indicate that the program should be changed or determine that the candidate should discontinue or has failed the program. A candidate must be the first or senior author on a published peer-reviewed, hypothesis-driven manuscript in a referred journal.

For all three paths, five high-quality case reports, for which the applicant is primary or senior author must be submitted to the Credentials/Residency Committee of the ACVSMR describing the diagnosis and treatment of medical and surgical conditions in animal athletes and/or on rehabilitation of performance or non-performance animals. The case reports must be written to the standard format acceptable for publication by appropriate journals such as Equine Veterinary Education or the Journal of the American Veterinary Medical Association. The publication and case reports will be reviewed by the Credentials/Residency Committee and evaluated on satisfactory case management with attention to logical thought processes, clinical knowledge and appropriate management. All five case reports must be found to be acceptable by the Credentials/Residency Committee.

#### **Application Process**

Candidates must submit a completed application form from the ACVSMR, a copy of their current veterinary license, curriculum vitae, three letters of reference and reprints (or editor's letter indicating acceptance) of one published hypothesis driven, peer-reviewed/refereed publication on which the applicant is first author AND five high-quality case reports written to the standard format acceptable for publication by an appropriate journal.

#### ***Waiting Period after Establishment of Eligibility for Examination***

Candidates will not be required to have a waiting period between formal training and eligibility to sit for the examination.

#### ***Notification of Candidates Regarding Deficiencies in Credentials***

In case of deficiencies in credentials that prevent examination of a candidate by the ACVSMR, the candidate will be notified at least 120 days prior to the date of the examination.

## **Examination Procedures**

The following examination procedures will be adhered to:

The Curriculum/Education/Examination Committee has determined that examination questions will be submitted initially by all Charter Diplomates in multiple-choice format and written under the guidelines of the National Board of Medical Examiners (NBME). There will be two examinations: the first examination will be taken by all candidates and will contain questions on the basic physiological, medical, surgical and rehabilitation knowledge necessary for the Diplomate; the second examination will be species-specific (canine and equine) with candidates taking either the canine examination or the equine examination. Appendix III outlines the core curriculum of information for the basic examination (Appendix III A), the canine species examination (Appendix III B) and the equine species examination (Appendix III C). Candidates must pass both the first basic science examination and one of the species-specific examinations to earn Diplomate status.

Each examination will consist of 300 multiple-choice question distributed over the core knowledge base expected of a Diplomate. A copy of a "Procedures and Policies" Document (to be developed), bylaws and associated appendices will be given to each candidate on request or application. The examinations will be computer-based and will be administered at a site of a national meeting (yet to be determined) and on a date determined by the ACVSMR Board of Directors. The examination will be given once a year. The examinations will be administered and monitored by the Curriculum/Education/Examination Committee. Test questions will be marked electronically. Candidates will receive a content outline (blueprint) of the exam and exam format prior to the exam. ACVSMR will avoid personal conflict, or the appearance of conflict, that could affect results of examinations.

After acceptance of the candidate's credentials, there will be a period of 120 days available for examination preparation prior to sitting the test. If a candidate's credentials are denied and an appeal is filed, the ACVSMR will review this appeal and inform the candidate of their decision at least 45 days prior to the examination date (see below).

Candidates will be informed prior to the examination of the passing point or the method of setting the passing point. This pass rate will be recommended by the Curriculum/Education/Examination Committee to the Board of Directors. In the initial examinations over the first five years, a set percentage of correct answers resulting in passing will be determined prior to the examination by the Board of Directors and relayed to the examinees in the Policies and Procedures documents to be developed. The passing point may be adjusted lower but not higher after administering the exam. The Board of Directors will consult the National Board of Medical Examiners (NBME) on the establishment of passing criteria and a content based standard after a select number of examinees have been tested. An initial testing blueprint will be developed by the Charter Diplomates and refined by survey and a job task analysis conducted by the Diplomates before the five year Full Recognition review.

Candidates will receive notification of their scores on each of the tests within 45 days of the examination. Candidates will be notified of their examination results contemporaneously. Regardless of notification method, each candidate who takes the

examination will be notified of his/her result prior to informing the general membership. A candidate has 60 days from the time of notification to appeal the examination results (see below). On passing the examination, the candidate will receive a certificate of Diplomate status reading Diplomate of the American College of Veterinary Sports Medicine and Rehabilitation (Canine) or Diplomate of the American College of Veterinary Sports Medicine and Rehabilitation (Equine). Diplomate status is not time-limited nor subject to a recertification process. However, Diplomates are expected to continue to educate themselves in advancing sciences and procedures.

On failing to pass one or both of the tests, all candidates will be informed of their remaining eligibility and reapplication procedures. The candidates on written request will be provided with an explanation of deficiencies that prevented their passing the examination. Candidates failing to pass one or both parts of the test will be able to reapply to the ACVSMR within 3 years by providing a formal letter requesting a retake of the test. Candidates failing to pass one part of the test will only need to retake that part of the test. Both tests must be passed within 3 years of the initial test. This procedure will be published by the ACVSMR organization prior to the examination.

The ACVSMR will accommodate reasonable requests from applicants with documented disabilities for special test considerations in accordance with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). Appendix VI contains model language for applicants with documented disabilities.

#### Certificates Attesting to Diplomate Status

Certificates will be issued indicating that the individual is a Diplomate of the American College of Veterinary Sports Medicine and Rehabilitation and is certified in the AVMA-recognized specialty of *Sports Medicine and Rehabilitation (Canine)* or *Sports Medicine and Rehabilitation (Equine)*.

The certificates will not be time limited.

#### ***Veterinary Sports Medicine and Rehabilitation Residency Program***

A Veterinary Sports Medicine and Rehabilitation Residency Program shall consist of a minimum of three (3) years of supervised training, postgraduate education, and clinical experience in the science and practice of veterinary sports medicine and rehabilitation under the direct supervision of at least one (1) ACVSMR Diplomate or two (2) Diplomates of other supporting specialties such as ACVS or ACVIM who participate actively (at least 50% of clinical effort) in the field of canine or equine sports medicine and rehabilitation. Once in place, residency programs will be evaluated by the Credentials/Residency Committee.

#### **Facilities, Services and Equipment Required for a Veterinary Sports Medicine and Rehabilitation Residency Program:**

A. *Medical Library*: A library containing recent textbooks and access to printed or electronic copies of current journals relating to veterinary sports medicine and rehabilitation and its supporting disciplines must be accessible.

B. *Medical Records*: A complete medical record must be maintained for each individual case and records must be retrievable.

C. *Radiographic Services*: Appropriate equipment for comprehensive diagnostic imaging and image processing must be available.

D. *Surgical Facilities*: Operating suite and associated anesthetic and critical care equipment, surgical instrumentation and sterilization equipment must be available.

E. *Rehabilitation Facilities*: Appropriate rehabilitation and physical treatment modalities must be available for clinical use. A minimal list of modalities available on site or through consultants or externships would include electrical/mechanical modalities of therapeutic ultrasound, electrical stimulation (E-Stim and TENS), thermal (hot/cold), and underwater treadmill. Candidate should be familiar with application of massage techniques, basic chiropractic techniques, shock wave therapy and the use of acupuncture. Optimally, there would be a trained rehabilitation/physical therapist person on staff.

F. *Pathology Services*: Access to anatomic and clinical pathology diagnostic services must be available. Reports must be retained and retrievable.

### **Requirements for Admission to Residency Programs:**

Prospective residents will be required to have broad training and experience in clinical veterinary medicine and surgery and their supporting disciplines, which must be attained by participation in an internship of 12 months duration or its equivalent in private practice.

### **Resident Responsibilities:**

A. *Clinical Responsibilities*. The resident shall be responsible for receiving clinic appointments, obtaining history and pertinent information from the client, performing a complete examination and diagnostic tests, prompt and professional communication with the client, and supervising the daily management of hospitalized animals. It is expected that residents will see 400 cases during a 3-year canine sports medicine and rehabilitation residency and 300 cases during a 3-year equine sports medicine and rehabilitation residency. (Note, these case numbers were adopted from and are in concert with that needed for the American College of Veterinary Surgeons.)

B. *Didactic Education*. Residents should also attend rounds, journal clubs and guest lectures, take courses in consultation with their primary advisor, prepare scientific manuscripts, and present at national scientific conferences.

C. *Case and Activity Log*. Residents must keep a case and activity log, listing each week of the current year individually, the cases for which the resident had primary responsibility (including the species, breed, age, gender and diagnoses), and the residency advisor that directly supervised the case. Entries must be signed quarterly by the resident's primary advisor. The resident also should document his or her seminar, rounds and conference presentations as well as teaching responsibilities during each week.

D. Research. The resident must complete an investigative project that uses the scientific method. It is recommended that this project be initiated in Year 1 of the residency program. In addition to contributing to the literature, manuscripts originating from basic or clinical research enhance a resident's education by the learning of scientific methodology, which may lead to the discovery of new concepts, or substantiate or refute established methods. Manuscripts should demonstrate intellectual curiosity and should further the state of scientific knowledge of sports medicine, rehabilitation, or other closely related biological sciences.

### **Existing Residency and Training Programs**

Facilities and training programs are available (Appendix II). It is estimated that 20-30 veterinarians are currently involved in graduate or residency programs with a sports medicine and/or rehabilitation focus. The objectives of these programs are to prepare graduate veterinarians for careers specializing in sports medicine and rehabilitation of athletic animals. In this new specialty, reliance on existing residencies in surgery and medicine and rehabilitation with board certified faculty with a focus on sports medicine and rehabilitation will be necessary. Training is currently provided by three rehabilitation certifying programs at the University of Tennessee, the Equine Rehabilitation Institute in Florida, and the Canine Rehabilitation Institute in Florida and at Colorado State University. In addition, many veterinary conferences are entirely or partially devoted to advanced training in sports medicine and rehabilitation. The success of these programs will be evident by growth in the number registrants. At the present time, existing educational programs are well attended and attendance is increasing.