

Veterinary Assistant Student Certification

This document includes:

- Certified Veterinary Assistant (CVA)
Protocol
- Letter to Veterinarian
- Certified Veterinary Assistant Level I Exam
Application

Certified Veterinary Assistant (CVA)

North Carolina Agricultural Education Courses with content in this certification area include Animal Science I and Animal Science II, and Animal Science II – Small Animal.

The Certifying Agency

The Texas Veterinary Medical Association (TVMA) developed this Certified Veterinary Assistant (CVA) certification program to establish knowledge and performance standards in the practice of veterinary assisting and to encourage the widespread adoption of these standards through a highly valued credential of competency. The CVA program is currently offered to schools outside of Texas, ideally in cooperation with the corresponding state VMA to provide the CVA Certification; however, the TVMA will provide the CVA Certification in those states where no licensing agreement is in place.

North Carolina Agricultural Education recognizes the quality and expertise that this program demands for those wishing to earn certification. Those students who complete Veterinary Assisting (Course Number AA 41) as part of the North Carolina Department of Public Instruction approved Program of Studies in Agriculture Education at the secondary level may petition to take the certification test offered by TVMA. The local school will coordinate the testing element as prescribed by TVMA for their students. It will be the responsibility of each individual seeking certification to present all necessary evidence as prescribed by TVMA and complete all requirements as prescribed by the certifying agency through the cooperating school.

One may obtain general information about the certifying agency and certification requirements by visiting their website at: www.tvma.org. For detailed certification questions, teachers and school personnel may contact Andrea (Andy) Walker at the email address below.

Andrea Walker
Director of Training & Certification
Texas Veterinary Medical Association
8104 Exchange Drive, Austin, TX 78754
Phone: (512) 452-4224; Fax: (512) 452-6633; Email: awalker@tvma.org

Benefits of Certification (Item 1.6, *Policies and Guidelines, Policy Manual* Version 1.1, July 1, 2010)

- **Certificate:** Professional quality designating the date, level of certification, and qualifiers name.
- **Verification of Certification:** TVMA maintains a permanent registry of all CVAs who have completed and maintained their certification status as a reference for employers.
- **Discounts on Continuing Education:** Individuals who hold current certification will be allowed to register for continuing education at any TVMA-sponsored seminar or conference at a reduced rate.
- **Newsletter:** All current CVA's with certification that provide an email address will receive the bimonthly TVMA source newsletter.
- **Portability:** The CVA designation can be taken from one practice to another.
- **Patches/Pins:** A CVA patch for clinic clothing makes the public aware of the CVA's credentials. The first patch is provided without cost upon successful completion of CVA Level I. CVA pins are available as well.

Certification Criteria

North Carolina Agriculture Education students will be certified as a Certified Veterinary Assistant (CVA Level I) upon meeting all eligibility requirements. Students who earn Level I status may work directly with TVMA to continue the process required to meet additional certification levels.

CVA Program Organization (Item 3.0, *Policies and Guidelines, Policy Manual* Version 1.1, July 1, 2010)

The CVA program consists of three core components, which are included in every level of certification as outlined above: Knowledge, Skills, and Experience.

Knowledge Standards (Item 3.1, *Policies and Guidelines, Policy Manual* Version 1.1, July 1, 2010)

Knowledge standards represent the minimum competencies in the range of work typically assigned the veterinary assistant in a professional practice of veterinary medicine and must be demonstrated. The North Carolina Veterinary Assisting (Course Number AA 41) was developed to cover these knowledge standards. In addition, "TVMA recognizes that the school-based veterinary assistant program consists of well-designed, highly organized content taught in classroom settings by well-qualified professional educators through 1-3 academic years."

Guidelines for school-based programs include:

- Applicants for certification must complete at least 9 months of the school-based veterinary assistant program
- Applicants for certification must be at least **16 years of age**
- Applicants meet the knowledge standard by successfully passing the TVMA written examination.
 - The CVA examination for each certificate level will consist of 100 multiple-choice questions.
 - The examination consists of questions related to skills covered in the *Certified Veterinary Assistant Level I Skills Validation Checklist*.

Skill Standards (Item 3.2, *Policies and Guidelines, Policy Manual* Version 1.1, July 1, 2010)

Each candidate for certification must acquire specified skills and performance abilities identified on the *Certified Veterinary Assistant Level I Skills Validation Checklist*. The **Certified Veterinary Assistant Level I Exam Application** includes a signature space for a veterinarian or other licensed/certified supervising personnel to validate the student's *Skills Validation Checklist*. Each competency on the *Certified Veterinary Assistant Level I Skills Validation Checklist* must be initialed by the veterinarian or certified personnel who observed the student complete the competency to validate the applicant's proficiency for that skill. Only the initials of those whose names appear on the exam application are acceptable as observers of competencies. **In no case will other initials be allowed to validate the competency.**

If a veterinary practice does not perform the particular competency but the veterinarian explained the skill, the veterinarian or certified person will write explained and understood in the comment column along with their initials. A minimum number of *Skills Validation Checklist* competencies/skills (4 or at the most 5) may be completed during the supervised agricultural experience and class/lab practice of the high school program. The supervising agriculture teacher should initial in the comment column on the *Skills Validation Checklist* for those competencies. The CVA program relies upon observation and supervision by appropriate professional personnel to assure appropriate skill levels in the veterinary assistants achieving certification.

Experience Standards (Item 3.3, *Policies and Guidelines, Policy Manual* Version 1.1, July 1, 2010)

Applicants for certification must provide documentation that support appropriate **500 hours of hands on** work experience that demonstrates supervised interaction with live animals.

Two hundred of the 500 hours may be completed during the supervised agricultural experience (SAE) component of the agriculture education program. Key elements for the student to receive credit for the **200** hours include:

- All work is done under the supervision of the agricultural education teacher.
- Records substantiate all work.
- Hours may be earned any time during the year including summer months.

Three hundred of the 500 hours must occur within a veterinary clinic or animal shelter setting that is not on school premises (this includes but is not limited to school labs, school farms, etc. where animals are cared for on campus) with a DVM or other licensed/certified personnel to provide the required skill and techniques training. Volunteering in a veterinary hospital, riding on large animal veterinary field calls, institutional veterinary clinics that treat animals, and shelters that offer medical services through a veterinarian are a few examples of suitable sites.

- Completion of the 300 hours must be substantiated on the student's application for exam.
- The exam application includes verifiable information on the practice name and location.
- Period of observation must be included whether paid or unpaid.
- Signature of the supervising veterinarian must be included.

Certification Exam Protocol

Agriculture education programs teaching the Veterinary Assisting (Course Number AA 41) should observe the following protocol to ensure students may apply for the examination.

- Agriculture education teachers (Administrators) should notify TVMA upon enrollment of students in the CVA program.
 - Done at the beginning of the semester
 - Simple email to awalker@tvma.org
- Administrators should contact TVMA at least **three (3) months** prior to the test date. Failure to notify TVMA in a timely manner may result in a \$15 late fee and/or a delay in certification.
 - 14 to 21 days upon receipt of the application is required to get the exam back to the teacher.
 - Then the exam must be mailed back for grading which can require an additional 14 to 21 days.
 - Observing time requirements ensure certification information is returned in a timely manner.
- Schools must return certification examinations to TVMA within 1 week from the date of receipt of the exam.
 - Failure to return exams within the specified time may forfeit the school's future participation.
- Test security must be maintained at all times. Theft of exam forms, evidence of student cheating, or failure to properly secure the exam may result in cancellation of the school's participation in the certification program.
- Applicant must score 70% or better on a properly proctored CVA Level I exam to earn certification.
 - **TVMA cannot guarantee immediate scoring and turnaround for the tests and final certification.**
 - **Processing the certification applications and examinations will be done as quickly as possible.** Students and parents are asked not to contact TVMA directly to receive final results.
- **The individual fee for a student taking the CVA Certification Examination is \$125.** Payment must be submitted on a school check or credit card along with the application/checklist packet & preferred testing date.
 - **No personal checks or credit cards will be accepted from students or teachers.**
 - Individuals when not paid by the school must pay by money order or cashier check.
- Include a roster of those taking the test along with all applications/checklist.
 - Names of applicants must be printed, spelled correctly and legible.
 - Certificates with wrong information cannot be corrected.
- Ensure documentation of the 300 hours and 500 hours.
 - Signatures of the supervising agriculture teacher and veterinarian are required.
 - Applications will not be processed that do not have the proper signatures.
- Ensure the *Certified Veterinary Assistant Level I Skills Validation Checklist* is properly completed.
 - Each competency/skill has initials of observers who signed the application.
 - Other initials signing off on competencies are not acceptable.

Applicants completing all requirements for certification with the exception of the work requirement will be given a one-year period from the date of completing the exam for Level I to complete the 500 hours of work experience.

- A Pending Practical Experience (PPE) letter & PPE Certificate will be sent by the TVMA to the applicant notifying the student of their status. If the work experience is completed and supporting documentation is submitted to TVMA by the anniversary date, the applicant will be awarded CVA Level I certification.
 - The certification fee will be charged for the issuance of the PPE.
 - There will be no additional fee the issuance of the CVA certification if the work experience requirement and supporting documentation is submitted to TVMA by the anniversary date.

Retesting Provisions (Item 4.3, *Policies and Guidelines, Policy Manual* Version 1.1, July 1, 2010)

An applicant for CVA certification who fails to pass the examination may retake the exam as often as they wish following the initial examination date. TVMA will charge a re-test fee to cover the cost of producing and administering the test. This fee is \$35 for each retest.

Certification Renewal & CE Requirements (Item 5.0, *Policies and Guidelines, Policy Manual* Version 1.1, July 1, 2010)

Renewal Dates and Fees (Item 5.1, *Policies and Guidelines, Policy Manual* Version 1.1, July 1, 2010)

Certification is valid for one calendar year, beginning with the date of initial certification. This date will be clearly shown on the issued certificate and on each subsequent certificate issued for re-certification. This date will serve as the CVA's permanent anniversary date. TVMA will make every effort to notify the CVA in writing when their certificate is due to expire, but the CVA is responsible for contacting TVMA on or before their anniversary date and for submitting the application for renewal of certification. The CVA has thirty (30) calendar days following the anniversary date to submit an application for certification renewal and necessary documentation along with the renewal fee. The CVA renewal fee is \$30.00 and must be received in a form acceptable to TVMA. If items required for certification renewal are not received by TVMA before the 30-day deadline, the CVA will lose certification status and required to re-test for certification. Submission materials including payment of fees so that they reach the TVMA office after the anniversary date noted on the CVA certificate will result in the assessment of a \$15.00 late fee.

Continuing Education Requirement (Item 5.2, *Policies and Guidelines, Policy Manual* Version 1.1, July 1, 2010)

TVMA Certified Veterinary Assistants must complete a continuing education (CE) requirement for certificate renewal.

- During the calendar year preceding the date of expected renewal, the CVA must complete a minimum of five (5) hours of continuing education instruction.
- CE hours may be acquired through any legitimate veterinary educational content produced and provided by a recognized provider, including but not limited to: state and local VMA meetings, online courses, professional seminars presented by veterinary companies, etc.

Proof of Participation

Documentation for each continuing education activity must be kept on file by the Certified Veterinary Assistant.

- Records will be audited at random.
- The veterinary assistant must provide copies documentation for review by TVMA upon request.
- Failure to provide sufficient documentation of required CE will be cause for the applicant's certificate to be deactivated to probationary status.

The applicant for certificate renewal will have six (6) months to correct the CE deficit and remove the probationary status.

NC STATE UNIVERSITY

Horace Johnson
Central Region Agricultural
Education Coordinator
126 Alexander Drive, Room 315
Lillington, NC 27546-1089

910.814.6048 (telephone)
919.513.3201 (fax)
horace_johnson@ncsu.edu

July 9, 2014

Dear Veterinarian;

I am excited to alert you to a new benefit we are offering through our agricultural education programs at the secondary level. I recognize that as a doctor of veterinary medicine that you have certified veterinary technicians available through the community college system. To take training to another level, agriculture education is providing certification at the veterinary assisting level through an association with the Texas Veterinary Medical Association.

Your local agricultural education teacher is contacting you about placing a student in your practice to receive the needed hours of on the job training. I encourage you to consider this opportunity to help ensure a better prepared work force of assistants.

Thank you for taking a few moments of your time to explore this opportunity.

Sincerely,



Horace Johnson

HJ/swg

copy: Gerald Barlowe, State Agricultural Education Leader

Certified Veterinary Assistant Level I Exam Application (HIGH SCHOOL PROGRAM)

PLEASE PRINT

Student Name:

(Please Circle): Mr. Mrs. Ms.

Student Address:

City, State, Postal Code:

Phone: Email:

Date of Application:

Student Signature:

TO BE COMPLETED BY STUDENT'S SCHOOL SUPERVISOR

By affixing my signature below, I certify that the student named above has met the 1-3 year classroom requirements, and the additional 200 hours of hands on training with live animals (if all 500 hours are not completed at the vet clinic under the supervision of a DVM or RVT*).

Supervisor Name:

Supervisor Title: (Please Circle): AG TEACHER DVM RVT* CVT** LVT**

* Only RVT (registered in TX) supervision allowed in TX
** CVT, RVT, or LVT supervision allowed out of State

School Name:

Address:

City, State, Postal Code:

School Phone: Fax:

Period of Observation: From date: To date:

Supervisor Signature:

Payment: The exam fee is \$125 per student. A school check can be mailed or payment by credit card can be mailed or faxed to TVMA. The exam and final results will be mailed to the school supervisor at the above address.

Visa/MC# _____ Exp Date: _____ CVC #: _____

Name on card: _____ Signature: _____



Certified Veterinary Assistant Level I Exam Application (HIGH SCHOOL PROGRAM)

PLEASE PRINT

Student Name:

TO BE COMPLETED BY STUDENT'S HANDS ON TRAINING SUPERVISOR

By affixing my signature below, I certify that the student named above has trained or worked under my supervision & completed a minimum of 300 hours of hands on training with live animals.

Supervisor Name:

(Must be DVM or RVT* who supervised student at clinic)

Supervisor Title: (Please Circle): DVM RVT* CVT** LVT**

* Only RVT (registered in TX) supervision allowed in TX

** CVT, RVT, or LVT supervision allowed out of State

Clinic Name:

Address:

City, State, Postal Code:

Clinic Phone:

Fax:

Period of Observation:

From date:

To date:

Supervisor Signature:

TO BE COMPLETED BY SKILLS VALIDATION CHECKLIST SUPERVISOR

By affixing my signature below, I certify that the student named above has demonstrated competency in the behaviors and skills checked herein, and I recommend that this student be considered for certification at Veterinary Assistant Level I.

Supervisor Name:

(Must be DVM or RVT* who supervised student & signed skills validation checklist)

Supervisor Title: (Please Circle): DVM RVT* CVT** LVT**

* Only RVT (registered in TX) supervision allowed in TX

** CVT, RVT, or LVT supervision allowed out of State

Clinic Name:

Address:

City, State, Postal Code:

Clinic Phone:

Fax:

Period of Observation:

From date:

To date:

Supervisor Signature:

Certified Veterinary Assistant Level I Skills Validation Checklist (HIGH SCHOOL PROGRAM)

(MUST BE SUPERVISED & CHECKED OFF BY DVM OR RVT ONLY IN TEXAS &
DVM OR CVT/LVT ONLY IF OUT OF STATE HIGH SCHOOL PROGRAM)

NOTE: All competencies must be either demonstrated or described by the applicant, even if a certain species is not seen by the practice.

Applicant has demonstrated reasonable proficiency or competency in the following work requirements:

| YES | <i>Skill or Competency</i> | <i>Comments</i> |
|-----|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------|
| | Uses common terminology (spoken and written) required in your veterinary practice | |
| | Keeps assigned work areas clean and orderly | |
| | Demonstrates a basic knowledge of sanitary procedures | |
| | Handles animals in a safe, humane manner | |
| | Can name and select the equipment items most commonly used in your veterinary practice | |
| | Demonstrates a basic understanding of the most commonly used veterinary drugs | |
| | Recognizes the symptoms commonly associated with animals affected by rabies | |
| | Uses procedures that ensure personal safety when handling animals suspected of having rabies | |
| | Demonstrates appropriate understanding and respect for the human-animal bond in dealing with clients and their animals | |
| | Handles and disposes of "sharps" instruments safely and in compliance with practice standards | |
| | Uses the proper procedure for lifting and positioning animals | |
| | Uses the proper procedure for placing animals in a cage | |
| | Uses proper method for placing large animals in a stall | |
| | Uses (or can describe) the proper method of haltering a large animal | |

Applicant has demonstrated reasonable proficiency or competency in the following work requirements:

| YES | <i>Skill or Competency</i> | <i>Comments</i> |
|------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------|
| | Practices (or can describe) the proper personal safety precautions when releasing a large animal | |
| | Properly restrains animals when assisting the veterinarian with cephalic and saphenous venous sampling | |
| | Properly muzzles fractious animals | |
| | Handles and holds animals so as to generally avoid bites to themselves and to the attending veterinarian | |
| | Demonstrates (or describes) the proper method of moving cattle and horses through chutes and into or out of stalls | |
| | Recognizes and avoids potential safety hazards in the examination room or area | |
| | Handles animals in the examination room or area so as to prevent harm to the patient and humans | |
| | Carefully observes patients and surroundings and reports observations to the attending veterinarian | |
| | Aids the veterinarian in the handling and treatment of patients | |
| | Provides an additional set of eyes and hands for the attending veterinarian | |
| | Handles and uses disposable "sharps" containers in a safe manner | |
| | Follows OSHA guidelines in collecting and disposing of bio-hazardous materials | |
| | Demonstrates (or explains) the proper method of collecting fecal samples (including the palpation sleeve) in the large animal | |
| | Uses correct quantities of feces for fecal flotations | |
| | Recognizes fresh fecal samples | |
| | Can explain client options for disposal of euthanized or deceased animals | |

Applicant has demonstrated reasonable proficiency or competency in the following work requirements:

| YES | <i>Skill or Competency</i> | <i>Comments</i> |
|------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------|
| | Discusses individual or communal cremation options with owners of deceased pets | |
| | Properly prepares the deceased animal for presentation to the owner | |
| | Exhibits proper decorum when presenting a deceased animal to its owner | |
| | Correctly collects urine through natural means | |
| | Knows proper method for collecting urine samples that are adequate for culturing microorganisms | |
| | Collects urine samples during the correct time of day | |
| | Correctly uses shielded gowns, gloves, and other protective wear when taking radiographs | |
| | Wears a monitoring device while taking radiographs | |
| | Handles uses and stores radiographic cassettes and film properly | |
| | Bathes and dips patients as instructed | |
| | Avoids basic hazards and species susceptibilities to certain bath and dip products when preparing and giving dips and baths | |
| | Follows accepted procedures when bathing or dipping patients | |
| | Safely cares for animals in runs, cages, stalls and paddocks | |
| | Uses the bedding types indicated for specific breeds/species of housed animals | |
| | Changes bedding materials in a timely and efficient manner | |
| | Disposes of used bedding materials as needed and in a proper manner | |
| | Recognizes and avoids safety hazards in the areas where patients are housed | |
| | Uses proper sanitary procedures in changing bedding materials | |
| | Maintains and repairs cages, kennels and stalls as needed | |

Applicant has demonstrated reasonable proficiency or competency in the following work requirements:

| YES | <i>Skill or Competency</i> | <i>Comments</i> |
|------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------|
| | Properly uses (or describes the proper use of) common devices and equipment to restrain horses, cattle, goats and swine for treatment | |
| | Recognizes common breeds and varieties of exotic animals that visit the clinic and calls them by the correct common name | |
| | Safely handles and restrains exotic animals for examination and treatment | |
| | Autoclaves veterinary instruments using moist pressure autoclave and chemical sterilization | |
| | Follows a proscribed procedure for cleaning all stainless steel instruments | |
| | Follows correct procedure for ultrasonic cleaning of instruments | |
| | Lubricates instruments properly during the cleaning process | |
| | Maintains all dental equipment in clean and usable condition for performing prophylaxis treatments | |
| | Determines that all active scavengers are working properly in evacuating anesthesia gases as needed | |
| | Ensures that all sharp and cutting blades are removed and disposed of properly following surgical procedures | |
| | Describes (or demonstrates) the proper method for administration of a paste or topical drug on an equine patient | |
| | Describes (or demonstrates) the proper method for administration of a bolus, paste or topical drug for a bovine patient | |
| | Describes (or demonstrates) the proper method for administration of tablets, capsules, liquid and topical drugs for canine and feline patients | |
| | Stores animal feeds according to instructions | |
| | Measures food quantities accurately | |

Applicant has demonstrated reasonable proficiency or competency in the following work requirements:

| YES | <i>Skill or Competency</i> | <i>Comments</i> |
|------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------|
| | Reads and follows food label directions correctly | |
| | Reads and correctly follows written instructions for animal feeding | |
| | Reports animal food and water consumption rates correctly and on schedule | |
| | Administers hydrotherapy according to directions | |
| | Selects the correct syringe on demand from the veterinarian | |
| | Correctly fills syringes with medication as directed | |
| | Recognizes intravenous, intramuscular, subcutaneous, and intraperitoneal applications | |
| | Selects correctly the needle gauge and length requested by the veterinarian | |
| | Properly disposes of syringes, needles and other sharp objects commonly used in the veterinary clinic | |
| | Properly identifies and disposes of expired substances | |
| | Obtains information relative to animal being boarded and/or discharged | |
| | Discusses and explains the charge for boarding costs | |
| | Posts and records money collected to the appropriate records as directed | |
| | Interacts cheerfully with clients and handles complaints with a smile | |