



American Board of Veterinary Ophthalmology (ABVO)

Policies and Procedures

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## 1.00 DEFINITIONS

- (a) **Applicants for Maintenance of Certification (MOC).** ACVO Diplomates who are required (Mandatory Applicants for MOC) or who elect (Voluntary Applicants for MOC) to submit application materials to the ABVO MOC Committee so as to maintain their certification as a Diplomate of the ACVO.
- (b) **Associate Mentor:** A Diplomate of the American College of Veterinary Ophthalmologists (DACVO) who provides supervision of a Resident for < 100 days of their Residency Training Program (RTP).
- (c) **Certified Copy:** A photocopy of a document in its entirety, accompanied by the following sworn and signed statement: “I swear or affirm under the penalties of perjury that the submitted documents are true and correct copies of [insert document name].” The signature on this statement must be acknowledged by a court clerk, lawyer, or notary public.
- (d) **Chair:** The appointed leader(s) of an ABVO committee. In this document, the term “Chair” shall include Vice-Chairs, Co-Chairs, and Chairs-Elect.
- (e) **Corresponding Supervising Diplomate:** A Supervising Diplomate, designated by the institution or practice, who is responsible for all communications regarding the Resident, particularly with the Residency, Credentials, and Examination Committees. The Corresponding Supervising Diplomate does not need to be the same individual for each Resident in a multi-resident practice.
- (f) **Direct Supervision:** That time a Supervising Diplomate or Associate Mentor is physically present in the clinical facility and actively engaged with the Resident in clinical service to patients.
- (g) **Examination:** The ABVO Certifying Examination.
- (h) **Examination Applicant:** A veterinarian applying to the ABVO Credentials Committee to take the ABVO Certifying Examination
- (i) **Examination Candidate:** A veterinarian who has been accepted by the ABVO Credentials Committee to take the next ABVO Certifying Examination

- (j) **Guidelines:** A set of written instructions developed and regularly updated by the ABVO Credentials Committee to guide Examination Applicants, Provisional Residents, and Supervising Diplomates through the ABVO credentialing process.
- (k) **Provisional Resident:** A veterinarian who has been accepted into an ABVO-approved Residency Training Program by the sponsoring institution and who is applying to the ABVO Credentials Committee to be accepted as an ABVO-approved Resident.
- (l) **Residency Training Program (RTP):** A residency training program approved by the ABVO Residency Committee.
- (m) **Resident:** A veterinarian who has been accepted into an ABVO-approved RTP by the sponsoring institution, who has been accepted by the ABVO Credentials Committee as an ABVO-approved Resident, and who is actively engaged in the RTP.
- (n) **Supervising Diplomate:** A DACVO who provides direct supervision of the Resident in the clinical setting for  $\geq 100$  days during the RTP. Diplomates involved in the RTP, but providing less than 100 days of Direct Supervision, may be considered Associate Mentors.
- (o) **Veterinarian:** A graduate of an accredited school or college of veterinary medicine that has a license in good standing to practice veterinary medicine or is exempt from licensure by an employing university or government agency.

All applications/submissions to the ABVO and its Committees must comply with Policies and Procedures in place at the time of approval. Where Policies and Procedures change between submission and approval, resubmission will be required.

## **2.00 ABVO BOARD POLICIES AND PROCEDURES**

### **2.01 Procedural Requirements Stipulated by the ACVO Bylaws, ABVO Charter or the Memorandum of Understanding Between the ACVO and ABVO**

- (a) The Board shall consist of a Chair, a public member and 3 additional voting members of ACVO.
- (b) Board members shall not be current ACVO Regents, Officers of the ACVO, or members of ABVO Committees.

- (c) Only the public member may not serve as chair.
- (d) Election of Board members shall take place annually as described in section 2.03.
- (e) Other than the inaugural officers, terms of officers shall be 4 years and be staggered.
- (f) Board members may serve no more than 2 consecutive terms.
- (g) An ABVO Board member may be removed by a majority vote of ABVO Board members or by a 2/3 majority vote of all ACVO Diplomates.
- (h) The ABVO Board meeting times and places, and agenda are determined by the Chair.
- (i) Notice of ABVO Board meetings must be provided to Board members at least 3 days prior to the date of the meeting.
- (j) ABVO Board meetings may take place via telephone or other electronic means.
- (k) For ABVO Board meetings, a majority of Board members constitutes a quorum.
- (l) A majority of Board members shall decide any item of business
- (m) The ABVO Board may take action without a meeting if consent in writing is signed by a majority of Board members.
- (n) ABVO Committee members shall consist of ACVO Diplomates.
- (o) ABVO Committees shall recommend policies that are subject to amendment, adoption and approval by the Board.
- (p) The ABVO Chair shall provide annual reports of the Board's activities to the ACVO Board of Regents.
- (q) The ABVO fiscal year shall be the same as that for the ACVO.
- (r) The ABVO shall review its operating costs annually at its spring meeting. The ABVO will submit a budget to the ACVO Board of Regents for consideration at their meeting the following fall.

## **2.02 Conflicts of Interest and Confidentiality**

- (a) At the commencement of his or her term of office, each member of the ABVO Board shall agree not to disclose any confidential information of the ABVO.
- (b) Each member of the ABVO Board will further agree to fully and promptly disclose to the ABVO any existing or potential conflict of interest the Board member may have of either a personal, professional, business, or financial nature. After full disclosure, the Chair and remaining ABVO members shall determine whether or not the member shall be excused from voting on any matter involving the conflict. Conflicts are defined and the policies for appropriate handling of conflicts are as described in the ACVO General Policies and Procedures.
- (c) Breach of confidentiality or conflict of interest shall constitute good cause for the removal of members of the ABVO from office pursuant to the policies of the ABVO.

### **2.03 Election of ABVO Board Members**

- (a) Open positions on the ABVO Board will be announced to the ACVO Diplomate population by May 1 of the year the position is to be filled.
- (b) Any ACVO Diplomate may serve on the ABVO Board; however, ACVO Diplomates seeking ABVO Board Membership should have served on at least one of the ABVO standing committees.
- (c) Any ACVO Diplomate may nominate themselves or any other ACVO Diplomate.
- (d) Nominations must be received by the ABVO Office by June 1.
- (e) The vote shall take place electronically and the results will be posted on the ABVO web site by July 1.
- (f) The Board member-elect is expected to attend the fall meeting of the ABVO Board for training purposes. The new Board member's term officially begins at the adjournment of the fall ABVO Board meeting.
- (g) Election of ABVO Board Chair: The Board Chair shall be elected by majority vote of the Board members at any scheduled meeting of the Board.
- (h) The Public Member shall be appointed by the ABVO as prescribed by the ABVO Charter.

### **2.04 Policy for Amending Committee Policies and Procedures**

- (a) The ABVO will review, oversee, and approve the policies and procedures of its Committees, including but not limited to the Residency Committee, the Credentials Committee, the Examination Committee, the Maintenance of Certification (MOC) Committee, and the Appeals Committee (AC). Changes to the policies and procedures of the ABVO Committees require approval by a majority of the members of the ABVO Board. Each Committee shall draft its own policies and procedures subject to the approval of the Board. Requests for approval of changes to committee policies and procedures must be included in fall or spring committee reports to the Board.
- (b) If it is decided that a policy or procedure for a Committee reporting to the ABVO Board needs to be modified or if new procedures or policies are needed, the ABVO Board will direct the Committee to draft the necessary change to the Committees' policies and procedures. The Board will review the proposed

changes at its next scheduled meeting. The Board may vote to accept the proposed changes or return them to the Committee for further consideration. ABVO Board or committee proposals that impose major change(s) in the processes of the ABVO will be posted on the ABVO website and subject to a period of non-binding stakeholder comment of up to 3 months. The ABVO Office will oversee the process and mechanism for obtaining stakeholder comment. Following the comment period, the ABVO Board may vote to accept or reject the proposed changes.

- (c) Approved changes to Committee policies and procedures will be communicated to the ABVO Office whose staff will maintain currently approved versions of all documents.

## **2.05 ABVO Committee Composition**

- (a) Eligibility: Only Diplomates of the ACVO may serve on ABVO Committees. Emeritus and Honorary ACVO Diplomates are not eligible to serve on ABVO Committees.
- (b) Nominations: The ABVO Board will accept nominations for Committee service from the Committees themselves; however, any ACVO Diplomate is eligible to serve and may self-nominate or be nominated by other ACVO Diplomates. Requests from Committee chairpersons for new or replacement committee members shall be included in their spring report to the Board.
- (c) Appointment & Removal:
  1. The ABVO Board will make final Committee appointments.
  2. The ABVO Chair will appoint the Chair(s) of each ABVO Committee from duly appointed Committee members.
  3. The ABVO may remove Committee members and the Chair(s) of a Committee without cause with a majority vote of the ABVO Board.
  4. The Board shall appoint members to the Credentials, Residency and MOC Committees at their spring meeting, with committee member terms beginning immediately after the spring meeting. Examination Committee members shall be appointed twice annually.
  5. Committee Chairs may request the Board approve leaves of absence for committee members temporarily unable to perform their duties. If approved,



at the discretion of the Board acting reasonably, an ACVO Diplomate with prior experience on the committee may be appointed.

## **2.06 Committee Reports to the ABVO Board**

- (a) Format: All Committee reports will be submitted in the same format as designated by the Board.
- (b) Submission dates: Written Committee reports shall be electronically submitted to the ABVO Office not less than 4 weeks prior to the fall ABVO Board meeting, and if scheduled, 2 weeks prior to the spring ABVO Board meeting.

## **3.00 ABVO CREDENTIALS COMMITTEE**

### **3.01 Statement of Purpose**

The Credentials Committee of the ABVO determines eligibility criteria for, and evaluates applications from, two groups of individuals: Provisional Residents applying for acceptance as an ABVO-approved Resident, and Examination Applicants applying to take the ABVO Certifying Examination. The Credentials Committee also collects any fees associated with either of these application processes that together compose the two-stage credentialing process.

### **3.02 Committee Objectives**

- (a) To define the criteria that must be satisfied by Provisional Residents so as to be eligible to become ABVO-approved Residents, and by Examination Applicants so as to be eligible to take the Examination.
- (b) To define the methods by which Provisional Residents and Examination Applicants shall prove that they have met these criteria.
- (c) To review and judge all data submitted by and regarding a Provisional Resident and an Examination Applicant during their respective application processes.

### **3.03 Committee Membership**

The Credentials Committee shall consist of a minimum of 4 members including the Chair (and Vice Chair or Co-Chair if applicable). Members serve terms of 3 years and may serve up to 2 consecutive terms. Terms may be shortened as needed to maintain staggered

committee member terms. To serve as either Chair, Vice Chair or Co-Chair requires at least 1 year of committee experience.

### **3.04 Eligibility Criteria**

- (a) **Step One:** Successful completion of the first step in the two-step ABVO credentialing process (i.e., acceptance as an ABVO-approved Resident), requires that the Provisional Resident must:
1. Be a veterinarian;
  2. Have attained a minimum of 12 months' full-time clinical practice as a veterinarian between graduation as a veterinarian and beginning the RTP;
  3. Be of satisfactory moral character in the discretion of the Credentials Committee acting reasonably; and
  4. Have completed and submitted, by the assigned deadline, all documentation and paid all fees required as part of the credentialing process.
- (b) **Step Two:** Successful completion of the second step in the two-step ABVO credentialing process (i.e., establishing eligibility to take the Examination) requires that the Examination Applicant must:
1. Have successfully completed or be scheduled to successfully complete a RTP by the assigned deadline;
  2. Be of satisfactory moral character in the discretion of the Credentials Committee acting reasonably;
  3. Have completed and submitted, by the assigned deadline, all documentation and paid all fees required as part of the credentialing process.

### **3.05 Application Process**

- (a) All Provisional Residents, Examination Applicants, and Supervising Diplomates must submit all requested information as dictated in the Guidelines issued by the Credentials Committee. Current Guidelines shall be available either on the ABVO website or on request from the Credentials Chair or ABVO Staff.
- (b) All information provided by Provisional Residents, Examination Applicants, and Supervising Diplomates as part of the credentialing process must include consideration of any and all RTPs or parts of RTPs from which the Provisional

Resident or Examination Applicant is claiming experience.

- (c) When a Supervising Diplomate's supervisory role ends prematurely (due to either the Resident or the Supervising Diplomate leaving the RTP), all required forms shall be completed within one month of the severance occurring.
- (d) It is the responsibility of each Provisional Resident, Examination Applicant, and Supervising Diplomate to state, under penalty of perjury, that all information they provide throughout all stages of the credentialing process is, to the best of their knowledge and belief, true and correct.
- (e) No prescribed form may be changed in any way; however additional material may be provided as attachments.
- (f) All documents submitted as part of the credentials process must be in English or be accompanied by a certified translation into English. A certified translation must contain:
  - 1. The original text in its source language;
  - 2. The translated text in English; and,
  - 3. A statement signed by the translator or translation company representative, with their signature notarized by a Notary Public, attesting that the translator or translation company representative believes the target-language text to be an accurate and complete translation of the source-language text. The translator or translation company representatives need not be certified and so the Examination Applicant themselves (if they choose) may be the translator. The Notary Public seal assures only that the signature is that of the person who presented themselves to the notary. The Notary Public is not attesting to the accuracy of the translation.
- (g) Information from Supervising Diplomates may not be submitted by Examination Applicants directly, either via mail or electronic mail, and may not be submitted in the same envelope, if submitted via mail, as information from Examination Applicants.
- (h) A discrete set of submissions is required for each Examination Applicant and from each Supervising Diplomate, i.e. no Supervising Diplomate submissions may describe more than one Examination Applicant and no Supervising Diplomate submissions may be signed by more than one Supervising Diplomate.

- (i) All Supervising Diplomates and Examination Applicants are required to advise the Credentials Committee of any changes in submitted information between the time of submission of paperwork and the Examination Applicant becoming Board certified.
- (j) All fees submitted must be payable in U.S. currency.
- (k) The fee for each application reviewed by the Credentials Committee (whether successful or unsuccessful) shall not be refundable.
- (l) Applications not accompanied by the appropriate fee may be assessed a late fee.
- (m) Provisional Resident applications must be received by the ABVO Office at least 30 days prior to beginning the proposed RTP, but after approval of the RTP by the Residency Committee. Provisional Resident applications submitted anywhere other than to the ABVO Office, or prior to the approval of the RTP by the Residency Committee, shall not be reviewed.
- (n) The complete Examination application must be received by the ABVO Office by midnight on January 15 each year in order for the Examination Applicant to be eligible to take the Examination in that year.
- (o) Applications and any supporting material, including Supervising Diplomat Forms, from Provisional Residents and Examination Applicants received after the deadline (i.e., 30 days prior to beginning the proposed RTP for Provisional Residents, and January 15 for Examination Applicants), incomplete submissions, and submissions not using original, unaltered, current versions of all prescribed forms will render the application incomplete. Incomplete applications may not be reviewed.
- (p) The ABVO reserves the right to independently verify any information received and to request further data.
- (q) There is no limit to the number of times on which an Examination Applicant may submit their application to take the Examination.

### **3.06 Review Process**

- (a) All information submitted by Provisional Residents, Examination Applicants, and Supervising Diplomates to the ABVO Office prior to the submission deadline will be reviewed by the Credentials Committee Chair, or a designated Credentials Committee member in cases in which review by the Chair may constitute a

conflict of interest.

- (b) Complete applications which are received by the ABVO Office by the relevant deadlines and verify that the Provisional Resident or Examination Applicant fulfills all eligibility criteria shall be approved and accepted by the Credentials Committee Chair.
- (c) Those applications which the Credentials Committee Chair believes fail to satisfy one or more eligibility criteria shall be referred to at least two (2) other members of the Credentials Committee for review and evaluation. If these Credentials Committee members believe the application fails to fulfill one or more eligibility criteria, the application may be rejected.
- (d) Prior to receiving a Provisional Resident or Examination application for review, Credentials Committee members will be required to declare any potential, perceived, or real conflicts of interest with regards to Provisional Residents and Examination Applicants, and shall not review that application.
- (e) One complete set of application documents from every successful or unsuccessful Provisional Resident and Examination Applicant will be retained by the ABVO Office.
- (f) All Provisional Residents and Examination Applicants (regardless of application outcome) will receive communication regarding the outcome of their application at the email address provided on their application. The Examination Applicant shall be responsible for ensuring that this email address is accurate and for updating this email address as needed with the ABVO Office.
- (g) Names of successful Provisional Residents shall be provided to the Chair(s) of the Residency Committee, and names of successful Examination Applicants shall be provided to the Chair(s) of the Examination Committees.
- (h) Prior to completion of their RTP, successful Examination Applicants receive only *provisional* acceptance from the Credentials Committee to take the Examination. *Final* acceptance of an Examination Applicant's credentials is conditional upon successful completion of their RTP as determined by the Residency Committee.

#### **4.00 ABVO RESIDENCY COMMITTEE**

##### **4.01 Statement of Purpose**

The Residency Committee is responsible for:

- (a) Developing the standards for Residency Training Program (RTP) approval
- (b) Providing direction to Diplomates seeking approval of a RTP
- (c) Granting approval of RTPs that satisfy Residency Committee requirements
- (d) Certifying that a Resident has successfully completed a RTP

#### **4.02 Committee Objectives**

- (a) Develop the standards for RTP approval.
- (b) Provide directions to institutions seeking approval of a RTP.
- (c) Grant approval to RTPs that satisfy the Committee's requirements.
- (d) Maintain a current list and description of RTPs offered by ACVO Diplomates.
- (e) Provide Residents with a letter of welcome and a copy of their RTP application. The letter will direct Residents to the current standards for residency training, required forms, the credentialing process and the examination information.
- (f) Provide the Chairs of the Credentials and Examination Committees with a list of Residents who are anticipated to complete or have completed all RTP requirements.
- (g) Organize a prospective Resident/Supervising Diplomates meeting at the annual ACVO meeting as needed.
- (h) Provide a Committee report to the ABVO Board at the prescribed time prior to the fall and spring meetings of the ABVO Board.
- (i) Provide a list of Residents in RTPs to the Executive Director of the ACVO so that the Residents may receive any benefits due.
- (j) Monitor RTPs through 6 month evaluations provided by Residents and Supervising Diplomates so as to ensure that all required training elements are being met.
- (k) Terminate or place on probation RTPs in which required training elements are not met. Communicate with Supervising Diplomates to assist in correcting deficiencies so that probationary status can be lifted.

#### **4.03 Committee Membership**

The Residency Committee shall consist of a minimum of 8 members including the Chair (and Vice Chair or Co-Chair if applicable). Members serve terms of 4 years and may serve up to 2 consecutive terms. Terms may be shortened as needed to maintain staggered committee member terms. To serve as either Chair, Co-Chair, or Vice Chair requires at least 1 year of committee experience.

#### **4.04 Eligibility to train an ABVO-approved Resident**

- (a) All Supervising Diplomates and Associate Mentors must be ACVO diplomates.
- (b) The number of Supervising Diplomates per Resident in an institution's RTP is based on the ability to provide adequate Direct Supervision of residents during their training program. The requirement is as follows: one Supervising Diplomat may supervise one Resident per institution; two Supervising Diplomates may supervise up to 3 Residents per institution; three Supervising Diplomates may supervise up to 4 Residents per institution. Ophthalmology residents being trained in non-ABVO programs (e.g., ECVO residents) but in the same facility as the ACVO Resident and by the same Supervising Diplomates must be included in this calculation. If the above requirement is no longer met because of one or more Supervising Diplomates leaving, the Residents currently in the program can finish that program if it can be established that all remaining requirements of the program will be met. Determination for continuation of the Resident Training Program should mentor numbers drop below the minimum level outlined above will be on a case by case basis by the ABVO Residency Committee.

In addition to meeting all other requirements outlined here, a solo Supervising Diplomat shall have trained (either as a solo Supervising Diplomat or as one of multiple Supervising Diplomates in a RTP) at least one (1) ABVO Resident to board certification within the five (5) years immediately prior to submission of the application.

In addition to meeting all other requirements outlined here, in a situation where two (or more) ACVO diplomates who are not employed in the same institution wish to work together to conduct a RTP in a joint mentorship scenario, additional criteria concerning facilities, advanced scheduling, numbers of days each Supervising Diplomat supervises the resident in a clinical setting, and participation of Supervising Diplomates in non-clinical training of the resident during the program are listed in the RTP Application.

- (c) The RTP Application must be completed by the Corresponding Supervising Diplomat and

sent electronically to the ABVO Office within the time designated in the RTP Application form.

- (d) Supervising Diplomat(e)s signing the RTP application are expected to remain responsible for training the Resident throughout the RTP. The Corresponding Supervising Diplomat must notify the Residency Committee, Credentials Committee, and the ABVO office if one or more Supervising Diplomat(e)s leave the RTP, or if new Supervising Diplomates join the RTP. Such notification must be made within 30 days of the change occurring and sent by email (with confirmed receipt) to all 3 bodies. In addition, this change should be noted on the next 6-month evaluation form.

#### **4.05 Eligibility to become an ABVO-approved Resident**

- (a) Eligibility to become an ABVO Resident is based on requirements determined by the Credentials Committee and, in some cases, additional requirements by sponsoring institutions.
- (b) Residents are selected in whatever manner is deemed appropriate by the Supervising Diplomat(e)s and the institution in which the RTP will be conducted. After selecting a Resident, the Corresponding Supervising Diplomat must notify the appropriate ABVO committees as described in the RTP application. The Provisional Resident will then be contacted by the relevant ABVO Committees with further instructions.

#### **4.06 Review of a traditional Residency Training Program (RTP)**

- (a) The RTP application will undergo initial evaluation for completeness, accuracy, and to ensure that all RTP requirements are met. Incomplete, inaccurate, or deficient RTP applications will not undergo full review and the Corresponding Supervising Diplomat will be notified of deficiencies. A new RTP application addressing the deficiencies must be submitted to the Residency Committee Chair by the Corresponding Supervising Diplomat.
- (b) Only accurate and complete RTP applications will undergo full review by the Residency Committee.
- (c) Each Residency Committee member is expected to approve, not approve, or request additional information to supplement the RTP application. The Chair maintains a record of the votes cast.
- (d) A RTP application is approved if a simple majority of the Residency Committee approves the RTP application.



- (e) RTPs are approved for individual Residents, not for Diplomates or training institutions. Therefore, each time a Diplomat/Institution wishes to train a new Resident, that Diplomat/Institution must submit a new RTP application.

#### **4.07 Decisions regarding non-traditional Residency Training Programs (RTP)**

- (a) The RTP application and the alternative RTP application are filled out by the Corresponding Supervising Diplomat(s) and submitted to the Chair of the Residency Committee. The alternative RTP application is available by request from the Residency Committee Chair.
- (b) All other policies and procedures are identical for non-traditional and traditional RTPs.

#### **4.08 Notification of decisions regarding Residency Training Program applications**

- (a) The Corresponding Supervising Diplomat will be notified of the Residency Committee decision by the Residency Committee Chair(s).
- (b) A copy of approved RTP applications, the approval communication, and all subsequent correspondence to the Corresponding Supervising Diplomat and/or the Resident are kept by the Residency Committee Chair.

#### **4.09 Requirements for Residency Training Programs**

- (a) Residents and Supervising Diplomates must abide by the ABVO Statement on Ethics and Professionalism as set out on the ABVO website. Failure by the Supervising Diplomat(s) or Resident to abide by the Statement on Ethics and Professionalism may result in the ABVO a) terminating the RTP with no action against the Resident, b) terminating the Resident from the RTP with no action against the RTP, c) terminating the RTP and denying the resident admission to RTPs in the future, d) terminating the RTP and/or denying future RTP applications from the Supervising Diplomat(s), or e) taking other actions deemed appropriate.

To prevent misrepresentation, Residents are considered to be in training to become ophthalmologists for the duration of the RTP, and must not be referred to as “specialists”, “Diplomates”, “ophthalmologists” or “Board Eligible”. Terms such as "resident in veterinary ophthalmology" or "veterinary ophthalmology resident" are acceptable.

- (b) A practice must be open full time for at least 1 year prior to submitting an application to take a resident, and must be open full time for at least 2 years prior to the resident starting the program.

- (c) The minimum length for an ABVO RTP is 36 months (156 weeks). In some circumstances, time spent in a prior RTP may be applied to a subsequent RTP following submission of satisfactory performance evaluations by previous Supervising Diplomate(s) and the Resident.
- (d) **Clinical training and supervision of Residents.** The ABVO requires that all Residents receive clinical ophthalmology training for at least 104 weeks (i.e., 520 days), with a week defined as 5 working days (at least 40 hours). Time spent on emergency duty does not count as clinical ophthalmology training time, but Supervising Diplomates should still be available for consultation during these times. At least 80% (i.e. 416 days) of all clinical ophthalmology training must be under Direct Supervision. Direct Supervision is defined as that time the Supervising Diplomate is physically present in the clinical facility and actively engaged with the Resident in clinical service to patients. For the remaining 20%, a Supervising Diplomate must be available for consultation by phone and/or computer (for transmission of photographs and email). Direct Supervision is required at all times for the first 6 months of the RTP to ensure that the Resident has developed early clinical skills in ophthalmology. An exception to this is made for the annual ACVO meeting since attendance is often mandatory for Supervising Diplomates and Residents. In this unique situation, it is acceptable to have a first-year Resident in the first 6 months of their RTP work without Direct Supervision for the time associated with the meeting only.

All Supervising Diplomates are expected to guide the Resident through medical, surgical, and academic training by direct, personal, one-on-one instruction. This is to occur throughout the entire RTP. Initially, Direct Supervision and instruction in the clinical setting are expected to be strict, while gradually allowing the Resident more independence as time goes on. However, it is expected that continued interaction on the clinic floor would be the norm for the entirety of the RTP. The Supervising Diplomate is expected to use his/her judgment regarding the degree of independence allowed, based on his/her assessment of the Resident's abilities.

One Supervising Diplomate may provide Direct Supervision for no more than two Residents while on the clinic floor. Additional Residents on the clinic floor during that time cannot count this as time under Direct Supervision.

Primary responsibility for training of Residents is not to fall on other Residents. Working with only another ABVO Resident is not considered Supervision for the purposes of fulfilling RTP requirements. Surgeries done under the supervision of another ABVO

Resident must be identified in the surgery log (see Residency Training Program Application form, ABVO Resident Surgery Requirements).

One Supervising Diplomate may provide Direct Supervision simultaneously to two Residents performing surgery without directly participating in the surgery. In this scenario, one Resident is the primary surgeon while the second Resident assists. The Supervising Diplomate would thus be able to instruct both Residents simultaneously (either by direct observation, or video from the operating microscope, or both). For the surgery log, the primary surgeon would record this as a Level-2 procedure while the assistant would record this as a Level-1 procedure.

At no time is it permissible for the Resident to change hospital locations (including to a satellite clinic) during the RTP without approval of a written request from the Corresponding Supervising Diplomate to the Residency Committee. This is to ensure that Direct Supervision will be maintained, and that the satellite clinic is of the same standard (equipment, facilities, etc.) as the primary training facility. Applications for a Resident to work at any location other than that listed on the RTP application must be sent to the Residency Committee Chair within the time limits described in the RTP application. Specific clinical facility requirements and requirements for ancillary diagnostic service access are described in the RTP application. Required case examination and surgical case minimums can also be found in the RTP Application.

- (e) In order to ensure adequate supervision, a RTP Master Schedule may be requested (to cover the entire period of the RTP) at the beginning of the RTP and every 6 months (along with the 6-month evaluation) thereafter. The schedule must indicate Resident and Supervising Diplomate activities (including clinical duties, histopathologic review, journal club, research, and any other items directly related to the RTP). The schedule must include the name(s) of the Resident(s), Supervising Diplomate(s) on duty with planned dates of interaction (day/week/month), as well as the practice name (particularly if training occurs in more than one facility). In addition, the Corresponding Supervising Diplomate is required, upon request, to provide the ABVO Residency Committee with information concerning the structure or content of the RTP (see Residency Training Program Application form for further details concerning RTP Master Schedules).
- (f) **Time for professional development:** While the bulk of the experience during a RTP is intended to be clinical ophthalmology training, a minimum amount of “off clinic time” is

necessary for professional development. The ABVO minimum requirement for off clinic time is 15% of the duration of the RTP (117 days, in a 3-year, 156 week, RTP). For clinical ophthalmology training, a week is defined as 5 working days, at least 40 hours. “Off clinic” time does not include vacation or the two regular days off per week and must be completely free from clinical duties, including emergency duty.

- (g) **Library access:** Residents must have direct or on-line access to a medical library that contains the texts and journal titles as sources of test material by the ABVO Examination Committee.
- (h) **Literature review:** The ABVO requires that Residents be guided by the Supervising Diplomates or Associate Mentors in regular, systematic review of the ophthalmic literature for at least 2 hours per month. At least one Supervising Diplomat or Associate Mentor is required to participate in these reviews, either in person or via electronic transmission.
- (i) **Histopathology training:** The ABVO requires that Residents be trained in ocular histopathologic interpretation. A minimum of 12 hours of histopathology training is required annually (36 hours per 3-year RTP). Ideally, this training should be spread out approximately equally over the RTP so that Residents may correlate histologic findings with clinical cases seen during the RTP. While there is no maximum total number of histopathology training hours, no more than 2 hours per month may count towards the 12 hours per year. Options for histopathology training include:
  - 1. Directly working with a DACVP; preferably someone well versed in ophthalmic pathology
  - 2. Use of an established, ongoing course in ophthalmic pathology, headed by a DACVP or DACVO, who is well versed in ophthalmic pathology.
  - 3. Pathology course work given at the ACVO Basic Science Course. This counts for a total of one hour only.
  - 4. Working with Supervising Diplomates or Associate Mentors.
- (j) **Financial commitments:** It is assumed that financial commitments to each Resident will be maintained throughout their RTP. However, financial compensation and other employment

issues are negotiated between the Resident and Supervising Diplomat/employer and do not fall under the purview of the Residency Committee.

- (k) **Termination of a Resident from a RTP:** If a Resident is terminated by the Supervising Diplomat(s) or employing institution for any reason, the Resident and all Supervising Diplomates must inform the Residency Committee in writing of the termination. Early termination would prompt a review of the program and whether it is meeting all requirements. If deficiencies are found, these must be corrected before a subsequent RTP is approved. Any Resident beginning a new RTP must disclose any previous RTP. In some circumstances, time spent in a previous RTP may be applied to a subsequent RTP following submission of satisfactory performance evaluations by previous Supervising Diplomat(s) and the Resident. If a new RTP is sought by the terminated Resident, the interval between RTPs must not exceed one year if time spent in the previous RTP is to be included in the new RTP.

#### **4.10 Evaluation of Residency Training Programs**

- (a) Each RTP must be evaluated by the Resident and the Corresponding Supervising Diplomat every 6 months. This evaluation includes submission to the Residency Committee of 6-monthly Program Evaluation Forms by Residents and Corresponding Supervising Diplomates, and species and surgical case summaries submitted by Residents. All information must be submitted on line via the portal on the ABVO website by the date stated in the RTP application and on the ABVO website. Additionally, Supervising Diplomates are required to provide the Resident with a written progress evaluation at 6 month intervals. These are not submitted to the Residency Committee.
- (b) Program evaluation forms are due to the Residency Committee Chair semi-annually (specific dates are noted on the evaluation forms). Failure of the Supervising Diplomat(s) to comply will result in the inability of the Supervising Diplomat(s) to receive approval to train future Residents. Failure of the Resident to comply will result in termination of the RTP.
- (c) In addition to the 6-monthly Program Evaluation Forms listed above, in RTPs where Supervising Diplomates are at different institutions/practices, detailed logs of resident-mentor interactions for the 6-month evaluation period will be provided biannually with the 6-month Program Evaluation Forms.

- (d) The Residency Committee Chair (or designated Committee member) will collate and compare the Resident and Supervising Diplomate program evaluation forms for each RTP, and ensure that the Supervising Diplomate(s) and Resident are consistently meeting all of the minimum training guidelines outlined in the RTP application form(s).
- (e) Site visits may be conducted by members of the Residency Committee or its designees.
- (f) Medical records may be requested by the Residency Committee to validate case examination/species logs and surgical case logs.

#### **4.11 Notification of deficiencies in a Residency Training Program**

- (a) The Residency Committee Chair (or designated Committee member) will note any deficiencies discovered in the comparison process of the six-month Program Evaluation Forms.
- (b) Any deficiencies will be documented in writing to all Supervising Diplomates and the Resident and may result in the RTP or Resident being placed on probation.
- (c) Serious deficiencies or documented deficiencies that are not corrected during the ensuing 6 months may result in the RTP or the Resident being terminated, and the Supervising Diplomate(s) not receiving approval for future RTPs until corrected.

#### **4.12 Completion of a Residency Training Program**

- (a) Residents are required to complete their ABVO-approved training programs by August 1 of the year in which the examination is to be taken. Residents must submit to the Residency Committee Chair the 1) final 6-month RTP evaluation (Resident), 2) surgical log, and 3) species examination log. Requirements for minimum case examination numbers and level 2 surgical procedures must be met by the end date of the RTP. The Corresponding Supervising Diplomate must submit the final 6-month RTP evaluation (Supervising Diplomate). The final evaluation forms are due to the Residency Committee by the specific date noted on the evaluation forms. In most cases the date is prior to the official ending date of the residency program.
- (b) The Residency Committee Chair(s) will notify the Examination Committee Chair and the Credentials Committee chair once the RTP is successfully completed.

## **5.00 ABVO EXAMINATION COMMITTEE**

### **5.01 Statement of Purpose**

The mission of the ABVO Examination Committee is to conduct a fair and unbiased examination of Examination Candidates and to provide to the ABVO a list of Examination Candidates that have demonstrated minimally competent skills and knowledge required of a veterinary ophthalmologist.

### **5.02 Committee Objectives**

- (a) Write questions for the Written and Image Recognition portions of the Examination (performed by Committee members).
- (b) Review and validate questions prior to use on the Examination (performed by Committee members).
- (c) Annually review Suggested Reading List to determine its suitability for preparation of Examination Candidates (performed by Committee members).
- (d) Review Examination content for alignment with ABVO Blueprint (Chairs).
- (e) Review all Examination questions from prior year's examination and eliminate approximately 1/3 of questions based upon item analysis criteria or outdated references (Committee).
- (f) Reconstruct Written and Image Recognition examination utilizing newly written items or banked items (Committee).
- (g) Transmit new questions to contracted testing service for incorporation into subsequent year's examination (Chairs).
- (h) Proofread Written and Image Recognition Examinations after they have been entered into the on-line system (performed by Committee Chairs).
- (i) Provide Angoff ratings for new items on the Written and Image Recognition examinations (Committee).
- (j) Communicate individual Examination scheduling information to Examination Candidates (performed by Committee Chairs).
- (k) Grade Image Recognition Examination on-line (performed by Committee members).
- (l) Schedule and administer Practical Examination to eligible Examination Candidates

(performed by Committee members).

- (m) Communicate Examination results to examinees, Supervising Diplomates approved to receive such information, and to the ABVO (performed by Committee Chairs).
- (n) Provide diagnostic reports to unsuccessful examinees, outlining their Examination performance relative to the ABVO Examination Blueprint (performed by Committee Chairs).

### **5.03 Committee Membership**

The Examination Committee shall consist of a minimum of 9 regular committee members and 2 Chairs. Regular committee members may serve up to 2 consecutive terms, each of 3 years. However, the first term may be shortened if a regular committee member becomes a Chair, at which point a second term will begin. Chairs serve a 4-year term comprised of 2 years as Co-Chair, followed by 2 years as Chair. Chairs may serve only one term. A committee member must have served for at least 1 year as a regular committee member before becoming Co-Chair.

New regular committee members are recommended by the Examination Committee Chairs and appointed by the ABVO Board on a semi-annual basis, so as to maintain the required number of Committee members. Future Chairs are nominated by the current Chairs and appointed by the ABVO. Membership of the ABVO Examination Committee is designed to reflect in general the population of ACVO Diplomates with regard to gender, number of years as an ACVO Diplomate, and professional activity (i.e. academic vs. private practice).

### **5.04 Conflicts of Interest and Confidentiality**

- (a) All individuals involved with ABVO Examination development, item writing, and passing score workshops must sign a Statement of Confidentiality.
- (b) All Examination Candidates and Examination Committee members will be asked to declare any conflicts of interest prior to administration of the practical portion of the examination. Examiners will recuse themselves from examining a candidate if there is a declared conflict of interest.
- (c) Individuals who are involved with establishing the Examination pass criteria point for each section of the Examination agree not to discuss the results of this process with individuals other than members of the ABVO or its Committees.



- (d) If it is determined that an individual or individuals violated the confidentiality of the item writing, Examination development, passing score process, or other aspect of the accreditation process, the ABVO may pursue legal and other actions against the individual, or individuals, including recovery of financial damages.

#### **5.05 Nature and Scope of the Examination**

- (a) The Examination is offered annually to Examination Candidates who have successfully completed all requirements as dictated by the Residency and Credentials Committees. The Examination consists of three separate sections: 1) the Image Recognition Examination, 2) the Written Examination, and 3) the Practical Examination. The Examination is constructed to evaluate the Examination Candidate's proficiency and knowledge of elements considered relevant and important to a veterinary ophthalmologist. The Image Recognition Examination is designed to evaluate ability to identify, assess, and problem-solve (assimilate) clinical material. The Written Examination is designed to evaluate knowledge of the current scientific literature relevant to the clinical practice of and basic sciences related to veterinary ophthalmology. The Practical Examination is designed to evaluate proficiency in ophthalmic surgical techniques.

#### **5.06 Sections of the Examination**

##### **(a) Image Recognition Examination**

1. The Image Recognition Examination consists of a series of digital images and corresponding questions regarding three anatomic areas of the eye and related structures: 1) Orbit and Adnexa, 2) Anterior Segment, and 3) Lens and Posterior Segment.
2. The major demands of the Image Recognition Examination include identification, assessment, and problem-solving (assimilation) of the appearance and information presented on a photographic image. Questions and answers for the Image Recognition Examination are written, and Examination Candidates are asked to respond to structured questions with a short answer while viewing the image. The Examination Candidates are given approximately 2 to 2.5 hours to complete each of the three sections of the Image Recognition Examination. The Examination Candidates are generally asked to give several answers for each image.

3. The images used in this part of the Examination include clinical photographs of the eye or patient, fundus photographs, gonioscopic photographs, slit lamp photographs, photographs of imaging techniques and other special diagnostic techniques, cytologic specimens, and gross and microscopic (photomicrographs) pathology specimens. Questions on surgical techniques, principles, equipment and complications are also covered in each of the three anatomic areas. Questions typically include such items as listing lesions or abnormalities, developing a differential considerations list for the specific disease process, citing the most likely etiologic diagnosis(es) or pathogenesis, listing a morphologic diagnosis, listing appropriate therapy for the specific condition, identifying species on the image, identifying surgical techniques, surgical instruments, surgical principles, or surgical complications.

(b) **Written Examination**

The Written Examination consists of 250 multiple-choice questions in eight disciplines: anatomy/embryology, physiology, neuro-ophthalmology, surgery, pharmacology, pathology, medical ophthalmology, and diagnostics. The Written Examination is designed to evaluate the Examination Candidate's knowledge of current literature and basic science information relevant to veterinary ophthalmology. A list of journals and textbooks from which the questions are generated is provided in the ABVO website under the heading "Suggested Resource Material for ABVO Examination." All journal article-based questions must be from articles published within seven calendar years from the Examination year (for e.g., questions for the 2011 Examination must be from articles published no earlier than 2004). The specific content of the questions follows a Blueprint approved by the Examination Committee and based upon a Job Task Analysis of ACVO Diplomates, detailing discipline, animal species, and region of the eye. The Written Examination is given in two sections each comprising 125 questions. The Examination Candidates are given 3.5 hours to complete each section.

(c) **Practical Examination**

The Practical Examination consists of two separate stations that are designed to evaluate an Examination Candidate's proficiency in ophthalmic surgical techniques. Both stations of the Practical Examination must be passed to successfully complete the Examination. However, only failed sections of the Practical Examination must be repeated.

The Examination Candidate is given 50 minutes to set up and perform a surgical procedure at each of two surgery stations – one for an extraocular (corneal/conjunctival) procedure and one for an intraocular procedure. The two surgery stations involve surgical exercises on cadaver (calf, pig, rabbit, dog, cat or other appropriate species) eyes. The Examination Candidate is required to supply all necessary surgical instruments, irrigating solution, suture material, blades, gloves, head loupes (if desired), etc. An operating microscope for the intraocular surgery section and stands for organizing the instruments are provided. All time limits are strictly enforced.

Failure to bring necessary supplies may result in failure. The examiners will not offer supplies. Examination Candidates are evaluated on components of the procedure and are primarily evaluated on surgical technique.

**5.07 Assuring Examination Questions Reflect Professional Activities Expected of Diplomates**

- (a) It is the Examination Committee's responsibility to ensure that Examination questions reflect professional activities expected of Diplomates.
- (b) Questions for the Image Recognition and Written Examinations are validated by Committee members using an item validation rating scale. The Committee members act as expert judges when validating the images and questions and must consider whether the knowledge or skill measured is relevant, important, and critical to certification level performance. Only questions with a positive score for each category from each expert judge are validated and available for use on the Examination. For the Practical Examination, the Committee has constructed evaluation sheets for each station of this portion of the Examination. These are designed to measure whether the performance of the Examination Candidate in each task is at the entry level for certification.

**5.08 Development, Review, Grading, and Evaluation of the Examination**

- (a) The Examination Committee meets yearly to assess the most recently completed Examination and to assemble the next Examination. Prior to the planning session, each Examination Committee member is given question writing assignments for the Image Recognition and Written portions of the Examination. Additionally, Committee members are provided with Examination development materials on constructing high-quality Examination items. Committee members construct questions and obtain digital images in their assigned areas and bring these to the

planning session. Sections of the Examination are reviewed, revised, assembled, administered, and evaluated in the following fashion:

- (b) **Construction of Image Recognition Examination:** At the Examination Committee planning session, new questions and images submitted by Committee members within each anatomical area (Orbit/Adnexa, Anterior Segment, Posterior Segment) are reviewed and validated by three Committee members for quality of the image and validity of the questions (using item validation rating scales). These three Committee members then review the previous year's Examination; using item analysis provided by the exam consulting service and psychometrician selected by the ABVO (the "Consultants"). Item analysis cites the percentage of Examination Candidates that answered the question correctly and the discrimination index, which statistically compares the performance of Examination Candidates on that question to their overall performance on the Examination. The Consultants also provide the Committee with an overall statistical summary of the results of the Examination including a reliability coefficient for each portion of the Examination. The Committee Members use the item analysis as a guide and the Examination Blueprint (for content) to select new questions and images for inclusion on the following year's Examination. The Committee Members then re-construct the Examination for the upcoming year. Approximately 33% of questions and images are replaced every year. The new Image Recognition Examination is then submitted by the Examination Committee Chair to the Consultants for administration to the Examination Candidates. The Examination Candidate provides short answers to questions, which are subsequently evaluated independently and without knowledge of the Examination Candidate's name by three Examination Committee members. They score each response as "correct" or "incorrect". The Consultants use the average of the three judges' scores to determine the raw score on the Image Recognition Examination. The Consultants then notify the Exam Committee Chair of the final determined passing point and ID number and names of Examination Candidates above and below this minimum passing point.
- (c) **Construction of Written Examination:** New questions are submitted by Committee members and are reviewed for validity in a similar fashion to the Image Recognition Examination. The Committee uses item analysis supplied by the Consultants from the previous year's Examination to select questions for removal (approximately 33% of questions are changed annually). Written questions originating from literature published more than 7 years prior to the Examination date are automatically discarded, unless the examiners can verify that the data has been published again within the 7-year period in another format

(i.e. review article, textbook chapter, etc.). Replacement questions may come from newly validated questions or from the written item bank, which consists of previously validated but unused written questions. The new Written Examination questions are submitted to the Consultants by the Examination Committee Chair, and administered to the Examination Candidates. The Examination Candidates answer the multiple-choice questions, which are evaluated by the Consultants. Total raw scores, scores for each subject category, minimum passing point, and ID number and names of Examination Candidates above and below this passing point are supplied by the Consultants to the Examination Committee Chair.

### **5.09 Grading of the Examination and Determination of Passing Point**

The passing points for the Image Recognition and Written Examinations are determined primarily using a modified Angoff method, with further validation of the derived passing point provided by application of the Hofstee method. Because the Image Recognition and Written Examinations are revised regularly, with some items being replaced by newly developed ones, the content and difficulty level of the Examinations change. As a result, the passing point for each Examination is unique.

The passing points for the Practical Examination stations are determined through the Hofstee method. Passing points determined by the Hofstee method are informed by both criterion-referenced and norm-referenced factors, the latter of which includes actual candidate performance on the exam.

### **5.10 Application Procedure for Examination Accommodations.**

- (a) In compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), the ABVO shall offer its exams in a manner that accommodates individuals with disabilities, including persons with learning disabilities.
- (b) An Examination Candidate who has a disability, but has completed the credentialing requirements of the ABVO may request accommodations in taking the Written and Image Recognition portions of the Examination. Due to the nature of the Practical Examination (which includes the Intraocular Surgery and Extraocular Surgery stations), accommodations in the form of time extension or altered setting are not provided for these portions of the Examination.

### **5.11 Examination Candidate Notification and Reexamination Procedures**

- (a) Examination Candidates are notified of their results by the Examination Committee Chair. Examination Candidates are informed of their specific scores

and minimum passing point on each section of the Examination. If unsuccessful on one or more portions of the Practical portions of the Examination, Examination Candidates are also provided comments specific to their performance on those stations at which they were unsuccessful. Unsuccessful Examination Candidates are subsequently provided a diagnostic report outlining their performance on the Written and/or IR portions of the Examination relative to the distribution of questions specified by the Examination Blueprint.

- (b) An Examination Candidate need only retake the section(s) of the Examination for which an unsuccessful score was rendered. The stations of the Practical Examination are considered separate (i.e., only unsuccessful stations need be repeated, not the entire Practical Examination). The Examination Candidate has four calendar years from the time his/her credentials are initially approved to pass all sections of the Examination regardless of the number of attempts made to pass the Examination (i.e. if, for whatever reason, an Examination Candidate does not take the Examination in consecutive years, the four-year limitation continues to run). After that time, the Examination Candidate must take all sections of the Examination including all those previously passed. Re-application to begin a new four calendar-year cycle is not permitted until the cycle initiated by the Examination Candidate's initial credentials application has expired.

#### **5.12 Procedure for Reapplication to Repeat the Examination**

First-time and repeat Examination Applicants must re-submit and comply with all requirements as outlined by the Credentials Committee in order to repeat any portion(s) of the Examination. Previous satisfaction of Credential Committee requirements does not insure successful reapplication.

### **6.00 ABVO MAINTENANCE OF CERTIFICATION (MOC) COMMITTEE**

#### **6.01 Statement of Purpose**

The MOC Committee of the ABVO determines eligibility criteria for maintenance of certification by Diplomates of the ACVO. MOC participation is mandatory for individuals who become board-certified during or after 2015 and voluntary for those who became board-certified prior to 2015. Beginning in 2021 the MOC Committee will provide annually to the ABVO a list of the successful and unsuccessful Applicants for MOC.

## **6.02 Committee Objectives**

- (a) To define the criteria for MOC in the areas of:
  - 1. Professional development, scholarly activities, and professional service.
  - 2. The time interval between evaluations for MOC.
  - 3. Methods whereby Applicants for MOC may prove the criteria have been met.
  - 4. Proportion of Diplomates for whom MOC is required and who will be audited in each cycle.
- (b) To review, validate, and certify that activities submitted by Diplomates satisfy the criteria for MOC.
- (c) To develop paths to MOC for Diplomates who fail to meet MOC.

## **6.03 Committee membership**

The MOC Committee shall consist of a minimum of 5 members including the Chair (and Vice Chair or Co-Chair if applicable). Members serve terms of 3 years and may serve up to 2 consecutive terms. Terms may be shortened as needed to maintain staggered committee member terms. To serve as either Chair, Co-Chair or Vice Chair requires at least 1 year of committee experience.

## **6.04 Eligibility Criteria and Application Process**

- (a) MOC participation is mandatory for individuals who become board-certified during or after 2015, and voluntary for those who became board-certified prior to 2015. Diplomates who became board-certified prior to 2015 may voluntarily apply or reapply for MOC at any time at their discretion.
- (b) Both Mandatory and Voluntary Applicants for MOC must be ACVO Diplomates and veterinarians with current licensure or alternate documentation (e.g., institutional licensure or waiver, foreign/non-US approval by country of residence) to practice in good standing for the entire 5-year cycle of the review.
- (c) Mandatory Applicants for MOC must submit application materials

to the MOC Committee every five years beginning in the application time window announced by the MOC committee in the 6<sup>th</sup> year of the original ABVO certification (e.g., time window in January, 2021 for Diplomates certified in 2015).

- (d) Voluntary Applicants for MOC may submit application materials in the same application window as mandatory applicants after the annual call for such materials goes out from the MOC Committee.
- (e) Applications to maintain certification, whether submitted by Mandatory or Voluntary Applicants for MOC, must describe a minimum of 300 points per 5-year cycle gained through completion of activities approved for MOC.
- (f) An application fee payable to the ABVO must accompany the application.

#### **6.05 Review Process**

- (a) Up to ten percent of Voluntary and Mandatory Applicants for MOC each year will be selected by random lottery to have their applications audited for content, accuracy, and proof of activity. Accounting and verification will be performed by MOC committee members within 60 days after the application deadline.
- (b) **Methods by which Applicants for MOC may prove that criteria have been met:**
  1. Documentation of CE should consist of a copy of CE certificates obtained at meetings attended.
  2. Documentation of scholarly activities should consist of a printed copy or PDF of a published manuscript that the Applicant for MOC has authored or co-authored; a copy of the letter or email from the journal or book editor verifying acceptance of the refereed manuscript or book chapter; a copy of the abstract and program or schedule for a poster or spoken presentation; a brief letter, email, or other correspondence from the organizer of a meeting at which the Applicant for MOC presents; a brief correspondence from the Department Chair who supervises faculty stating that lectures to veterinary students were performed as stated.



3. Documentation of professional service participation should consist of a brief communication from the Chair of the committee on which the Applicant for MOC served or from the Editor of the journal for which the Applicant for MOC has reviewed. Documentation of rounds participation should consist of a log of rounds attended which includes dates, names of persons present, type of review completed (journal club, pathology review, slide rounds, etc.) that has been signed by the Applicant for MOC.
  4. Documentation of licensure should consist of copies of licensure certificates or alternate verifications that are active for the entire 5-year period.
- (c) Successful and unsuccessful Mandatory or Voluntary Applicants for MOC will be notified of the outcome of their application reviews by certified mail and/or secure email.
  - (d) The ABVO will be provided lists of successful and unsuccessful Applicants for MOC.

#### **6.06 Recognition of Maintenance of Certification**

- (a) Diplomates who maintain certification will receive documentation from the ABVO acknowledging this accomplishment.
- (b) These Diplomates will be recognized in their listing on the ABVO/ACVO websites by an asterisk (\*) followed by year achieved. A notation in the Diplomat directory explaining the maintenance of certification scheme will be added.

#### **6.07 Remediation of Application Deficiencies**

Mandatory Applicants for MOC who do not submit MOC compliance summaries or who fail documentation verification will be given 2 additional years to meet a greater expectation of 450 points in the 7-year extended cycle and pay the application fee again at the time of resubmission.

### **7.00 ABVO APPEALS COMMITTEE**

#### **7.01 Statement of Purpose**

The purpose of the ABVO Appeals Committee is to complete a fair, transparent and expeditious review of an appeal by an “individual” or “interested party”. They shall do this by considering whether the ABVO or one of its Committees has ruled erroneously by:

- (a) Disregarding the current Policies and Procedures of the ABVO or relevant ABVO Committee.
- (b) Failing to properly consider relevant evidence and documentation.

An “individual” or “interested party” is defined as a(n):

- (a) ACVO Diplomate.
- (b) ABVO Resident.
- (c) Provisional Resident.
- (d) Veterinarian who has completed all or part of a RTP.
- (e) Examination Applicant.
- (f) Examination Candidate.
- (g) Applicant for Maintenance of Certification.
- (h) Any person who, upon application to the ABVO Executive Board is granted standing as an “individual” or “interested party” in the sole discretion of the ABVO Executive Board acting reasonably upon written submissions for such standing by such person.

## **7.02 Committee Objectives**

- (a) To review in a timely and unbiased manner, decisions or actions by the ABVO Executive Board and its Committees that have been imposed upon an individual or interested party who objects to such decision or actions, and petitions for reconsideration in accordance with these Policies and Procedures.

- (b) To affirm, modify or reverse the action or decision of the ABVO or its respective Committee. An action or decision shall be affirmed if the Appeals Committee determines that it is within a reasonable range of decisions or actions that would be made based upon the initial investigation. A decision or action shall be modified or reversed on the basis that, upon review by the Appeals Committee, such action or decision was deemed unreasonable, erroneous or failed to comply with the policies of the ABVO Executive Board or the relevant ABVO Committee.

### **7.03 Committee Membership**

The Appeals Committee shall be composed of voting member Diplomates of the American College of Veterinary Ophthalmologists (ACVO) in good standing, and a (non-veterinary) Public Member. Diplomates who are currently serving on the ABVO Executive Board or on an ABVO Committee and ACVO Diplomates serving on the ACVO Board of Regents are not eligible to serve on the Appeals Committee. The Appeals Committee shall consist of a Chairperson, four (4) other ACVO Diplomates, one of whom is an alternate member to serve in instances of conflicts (per 7.04) and a Public Member. The purpose of the Public Member is to protect and preserve the public interest relevant to matters of appeal. Nominations for committee members or replacement members and the Public Regent shall be forwarded to the ABVO Executive Board for consideration. Final appointment of the Committee Chairperson, members, and the Public Member to the Appeals Committee is the responsibility of the ABVO Executive Board. In making appointments to the Appeals Committee, the ABVO Executive Board shall endeavor to reflect a diverse membership balanced relative to age, experience, and emphasis upon practice, education, research, or other endeavors within veterinary ophthalmology. Each Committee Member shall serve a term of 3 years with staggered appointments. Members may serve up to two (2) consecutive terms. The Public Member may serve consecutive terms without limitation. Terms may be shortened as necessary to maintain staggered committee member terms. At least 1 year of committee service experience is required to serve as Committee Chair or Co-Chair. Only the Public Member shall not serve as Chair.

- (a) The Chair of the Committee will serve as the principal administrative officer for the Committee and is responsible for ensuring that these Administrative Procedures are followed. The Chair presides at, and participates in, all meetings

and hearings of the Appeals Committee. The Chair is responsible directly and exclusively to the ABVO Executive Board.

#### **7.04 Conflicts of Interest and Confidentiality**

Each member of the Appeals Committee shall immediately disclose to the Committee any existing, real, perceived or potential conflict of interest involving the appellant or the appeal. Any member of the Appeals Committee who has a conflict shall be recused from participating in any aspect of the appeal. In such an event, the alternate member will serve. The appeal decision and the reasons therefore shall be kept confidential and disclosed only to the ABVO Executive Board, the relevant ABVO Committee, and the appellant. Breach of confidentiality or conflict of interest shall constitute sufficient cause for the removal of Committee Member from the Appeals Committee.

#### **7.05 Administrative Procedures**

The Administrative Procedures maintain the structure and operation of the Appeals Committee and specify procedures followed by the Appeals Committee in managing appeals filed by an individual or interested party. The appellant is required to comply strictly with the Procedure for Appeals. Failure to comply with these Procedures shall, at the sole discretion of the Appeals Committee, constitute sufficient cause to dismiss any appeal.

#### **7.06 Procedure for Appeals**

- (a) An individual or interested party who objects to a decision of the Executive Board or an ABVO Committee has the right to appeal to the Appeals Committee. The individual or interested party may, at his or her option, petition the Appeals Committee to reconsider any decision including, but not limited to, the residency program approval, training, credentialing, examining, certifying, or MOC process.
- (b) The individual or interested party desiring to appeal an adverse decision or action shall adhere to the following procedures:

1. Appeals may be based only on grounds that the ABVO or one of its Committees has ruled erroneously by:
  - a. Disregarding the current Policies and Procedures of the ABVO or relevant ABVO Committee.
  - b. Failing to properly consider relevant evidence and documentation.
2. Appeals based upon the content of or assessment of performance on the ABVO Certifying examination will not be considered.
3. The Notice of Appeal shall be digital and directed to the ABVO Executive Board by email. Digital proof of receipt at the ABVO office is also required.
4. It is the responsibility of the individual or interested party requesting the appeal to ensure the Notice of Appeal is filed within thirty (30) days of the delivery of the decision being appealed. The delivery date of the appealed decision shall be verified by digital proof of receipt notification. Appeals received after the 30-day deadline will not be considered.
5. The Notice of Appeal must be written and shall include a statement of the grounds for reconsideration, and written documentation, if any, in support of the appeal. Supporting documents and evidence shall be included with the Notice of Appeal at the time of submission. New or additional supporting evidence presented after the initial ruling by the respective ABVO Committee will only be considered by the Appeals Committee if it relates to the reason why such written evidence was not available at the time of the decision appealed from.
6. The Notice of Appeal shall contain the following information and be in the form set out in the Notice of Appeal Form:
  - i. A description of the decision being appealed
  - ii. The date of the decision being reviewed
  - iii. The reason(s) the decision is alleged to be erroneous
  - iv. Any written submissions of the appellant in support of the appeal
  - v. A statement of the corrective action(s) sought
  - vi. Copies of relevant documentation

7. Requests for appeal shall be acted upon by the ABVO Appeals Committee within thirty (30) days of the receipt of the request. The Appeals Committee may extend this time period an additional thirty (30) days, for good cause, provided written notification is made to the appellant. The written decision of the Appeals Committee together with the reasons therefore shall be forwarded to the appellant by certified mail or by email with digital receipt within ten (10) days of the decision having been made.
8. The decision of the Appeals Committee shall be final and there is no further right of appeal.

#### **7.07 Review Process**

- (a) Preliminary Disposition. The Appeals Committee Chair shall conduct an initial review of each appeal to determine if all procedural / administrative requirements for further review are satisfied. The Chair has the right to, but is not obliged to seek additional information, in any form, or clarification from the appellant, respective ABVO Committee, ABVO Executive Board, or any other source regarding the initial decision being appealed from.
- (b) In the event that the Chair concludes that the appeal satisfies all procedural / administrative requirements for further review, the Chair shall notify the members of the Appeals Committee of the appeal. In the event that the Chair concludes that all procedural / administrative requirements were not satisfied for further review, the request for appeal shall not be considered by the Committee and shall be returned to the appellant for further revision/completeness so that the appellant can comply with all procedural requirements. Any revisions to an appeal shall be received by the ABVO Office within thirty (30) days following delivery of the appealed decision, as stipulated in 7.06 (b)3. All resubmitted requests for appeal received after the 30-day deadline will not be considered. Notice of such decision shall be provided to the ABVO Executive Board or the relevant ABVO Committee.

- (c) Meetings of the Appeals Committee shall be called upon by notice to Committee Members by the Committee Chair and will include a copy of the agenda for the meeting together with a copy of the notice of appeal. The Appeals Committee may, at its discretion, review any aspect, portion, or all of the material involved in the decision(s) being the subject matter of the appeal, having regard to the content of the notice of appeal and any other documentary evidence presented in connection with the decision appealed from. The Committee may, but shall not be obliged to, request additional information considered necessary to make reasonable findings.
- (d) All written communications shall be sealed and marked “Confidential.”
- (e) Review of a decision is not a judicial proceeding. Legal rules of evidence and procedure do not apply. The appeal review shall be limited in its scope to grounds cited in the notice of appeal and the review by the Appeals Committee will include relevant documentary evidence and written submissions.
- (f) A quorum consists of all appointed Committee members. Voting is by majority of the votes of the Appeals Committee. Mail (e-mail) voting without a meeting is permitted where all Committee members submit mail (e-mail) votes.
- (g) The appellant or other relevant individuals may, at the discretion of the Appeals Committee, be invited to appear at a meeting of the Appeals Committee or to participate in a conference, teleconference, or videoconference with the Committee for the purpose of clarifying any of the written submissions set out in the notice of appeal.
- (h) The Appeals Committee shall notify the ABVO Executive Board and the Chair(s) of the respective ABVO Committee involved in the original decision of its final decision.

## **7.08 Indemnification and Insurance**

All Appeals Committee members, staff, and other individuals engaged in review at the written request of the Chair, are indemnified and defended by the ABVO against liability

arising from Appeals Committee-related activities to the extent provided by the Bylaws of the ABVO for the Executive Board, Officers, ABVO committee members, employees, and agents. The ABVO maintains indemnification insurance against such liability.

#### **7.09 Financial Reimbursement**

Appeals Committee members shall be reimbursed for expenses.

#### **7.10 Award of Costs**

The Appeals Committee has no jurisdiction to award costs for or against the appellant.

### **8.00 MANAGEMENT POLICIES**

#### **8.01 Replacement Diplomat Certificates**

Approved by the ABVO Members at the fall board meeting in 2017, requests for replacement certificates can be granted to a Diplomat if a sworn statement and proof of name change (E.g., driver's license; passport) was provided, and if the original certificate was returned. A fee of \$100 will be collected for all such requests. Diplomats should contact the ABVO office if this service is needed and a Replacement Certificate form should be requested.