



Accreditation Standards- Guidelines for Interpretation

Accreditation is the voluntary process by which educational institutions are evaluated for quality based on conformity with established standards. Accreditation serves to enhance the profession and protect the public by identifying goals and assisting institutions in achieving those goals. The CVMA Veterinary Technologist Program Accreditation Committee (VTPAC) Accreditation Standards have been established by the CVMA for quality assessment and provide a framework within which institutions are expected to identify and achieve goals for quality enhancement of accredited veterinary technology programs. These guidelines provide support for educational programs, the VTPAC and site visit teams in interpreting the standards.

How to use this document: The accreditation process looks for objective evidence that institutions are effective in meeting the standards and achieving desired outcomes for student learning, safety, and animal welfare. The standards are not prescriptive, and the VTPAC recognizes that institutions may employ a variety of means, consistent with their individual missions, to meet the standards. Compliance/performance examples are offered within the document to show how an individual program might demonstrate it is meeting the standard through verifiable documentation, facilities inspection, site visit interviews, and other means. Note that examples, while intended to be helpful, are not exhaustive and should not be considered directive.

The following definitions shall be used in applying the Standards:

- **Must, shall:** Indicates an imperative need, duty or requirement; an essential or indispensable item; mandatory.
- **Should:** Indicates the recommended and highly desirable manner in which to attain the Standard. Compliance is expected unless there are extraordinary and justifiable circumstances that preclude full compliance.
- **May:** Indicates freedom or liberty to follow a suggested alternative.
- Primary learning is defined as the period of time up to and including the time an essential skill is successfully completed and evaluated. Primary learning sites are facilities used for the teaching and evaluation of students for essential skills completion. This may occur at the campus or at facilities not administratively associated with the diploma granting institution. The program is responsible for ensuring safety measures are addressed at primary learning facilities to meet the Standards. Specific areas include, but not limited to:
 - Oversight of animal care and use
 - Occupational Health and Safety
 - Zoonoses
 - Student personal safety
 - Emergency preparedness
 - Equipment requirements
 - Adequate supervisory oversight
- Practical experience, outlined in standard 10d, is defined as the period of time after primary learning when students hone essential skills in a clinical setting. Practical experience sites are off-



campus facilities where students hone the essential skills that have been successfully completed and evaluated.

- On-campus, hyflex/hybrid, distance, and distributive education models may utilize off-campus facilities where both types of learning activities, primary learning and practical experiences, occur.
- On-campus education model is defined as primary learning physically supervised by program personnel who are employed by, or have a contract with, the institution, whether at on-campus and/or off-site clinical facilities not administratively associated with the diploma granting institution.
- Distance education model is defined as the primary learning process where the student and instructor are not required to be in the same physical location and utilizes synchronous or asynchronous telecommunication or other electronic technologies. Students are evaluated by Program personnel who are employed by, or have a contract with, the institution. Clinical facilities are not administratively associated with the diploma granting institution (Standard 10e).
- Distributive education model is defined as a veterinary technology program using facilities externally located from the main campus, not administratively associated with the diploma granting institution, and the majority of student essential skills assessment is completed synchronously by program personnel physically present during assessment who are employed by, or have a contract with, the institution (Standard 10e).
- HyFlex/Hybrid education model is defined as a blending of “hybrid” and “flexible” to provide students the choice of how to attend a course – online (synchronous, asynchronous, or a combination) or face-to-face. How the preference is managed, whether daily, weekly, or based on topic, depends on the program, taking into consideration classroom and instructional capacity. HyFlex courses have multiple, equitable ways for students to access the same information.

1. Institutional Accreditation

An accredited veterinary technology program must be part of an institution of higher education accredited by an agency recognized by the appropriate national, provincial or regional agency with that authority.

Rationale: CVMA focuses accreditation efforts on standards for delivering a quality education in the field of veterinary technology. It is expected that institutions are meeting accreditation standards relevant to overall delivery of educational and student services and are operating in a way that maximizes student success.

Publicly funded colleges are not required to provide evidence of institutional accreditation. Private colleges are required to provide a document showing approval by the provincial government.

When applicable, copies of letters regarding institutional accreditation, and relevant to the program, may be required. i.e. funding for program expansion, facilities

2. Finances

Sustainable financial support must be adequate for the program to attain the educational goals and support its mission.

Rationale: The financial stability of a program ensures that it can provide continuity to a student's educational experience. In addition, sufficient financial resources must be available to provide for

emergencies, capital purchases, facilities maintenance, and the recruitment and retention of qualified faculty and staff. Financial information allows the CVMA VTPAC to assess budget allocations (including for faculty and staff salaries), to ensure that quality teaching and support services are provided, and to ensure that facilities and equipment are available and maintained to meet the standards of accreditation.

Examples of evidence or documentation provided by the program to demonstrate compliance:

- All sources of revenue are accounted for—e.g. tuition, fees, government allocations, grants.
- A program budget is available for review that is adequate to attain the short and long-term educational goals of the program and to support its mission.
- Evidence, including site visit interviews, that the budget planning process includes input from the program director.
- The budget provides:
 - Allocations from recurring and sustainable funding sources to meet the needs of the program based on the number of faculty, staff, and students.
 - Adequate salaries for faculty and staff to ensure continuity of instruction and program management.
 - Allocations for supplies, facilities, and needed equipment with consideration for any long-term plans for facility building/remodeling.
 - Provisions for emergency funding to meet equipment and/or facility maintenance and replacement needs.
- Site visit interviews with the program director, faculty, staff, and students corroborate that resources, including salaries, are sufficient to meet the needs of the program.

3. Organization and Communication

a. The program must develop and follow its mission statement.

Rationale: Having a mission statement allows for the alignment of administration, faculty, staff, and students with the philosophy and goals of the program. A mission statement provides the framework for a program to set and re-evaluate goals.

Examples of evidence or documentation provided by the program to demonstrate compliance:

- The mission statement is succinct and easily understood by program stakeholders (i.e., students, staff, faculty, program advisory committee, and community members).
- Action taken by the program in regard to the focus of the curriculum, facilities, equipment, off-site placement opportunities, program outcomes, and interactions with the community align with the mission statement.

b. There must be clearly defined lines of communication between the institution and the program director, program director and faculty/adjuncts, between program personnel, and between program personnel and students.

Rationale: Effective communication among all parties is key to a well-functioning program. Communication between the program and college administration and between students and staff is ideally frequent, professional, collegial, and transparent.

Examples of evidence or documentation provided by the program to demonstrate compliance:



- An organizational chart indicates alignment with other departments within the institution and a clear chain of command between the program director and administration.
- Site visit interviews with faculty and staff indicate that regularly scheduled meetings between the program director and institutional administration occur.
- Site visit interviews with faculty and staff indicate that scheduled meetings between the program director and faculty/staff (including between program personnel and off-site partners), occur (see Standards 5e and 10e).
- Evidence (such as regularly scheduled office hours or the ability to communicate through other synchronous or asynchronous communication) that students have access to program personnel and instructors.
- Site visit interviews with the program director, faculty, staff, administrators, and students corroborate:
 - An aligned understanding of program needs, expectations, and goals.
 - Open communication channels that permit problems or concerns, once identified, to be addressed in a timely manner.
 - Interactions with staff are professional, particularly when concerns about animal welfare, student performance, or program improvement are brought forward.

c. Program relationships with students, faculty, administrators, and the public must be conducted with integrity. Policies and available educational services for veterinary technology students must be clearly defined and consistent with those provided to all students enrolled in the parent institution.

Rationale: Productive working relationships with a variety of stakeholders ensure long-term student success. In return, students should understand the expectations for their educational program in order to meet or exceed those expectations. The program should honor agreements and actively solicit feedback for program improvement.

Examples of evidence or documentation provided by the program to demonstrate compliance:

- A student handbook or other information is available on a website or other online resource that makes students aware of institutional policies and resources that affect them.
- Evidence that program information available to students and the public accurately reflects the activities of the program.
- Materials review and site visit interviews verify that there are opportunities for clinical sites, advisory committee members, students, and graduates to provide input for program improvement.
- The results of site visit interviews with administration, the program director, faculty, staff, and students demonstrate integrity in the program's communication and operations.
- Feedback in surveys, input from the advisory committee, and the breadth and stability of relationships with clinical placement sites and other community partnerships demonstrate integrity in the program's communication and operations.

d. The VTPAC must be apprised of changes in administration, organization, association with the parent institution, and major changes in the curriculum, faculty, or stated objectives. All changes must be reported to the VTPAC within sixty (60) days of implementation with an explanation of how the program will continue to comply with accreditation standards.



Rationale: Program accreditation is based on the state of the program documented in the Self-Study Report and Report of Evaluation generated from the most recent site visit. Information is also presented in subsequent reporting and substantive change reports. Changes must be submitted and reviewed in a timely manner to keep this assessment current and to ensure the continued quality of the educational program.

Examples of evidence or documentation provided by the program to demonstrate compliance:

- The program self-study accurately reflects the current state of the program.
- Substantive changes since the previous Report of Evaluation have been reported to the VTPAC according to policy timeline requirements.

It is expected that the program director or interim program director be included in all program reporting. (see CVMA VTPAC Substantive Change Report)

- e. **The program must have an advisory committee that meets at least annually to provide external counsel regarding equipment, curriculum, demographic trends, and other matters pertaining to the veterinary technology profession. Membership must include veterinarians and veterinary technicians, encompassing diverse professional background in companion animals, large animal, laboratory animal practice, and industry representation. The committee must have at least 1 credentialed veterinarian and 1 credentialed veterinary technician/technologist. A functional advisory committee should be focused on receiving information from outside the institution.**

Rationale: A properly constituted and functioning advisory committee assists the program in meeting its goals for program improvement and serves as a bridge between the program and the entities that will hire graduates. The intent of the advisory committee is to bring a variety of outside perspectives to the program that it may remain current and attuned to stakeholder needs. In order to do so, the advisory committee must meet minimum requirements for membership and attendance. The inclusion of individuals from a wide cross-section of the veterinary industry, including current students, program alumni, and veterinary professionals unaffiliated with the program, ensures diversity of perspective and experience.

The intent of the PAC is to hear about current trends etc in industry that could impact education of students. When the meeting is staff and student heavy, the meeting tends to be more about the program reporting to the committee rather than the meeting mainly serving to hear from industry representatives.

The last statement in the standard is a 'should' because some institutions have specific terms of reference for program advisory committees and, for example, specifically state whether or not staff, students or the public can attend. When students and staff participate in program advisory committee meetings they do so as ex officio non-voting members of the advisory committee.

Examples of evidence or documentation provided by the program to demonstrate compliance:

- Advisory committee meeting minutes:
 - Accurately reflect the content and attendance of meetings.
 - Include a list of all members in attendance and all those absent.
 - Reflect that, at a minimum, meetings occur annually.



- The advisory committee roster and the members in attendance demonstrate a diverse population of professionals.

- f. Programs in which there are agreements between two or more institutions are recognized. When a shared program meets the criteria for CVMA accreditation, the institution granting the certificate will be awarded the accreditation status.**

Rationale: This standard defines the responsibilities of individual institutions in the case of collaborative agreements and does not include satellite campuses of the same institution.

Examples of evidence or documentation provided by the program to demonstrate compliance:

- A written agreement that clearly defines the responsibilities of each entity involved in the collaboration.

- g. Communication and interaction with veterinary technician educator associations (i.e. Association of Veterinary Technician Educators), veterinary medical associations, and veterinary technician/technologist associations should be maintained.**

Rationale: Professional veterinary organizations provide access to current resources, information, and a gateway to the latest research in the field. Faculty will benefit from memberships and affiliations with these organizations while also modeling to students the importance of continuing education and life-long learning.

Examples of evidence or documentation provided by the program to demonstrate compliance:

- The role and value of professional organizations is included within the program curriculum.

4. Physical Facilities and Equipment

- a. All aspects of the physical facilities must provide an environment conducive to learning and the achievement of the educational goals. Classrooms, teaching laboratories, and other teaching spaces shall be clean, maintained in good repair, adequate in number, appropriate in capacity, and provided with sufficient equipment to meet the instructional need and the number of students enrolled.**

Rationale: It is essential that students learn in an environment that is clean, well maintained, sufficiently spacious to accommodate students and animals, and includes sufficient equipment for the number of students and animals. Facilities should be safe and free of hazards to personnel, students, and animals. Facilities capacity and maintenance directly impact the educational experience of students in veterinary technology programs. A 'best practice' approach is encouraged rather than maintenance of a minimum standard.

Examples of evidence or documentation provided by the program to demonstrate compliance:

- Site visit facilities walkthrough and interviews verify that classrooms, treatment areas, animal housing areas, surgery suites, and laboratories (including shared labs and those used to teach required core courses such as biology, chemistry, and microbiology):
 - Look and smell clean
 - Are large enough for students and animals to move freely



- Are free of clutter and extraneous items
 - Are free of hazards including but not limited to chipped tiles, water damage, leaks, low hanging wires, and trip hazards
 - Have lighting that is adequate for safe work and learning
 - Have HVAC, electric, plumbing, and other mechanical systems that are properly functioning and serviced regularly
 - Have floors, counters, shelves, and other surfaces that are in good repair, impervious to fluids, and easily cleaned/disinfected
- Site visit facilities walkthrough and interviews verify that surgery rooms are:
 - dedicated to surgical activities only
 - of sufficient size for teaching activities
 - free of extraneous materials
 - protected from excess personnel traffic and contamination. Storage of surgery relevant supplies (i.e. sterile packs, suture, and scalpel blades) in closed easily sanitized cabinetry is allowed
 - Only dedicated equipment (i.e. anesthetic monitor or fluid pump) may be stored in surgical suite
- Site visit facilities walkthrough and interviews verify that if needed, emergency lighting is present in all areas of the physical facility.
- Budgets, inventories, and site visit interviews with students, faculty, and staff indicate that equipment is provided in sufficient quantity so that waiting to use equipment does not impede learning.
- Budgets and planning documents indicate that program growth is supported by commensurate growth in physical facilities.

b. All clinical facilities for primary learning must emulate contemporary veterinary facilities. Standard types of laboratory and clinical equipment, consistent with those used in contemporary veterinary facilities, must be provided and must comply with the list of Instructional/Clinical Equipment List.

Rationale: The purpose of this standard is to ensure that student learning is taking place in functional, modern, and properly equipped clinical environments conducive to the proper treatment of patients and provision of humane animal husbandry and as required by provincial regulatory bodies.

Examples of evidence or documentation provided by the program to demonstrate compliance:

- Site visit facilities walkthrough and interviews verify that all equipment is in good working order.
- Receipts, contracts, and other documents verify that appropriate inspection, maintenance, and quality control measures are in place for essential equipment including (but not limited to):
 - Anesthetic vaporizers
 - Microscopes
 - Laboratory analyzers
 - X-ray machines
 - Lead aprons and lead gloves
- Evidence that the required equipment/instructional resources are either owned or accessible to the program during scheduled student learning activities.



- Site visit facilities walkthrough and interviews verify that surgery rooms are dedicated to surgical activities, free of extraneous materials, and protected from excess personnel traffic and contamination.

c. Office space must be sufficient for the instructional, advisement, and administrative needs of the faculty, staff, and program.

Rationale: In order to ensure that student learning objectives and program outcomes are met, program personnel must be provided with the basic infrastructure to efficiently meet their instructional responsibilities. This includes (but is not limited to) access to dedicated work space and administrative resources sufficient for the numbers of program faculty, staff and students.

Examples of evidence or documentation provided by the program to demonstrate compliance:

- Site visit facilities walkthrough and interviews verify that the program director and faculty/staff have:
 - Access to dedicated workspace that allows for the efficient execution of their administrative responsibilities.
 - Access to private space or technology for confidential student counseling and advisement.
 - Access to space or technology for program conferences and meetings.
 - Adequate access to administrative technology and equipment (computers, copiers, printers, etc.) to support student learning.
- Facilities walkthrough verifies that program workspace provides a secure location for storing confidential program materials.

d. Animal housing must be consistent with accepted humane standards and federal and provincial regulations. (See standard 5b)

Rationale: In all situations, the VTPAC endorses principles of humane care and use of animals, including their housing. All animal care and use must follow CCAC guidelines. Additionally, the program must follow all applicable provincial and local animal care requirements. A 'best practice' approach to animal housing is recommended rather than meeting minimum or outdated standards of care. Programs are referred to CCAC [Guidelines](#) and [Codes of Practice](#) for a specific 'best practice' approach to animal housing standards for a variety of species.

Examples of evidence or documentation provided by the program to demonstrate compliance:

- Site visit facilities walkthrough and interviews verify that animal housing facilities are clean and kept in good repair, with an emphasis on safety for both animals and personnel.
- If animals are housed on-campus, facilities inspection, still photography, and video documentation verify that:
 - Where possible and appropriate based on species, animals are housed in groups to minimize stress and encourage normal behavior (for example, predator species are not housed in close proximity to prey species).
 - Where species appropriate, animals are provided with hiding places.
 - Animals are provided with species-appropriate enrichment items.
 - Each enclosure provides adequate space for the animal(s) to move freely and engage in normal play, elimination, gustatory, grooming, and sleeping behavior.



- Bedding and substrates are species specific and appropriate.
- Enclosure flooring is species specific and appropriate (for example, wire mesh should be avoided in those species that may sustain foot injury).
- Depending on species, surfaces in housing areas are impervious and easily disinfected.
- Species specific requirements for temperature, humidity, and ventilation are maintained in areas where animals are housed.
- The program provides verification of an exercise schedule for those species that require it (i.e., a walking or supervised play schedule for dogs, turnout time for horses, etc.).
- The program adheres to a sanitation and disinfection schedule for kennels, cages, stalls, and enclosures that is available for review.

e. Safety of students, program personnel, and animals must be a prime consideration.

Rationale: Veterinary technology programs and their parent institutions must establish policies and procedures that ensure a safe and healthy environment for students, instructors, personnel, and animals involved in the educational program. Student acquisition of safety-related knowledge and skills is an important part of the educational process. Programs will be evaluated for attention to safety issues in general, with particular emphasis on specific subjects covered under Standards 4 (Physical Facilities and Equipment), 5 (Resources for Clinical Instruction), 8 (Students), and 10 (Curriculum). (See accreditation standards Appendix A and B).

Examples of evidence or documentation provided by the program to demonstrate compliance:

- The Program follows federal and provincial legislation pertaining to occupational health and safety standards and includes them in the curriculum.
- All areas in which program student learning takes place are compliant with federal and provincial legislation pertaining to occupational health and safety OHS/OHSA regulations.
- VTPAC expectations may expand on federal and provincial legislation pertaining to occupational health and safety requirements to cover areas not specifically addressed therein. Facilities walkthrough and site visit interviews should verify that the program attends to safety issues including:
 - Compressed gas cylinder placement and storage
 - Eye wash, safety shower, and drench hose availability and function
 - Radiation equipment, logs, use of dosimetry badges during all learning activities (including practical experiences), storage of dosimetry badges, and exposure records
 - Availability of sharps containers
 - Secondary labeling of repackaged materials, consistent with current Globally Harmonized System (GHS) requirements
 - Use of personal protective equipment that is in good repair and sufficient quantity for all students and staff
 - Available storage for student personal items to avoid contamination during laboratory activities
 - Anesthetic machine maintenance, vaporizer validation, and recalibration if indicated
 - Waste anesthetic gas exhaust and patient recovery area ventilation
 - Pregnancy, rabies, vaccination, aggressive animal, bite/scratch, and/or other zoonotic disease prevention policies.
 - Formaldehyde standards



- Noise protection
- Refrigerator contents
 - Separation of pharmaceuticals, animal food, and patient samples for potential biohazardous material concerns
- Hazard and safety signage
- Imperviousness of surfaces in laboratories (including seat covers) in which potential pathogens and/or hazardous materials are used
- First aid kits
- Surgery rooms are dedicated to surgical activities only, free of extraneous materials, and protected from excess personnel traffic and contamination
- Safety Data Sheets (SDS) are accessible and meet GHS requirements.
- The program curriculum covers the potential risks of animals as a source of zoonotic exposure or disease transmission to humans.
- Site visit interviews with faculty, staff, and students verify that program personnel model behaviors that minimize exposure to pathogens.
- A written protocol documents the handling or disposition of aggressive or dangerous animals (such as "faculty restraint only" cage signage or removal of the animal from the program).
- Electrical outlets are properly grounded and provide safe access.
- Signage, paint, and other steps have been taken to minimize trip, fall, slip, and other hazards.
- The Program has evacuation, animal care, and contingency plans in the event of an adverse weather event or disaster (for example: fire, flood, tornado, power outage, etc.) that are available for review.
- Animal housing areas are secure to prevent escape, theft or injury.
- Program buildings are secure so that students and program personnel are protected from personal harm or injury if on campus after hours, on weekends, or holidays.
- Students must be educated on rabies risk prior to working with animals. Prior to live animal use, students must be vaccinated against rabies or the program must implement a comprehensive rabies mitigation protocol (template provided).

- f. Drugs, biologics, reagents, and other materials used in conjunction with animal care shall be currently dated and appropriately labelled. Materials used for demonstration purposes must be appropriately identified and stored. Controlled substances shall be stored and logged in accordance with government legislation.**

Rationale: Proper management of medications and other materials used in animal care is an essential part of veterinary technology education. The student learning environment models compliance with regulations and demonstrates appropriate use of materials in animal care. This is applicable to all clinical facilities for primary learning.

Examples of evidence or documentation provided by the program to demonstrate compliance:

- Facilities inspection and review verify that:
 - Drugs and medical materials are used within their expiration date and stored according to label instructions.
 - Containers and packages are intact and not visibly damaged or contaminated.
 - Documented drug and material handling procedures are effective in mitigating risks to users and preventing contamination of drugs, reagents, and other supplies.



- Drugs, including controlled substances, that are mixed or compounded meet the same standards for safety, efficacy, labeling, and recordkeeping as commercially available products.
- All mixing/compounding of drugs follows provincial regulations.
- Controlled substances are:
 - Securely locked
 - Only available to trained, authorized users
 - Logged at each use and logs readily accessible for inspection
 - Properly disposed based on municipal, provincial, and federal requirements
- Any materials intended for demonstration purposes, including expired products, are clearly labeled as such to avoid use on live animals.
- Students in classes where drugs, controlled substances, or other materials are used are made aware of methods for legal compliance, management of inventory, dating, and labelling.

g. Waste management shall be appropriate for the needs of the program and consistent with regulatory agency requirements.

Rationale: The practice of medicine and student teaching generates waste streams that are regulated by federal, provincial, and local agencies. On- and off-site primary learning facilities should teach students proper procedures for managing these waste streams while emulating current industry standards of practice.

Examples of evidence or documentation provided by the program to demonstrate compliance:

- Facilities inspection and materials review verify that:
 - Sharp containers are puncture resistant, labeled as biohazard or medical waste, and not overfilled.
 - Recapping of needles is not performed unless using a safety device or one-handed technique.
 - Blood, tissues, and other biological waste products are labeled appropriately and disposed of in compliance with prevailing biohazard and/or medical waste regulations.
 - Unused or expired drugs are disposed of using recommended methods for the locality.
 - Unused or expired controlled substances are returned to distributors or manufacturers or destroyed in accordance with federal and/or provincial guidelines, if allowed.
 - Solvents and reagents are disposed of utilizing a specific chemical waste stream if required.

h. Storage must be sufficient for program needs.

Rationale: Physical facilities should emulate contemporary practice, and this includes storage areas. A 'best practice' approach is encouraged rather than adopting a minimum standard.

Examples of evidence or documentation provided by the program to demonstrate compliance:

- Facilities walkthrough and materials review verify that:



- The Program has adequate space to store equipment and supplies for all program needs, including but not limited to
 - Files
 - Infrequently used equipment
 - Lab supplies (including models)
 - Supplies used to treat/care for animals (i.e. needles, bandage materials, food, etc.).
- The Program has adequate storage to permit functional and uncluttered work, lecture, and animal housing areas.
- Program personnel can easily access storage areas and stored items.
- Storage is secured against theft and tampering.
- Storage areas are clean and dry.
- Surgery rooms are not utilized as storage areas. See Standards 4a, 4b, 4e above.

5. Resources for Clinical Instruction

- a. **Animals of various common domestic and laboratory animal species must be available for use in teaching. Adequate numbers of animals are required to provide the necessary quantity and quality of clinical instruction to meet curriculum requirements without overuse of the animals or violation of standards of humane care.**

Rationale: The use of live animals is considered critical for the development of hands-on technical skills and is required for certain essential skills. Subjecting animals to repeated procedures by unskilled students creates the potential for pain or distress but adequate numbers of available animals mitigates this risk. The CVMA VTPAC requires that programs have standards in place to limit potential animal stress and discomfort. In addition, student to animal ratios in teaching laboratories must be adhered to in order to ensure the safety of all participants.

Examples of evidence or documentation provided by the program to demonstrate compliance:

- Documented student to animal ratios and the laboratory schedule ensure that sufficient animals are available for all students to acquire essential skills within the published course syllabi/academic period.
- Approved animal care protocols limit the number of invasive procedures that can be performed on an individual animal within a given period of time and/or have objective assessment criteria for performing repeated procedures to prevent pain or distress from the procedures.
- Evidence that animal resources are adequate to serve the needs of the program.
- Site visit interviews verify that students, faculty, and staff have not raised concerns about animal use or welfare.
- Evidence that animal resources are commensurate with program growth.
- Off-campus providers of instructional support must meet objective requirements set by the program with respect to animal resources.

- b. **Programs must follow all applicable federal and provincial regulations and guidelines for the care and use of animals utilized by the program. The institution must have an Animal Care Committee to monitor and approve the use and care of animals used in teaching and with sufficient authority to enforce humane animal care practices in all aspects of the program. The goal of the Canadian**



Council on Animal Care (CCAC) is to ensure appropriate care and use of animals by institutions involved in research, teaching and testing. Institutions complying with CCAC standards are awarded a Certificate of Good Animal Practice (GAP). A GAP certificate is a requirement for CVMA Veterinary Technology program accreditation.

VTPAC endorses the principles of humane care and use of animals as required by the CCAC and requires programs to follow CCAC guidelines and policies with respect to all animal use. All animal activities conducted by a program must be reviewed and approved by an institutional animal care committee whose structure and functions are in accord with CCAC requirements.

Rationale: Humane animal care and use in teaching is an important ethical and social issue. The VTPAC requires veterinary technology programs to have a CCAC GAP certificate as this represents best practices for animal care and use. This serves to educate students on this important issue and assists programs in reinforcing the value of current guidelines for the well-being of animals under their care.

Examples of evidence or documentation provided by the program to demonstrate compliance:

- The most recent CCAC GAP certificate is provided.
 - If there were any non-compliant items from the last site visit, evidence of correction of the item(s) or an action plan and timeline for correction have been reported.
- A completed Pedagogical Merit chart showing humane animal use in the program. (See Appendix C Pedagogical Merit). The required student to animal ratio is specified in the chart to optimize student learning and animal safety. When considering the number of students, there may be more students in the vicinity/lab group, however the ratio indicates how many students will be performing procedures at any given time.
- Verification that all CCAC requirements are being followed.
- An Institutional Animal Care Committee (ACC) has been established.
- The ACC reports directly to a senior administrator who has authority to delegate institutional resources to the ACC for fulfillment of its mission.
- The Animal Care Committee:
 - Is comprised of individuals required in the document *CCAC Terms of Reference for Animal Care Committees*.
 - Must have a chair who should not be directly involved in the management of the institutional animal facilities, nor be a clinical veterinarian for the institution, nor an animal health or veterinary personnel responsible for compliance of CCAC guidelines.
 - Documents that all decisions require a majority vote of a majority quorum of the committee.
 - Protocol authors and members of their teams must always clearly remove themselves from ACC decision-making on their own protocols.
- Evidence that the ACC:
 - Meets at least twice annually.
 - Performs an inspection of on-campus facilities at least once per year.
 - Has a post-monitoring system.
- Documentation shows that the ACC has reviewed and approved the details of all animal use submitted by animal users prior to beginning the animal work as described in the CCAC Terms of Reference for Animal Care Committees.
- ACC protocols and SOPs are available for site team review.



- All committee members are provided the opportunity to review the proposal, ask questions, request clarifications, and request a review by the full committee at a convened meeting.
- A written procedure for reporting concerns (a "whistleblower policy") is published and posted publicly in areas where animal use takes place.

c. Models and other alternate methods of teaching that are consistent with the goals of the curriculum must be considered to replace, reduce, or refine animal use.

Rationale: While the CVMA VTPAC requires that live animals be used to assess student proficiency in psychomotor essential skills, models and other alternatives are useful to introduce students to concepts and skills and to refine their skills before live animal use occurs.

Examples of evidence or documentation provided by the program to demonstrate compliance:

- The Program has access to and utilizes commonly available alternatives to live animals including but not limited to computer simulations, anatomical models, synthetic cadavers, and models for suturing, injections, venipuncture, intubation, and catheterization.
- Models are sufficient in number to be readily available for use and are of sufficient quality/condition to meet the intended usage.

d. Records and logs for animals used by the program must be comprehensive and accurately maintained.

Rationale: A key tenet of veterinary technology education is that quality documentation is important for veterinary professionals to communicate with one another on details of case management and to comply with regulatory and legal requirements. Well-maintained medical records, logs, and other documents are also essential to meet the legal requirements of contemporary veterinary practice.

Examples of evidence or documentation provided by the program to demonstrate compliance:

- Medical records meet specific provincial practice act requirements.
- In general, medical records include but are not limited to the following components:
 - Identification of the animal (including signalment, case number/medical record ID, etc.), owner, and clinic (or program name)
 - Medical history
 - Presenting complaint or reason for visit
 - Physical examination data
 - Results of laboratory tests
 - Date, type, and site of any vaccinations administered
 - Diagnosis and treatment plan
 - Procedures performed (including surgery)
 - Drugs administered and dosages (typically expressed as dose amount administered and strength/concentration of preparation)
 - Anesthetic monitoring data
 - Date and identification of person making entry
 - Commonly accepted abbreviations and appropriate terminology are used
 - Proper correction of handwritten errors



- A SOAP format is used for medical records (other, comparable formats may also be acceptable).
 - Medical records comply with contemporary veterinary practice standards.
 - Examples of student completed medical records may include actual medical records, mock records, or assignments used to complete any associated essential skill.
 - Review of medical log books (controlled drug, radiography, surgery, etc.) verifies that:
 - Controlled substances/usage logs comply with provincial and federal requirements.
 - If logs for radiography or surgery are in use, they are complete.
 - Logs contain a key to identify the initials of those using the log.
- e. Off-campus providers of instructional support must meet objective requirements set by the program with respect to the physical facilities, staff, and available equipment. A memorandum of understanding or contractual arrangement must be established with all off-campus sites including, but not limited to, externship, preceptorship, and distance learning sites.**

See Standard 10d.

Rationale: Teaching best practices does not end with the activities at program facilities. Programs should select partners for primary learning where students receive the same quality of education as they would on campus. Contracts or Memoranda of Understanding (MOUs) are important for defining the responsibilities of the program, the student, and off-campus learning sites.

Examples of evidence or documentation provided by the program to demonstrate compliance:

- The program provides a documented process of review and approval for off-campus learning sites.
- Images of off-campus sites of primary learning (i.e., where required skills are first taught and proficiency is assessed) demonstrate cleanliness, safety compliance, proper labeling, storage, the sanctity of the surgery room, and appropriate animal housing (see Standard 4).
- Current, signed contracts or MOUs are available for off-campus learning partners (both institutional and individuals who are acting as program personnel). Contracts or MOUs describe, in detail, the responsibilities of all parties. The requirement for a MOU or contract also includes suppliers of animals to the program.
- If Essential Skills are assessed by personnel working outside the parent institution (for example, staff at a clinical site), there is evidence that these individuals are program personnel with appropriate training in assessment provided by the Program and they are overseen by the Program director.
- It is expected that students in an onsite program will complete all essential skills on campus prior to going on practicum. While that is the ideal situation, some programs have practicum hours in first year. In those cases students have a subset of skills that are appropriate to be improved on during practicum. For distance or hybrid programs typically students are employed at a veterinary practice and supply videos for program instructors to mark to ensure consistency among all students
- Signed agreements between these program personnel and the Program or parent institution are available for review. (See also Standard 10e.)



- Contracts or MOUs include an exit clause that provides sufficient lead time to allow the program to secure other partners, thereby ensuring continuity of resources critical to student learning.
- If essential skills are assessed by personnel working outside the parent institution (for example, staff at a clinical site), the program must ensure the following:
 - Signed agreements demonstrate that these individuals are program personnel. This means separate individual agreements with each individual RVT or DVM that is separate from the MOU with the veterinary practice.
 - There is appropriate training in assessment specific to the program's standardized criteria.
 - There is evidence of ongoing communication with the Program director.

Regarding preceptorships/practicums/externships, students may be paid an honorarium towards the cost of travelling to the practice for practical experience. The required 240 hours of clinical experiences are for the purpose of honing skills learned in the more formal instructional settings. An honorarium is acceptable for students however not on a per hour basis. In that case, the emphasis for the placement may change from educational to employee and student learning could be negatively impacted.

- f. If program staffed clinical veterinary services are offered, documented evidence must exist that clients are informed that student instruction is a major component of patient care. The primary purpose of such clinical veterinary services, regardless of animal ownership, must be teaching, not revenue generation.**

Rationale: Programs may choose to provide veterinary services as a method of outreach and community service. If a Program provides veterinary services to the public, clients must be aware that education is the primary goal and that students will be providing that care under the supervision of their instructors. With the growth of hybrid and distributive model programs, clients of off-campus learning sites must also be made aware the students will be participating in the care of their animals.

Examples of evidence or documentation provided by the program to demonstrate compliance:

- Verification that clients are informed about student participation through methods such as:
 - Signed consent forms or waivers
 - Posted statement(s) in the reception area
 - Identifying students with a badge, name tag, or emblem on their work uniform
- If clinical services are offered to clients, the program provides verification that any cost associated with those services is communicated to clients prior to the performance of services. This may take the form of signage, an estimate, signed forms, or other documentation
- The distribution of any funds earned (e.g., student club fund, scholarship fund, animal rescue donation, etc.), is displayed/posted for client review

6. Library and Informational Resources

- a. Libraries and information retrieval are essential to veterinary technicians' education and continuing education. Timely access to current information resources through print, electronic media, and/or other means must be available to students, faculty, and staff. Students must have access to a qualified librarian or resource specialist.**



Rationale: A commitment to life-long learning is part of the Veterinary Technician Oath. Library resources are an essential part of any accredited veterinary technology program. Library materials must be current to be relevant, resources must be diverse to meet student needs, and the library must be sufficiently sized to accommodate student numbers. As information resources have become more sophisticated, access to trained resource specialists has become important. The CVMA VTPAC will review the totality of the programmatic informational resources, electronic and print.

Examples of evidence or documentation provided by the program to demonstrate compliance:

- Budget review verifies the presence of a program-specific budget for programmatic library resources and/or a process to request new resources.
- Key veterinary science and medicine references are available in print or electronically.
- The library has a documented process for reviewing holdings and purging out of date or rarely used materials.
- Campus tour and interviews with students and staff verify that the library has adequate space, capacity and/or resource accessibility to meet the needs of students.

b. Knowledge of quality information resources, library use, and development and application of information retrieval skills must be included in the educational experience.

Rationale: It is not sufficient to merely have access to information resources; students must also be taught to use them and understand how to assess the validity of information. These skills are particularly important to prepare students for lifelong learning following graduation.

Examples of evidence or documentation provided by the program to demonstrate compliance:

- Curriculum review, student interviews, and surveys show that students use library resources.
- Student and staff interviews verify that there is a library orientation for students.
- Documentation that students have the ability to retrieve and apply veterinary specific information and evaluate the quality of that information.
- Faculty and library staff interviews verify that there is communication between faculty and library staff regarding desired resources.
- Curriculum review and faculty interviews establish that students are assigned projects that require them to utilize library resources.

7. Admissions

- a. The institution and program admission policies must be well defined and documented.**
- b. Applicants must have a high school diploma or its equivalent. Consideration of the qualifications of applicants for admission must include aptitude for, and interest in, a career in veterinary technology.**
- c. The VTPAC recognizes that some institutions must perform under admissions policies that prohibit selective entry into veterinary technology education programs. However, the development and consistent application of selective admissions standards may be helpful in admitting more qualified students, reducing attrition, and producing graduates who are most likely to succeed, and therefore should be encouraged.**

- d. **Catalogs, website, or other official publications must contain the institutional and programmatic purposes and objectives, admission requirements and procedures, academic offerings, diploma granted, and requirements for graduation. This information must include the length of time necessary for completion; policies with respect to satisfactory academic progress; policies on transfer of credits; tuition, fees, and other program costs; refund policies; and the provincial and national requirements for eligibility for credentialing for entry into the field of veterinary technology.**
- e. **The institution and program must demonstrate integrity and responsibility in student recruitment practices. Admission must be non-discriminatory and in accordance with federal and provincial regulations. Personnel who are knowledgeable about the program and its requirements should conduct student recruitment.**
- f. **The program director or appointee should participate in the deliberations of the admissions committee and selection of students.**

Rationale: The veterinary technology curriculum is challenging, as is the Veterinary Technician National Examination. In addition, the profession presents physical and emotional challenges that students should be aware of and students should have an understanding of the salaries and career paths available to them after graduation. Identifying motivation and scholastic aptitude during the admissions process improves the chances that a student will successfully complete the veterinary technology curriculum. Involving program faculty in the admissions process will help select students with the right motivation and fit for the program and reduce student attrition.

Examples of evidence or documentation provided by the program to demonstrate compliance:

- Program materials demonstrate that the program's admission and completion policies and requirements are accurately disclosed.
- An admissions officer or career counselor is employed by the college to advise pre-program students.
- Published admissions requirements accurately reflect the student process for admission.
- Student interviews establish that the process to apply to the institution, program, and for financial aid was accessible and that admissions personnel were knowledgeable of program requirements.
- Program application and informational materials verify that there is a pre-admission orientation, interview with the program director, and/or program faculty to inform students of the specific challenges associated with the veterinary technology curriculum and those inherent in the profession.
- Program informational and application materials show that pre-admission or placement examinations are used to help students self-identify if they are likely to be successful in the program and allow the program to proactively identify students that may need academic support.
- Volunteer or observation experiences in a veterinary clinic are/may be required for admission to the program.
- The program provides information sessions to prospective students.
- The program conducts recruitment events in the community.
- The program holds open house events for prospective students where they have access to program personnel.

8. Students

- a. **The number of students must be appropriate to achieve the mission of the program. Enrollment must not exceed the available resources including the number of faculty and support staff needed to meet the educational goals of the curriculum. An appropriate program personnel-to-student ratio must be maintained to ensure student safety and adequate delivery of instruction in program specific courses. Program personnel to student ratios shall not exceed 1:12 for laboratory courses without animals present and 1:8 for laboratory courses with animals present.**

Rationale: Students need adequate access to qualified instructors to ensure learning. When animals are present additional instructors are required to monitor student safety and animal welfare. For the best educational experience, student numbers must not exceed the available educational resources.

Examples of evidence or documentation provided by the program to demonstrate compliance:

- Substantive Change Reports have been submitted whenever the Program anticipates that increased enrollment will change ratios in conformance with current reporting requirements.

- b. **Student support services must be available within the institution for program students. Interactions between students and faculty/staff must be sufficient to communicate expectations for successful academic performance, provide feedback for improvement of skills or knowledge, and encourage professional growth and development.**

Rationale: All veterinary technology students need regular feedback and coaching to perform at their best. In addition, student tutoring, counseling, and disability services provide specialized support that program faculty and staff may not be qualified or able to provide.

Examples of evidence or documentation provided by the program to demonstrate compliance:

- Student interviews and surveys indicate that they are aware of the support services available to them and have positive experiences with support services for financial aid, tutoring, counseling, and academic advising.
- Faculty and staff interviews indicate that they are aware of the support services available at the institution and/or have referred students to support services in the past.
- Program materials contain information about student support services.
- There is evidence that student support materials are readily available to students.

- c. **Throughout the curriculum, students must be exposed to veterinary team concepts and appropriate modeling of ethical and professional behavior.**

Rationale: Veterinary technician job satisfaction is predicated on optimal utilization and healthy working relationships with veterinarians, veterinary assistants, other veterinary technicians, and clients. Effective modeling of veterinary team concepts as well as ethical and professional behavior is an essential component of professional education.

Examples of evidence or documentation provided by the program to demonstrate compliance:

- The curriculum exposes students to veterinary medical ethics and professional behavior concepts.



- There is evidence that laboratory activities and student assignments require teamwork for completion.
- Survey responses from employers and clinical placement sites document the ability of students to function in a team and behave both ethically and professionally.
- Interviews with students and faculty establish that professional, respectful communication and team behaviors are modeled among the Program Director, faculty, staff and students.

d. Students should be encouraged to affiliate themselves with respective local, provincial and national veterinary technician associations.

Rationale: Professional organizations have a key role in influencing public policy and public understanding of the profession. Exposure to these organizations can help students practice teamwork, promote collaboration, and develop leadership skills. Participation in student organizations models for students the many ways involvement in these organizations can be personally and professionally fulfilling for veterinary technicians.

Examples of evidence or documentation provided by the program to demonstrate compliance:

- There is an active student chapter of NAVTA and/or the provincial veterinary technician organization.
- Student interviews show that students are aware of the roles of professional organizations in the field.
- Curriculum review establishes that professional organizations and the benefits of membership are a component of the curriculum.
- Documentation that the college or program offers students discounted memberships or membership reimbursement to student chapters of professional organizations.
- Student interviews indicate that they are encouraged to join provincial and national technician organizations.
- Events are held that introduce students to representatives of local and national technician organizations (CE sessions, etc.).
- Students should be encouraged to be active in local, provincial and national veterinary technician organizations.

e. The program must develop a legally defensible pregnancy policy for the protection of the individual and the institution.

9. Faculty and Staff

a. Faculty and staff numbers must be sufficient to deliver the educational program and meet the instructional goals of the program.

Rationale: Refer to 8a

Examples of evidence or documentation provided by the program to demonstrate compliance:

- Refer to 8a regarding appropriate faculty: student ratios in labs
- Growth in human resources is commensurate with the growth of the program



- b. Instructors in the program must have knowledge and expertise in the topics they teach and promote the appropriate role of the veterinary technician in the veterinary health care team. Instructional duties must not violate provincial laws regarding the practice of veterinary medicine.**

Rationale: Veterinary technician education requires qualified instructors who can communicate the technical and medical material as well as the optimal utilization of the veterinary technician on the veterinary health care team.

Examples of evidence or documentation provided by the program to demonstrate compliance:

- Instructor curriculum vitae reflects the qualifications of the instructor.
- Student interviews indicate that instructors are effective and motivational in their teaching.
- Evidence that the duties of instructors do not require them to violate established local, provincial, or federal scope of practice for veterinarians or veterinary technicians.

- c. The program director must be a licensed veterinarian or a licensed veterinary technician who is a graduate of a CVMA or AVMA-accredited program. The program director must have the educational background and occupational experience appropriate to understand and fulfill program goals. The position of the program director should be full time with the institution.**

Rationale: The Program Director must have the necessary background and understanding to lead the program. Graduation from a CVMA or AVMA CVTEA accredited program ensures that students are led and taught by faculty who have themselves been educated at an institution whose curriculum and requirements have met defined standards of quality, content, and outcomes.

Examples of evidence or documentation provided by the program to demonstrate compliance:

- The curriculum vitae for the program director indicates that they are a graduate of an CVMA or AVMA accredited program.
- A copy of the program director's current license is available for review. If the Program Director is a veterinary technician, a copy of their official transcript is available for review.

- d. The program director must have the responsibility, authority, and support necessary to manage the program successfully. The director must be responsible for organizing continuous program review and development processes that assure program effectiveness. The director's appointment must include sufficient time for administrative and teaching responsibilities as well as opportunities and support for professional development. This shall be documented in a written job description that shall clearly define the position of director within the institutional hierarchy.**

Rationale: A qualified veterinary professional who understands the requirements of the profession should be in control of all aspects of the program. The job description documents these responsibilities and ensures that the institution is recognizing and supporting the responsibilities of the program director. Because the program director has significant administrative responsibility, if the program director is also an instructor, their teaching load should be adjusted to account for their administrative load.



Examples of evidence or documentation provided by the program to demonstrate compliance:

- The program director's job description delineates the responsibilities of the program director.
 - The program director job description is reviewed periodically to most accurately reflect the duties and responsibilities of the program director.
 - Evidence that the level of authority granted to the program director is appropriate to administer the program and that there is sufficient time allotted to fulfill the role.
 - The program director's academic schedule demonstrates adequate time allotted to student contact hours /instructional time and to administrative time.
 - The program director's contract is available for review.
- e. **Each program must have a minimum equivalent of one full-time licensed veterinarian and a minimum of one full-time veterinary technician who is a graduate of a CVMA or AVMA accredited program and/or is currently registered as a veterinary technician.**

Rationale: Veterinary Technology students must interact with credentialed veterinary technicians who can act as role models. It is essential that students have the opportunity to interact with licensed veterinarians to model the collaboration and communication within the veterinary healthcare team. It is essential that veterinary technician students be mentored by veterinary technicians with the knowledge and experience to teach the curriculum. The requirement that at least one veterinary technician be full time ensures continuity of professional modeling and instruction that may be compromised if only part time veterinary technician instructors are available.

Examples of evidence or documentation provided by the program to demonstrate compliance:

- If a provincial electronic licensing database is available, a search verifies that program veterinary technician and veterinarian credentials are active and in good standing. If an electronic database is not available:
 - A copy of the full-time veterinary technician's official transcripts and current credential.
 - A copy of current license(s) for the veterinarian(s) fulfilling the 1 FTE requirement of the standard.
- A copy of course schedule and personnel teaching assignments for the past four academic terms identifying all instructors, lab personnel, etc.
- Institutional policy definition of faculty/staff/personnel FTE.

Examples of duties and responsibilities of the FTE licensed veterinarian include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Curriculum development.
- Input and/or oversight of veterinary facilities and equipment.
- Holder of license for access to controlled substances if surgical or other procedures requiring anesthesia will occur on campus.
- Serve as the attending veterinarian for the institutional animal care and use committee (IACUC).
- Oversight and/or performance of animal procedures, especially anything involving diagnosis, surgery, or prescribing of medications or treatment.



- Teaching courses in the program.
- Student advisement.
- Attendance at faculty and staff meetings – both programmatic and college.

- f. Academic positions must offer sufficient compensation, incentives, and employment security to attract and retain qualified personnel in order to maintain program stability. Faculty and staff must have sufficient time for development and delivery of instruction, curriculum development, student evaluation, student advisement and counseling, and professional development. Programs should provide financial support for veterinary professional development activities.**

Rationale: Competence, motivation, and stability of the instructional staff are important aspects of program quality. Supporting them with adequate resources, including compensation that aligns with market conditions, is important to maintain program quality.

Examples of evidence or documentation provided by the program to demonstrate compliance:

- Faculty interviews and class schedules verify that adequate time is available for class preparation, to assist with practicums, for curriculum review, and to provide student support.
- Faculty interviews and financial self-study information indicate that support exists for professional development.
- If contracts are utilized, they are renegotiated often enough to address adequacy of compensation, benefits, and employment security.
- The program documents the use of relevant information in assessing sufficiency of compensation for faculty and staff. This may include but is not limited to:
 - Local, national, and regional remuneration information
- Documentation that the college or program provides funds to faculty and staff to maintain professional licenses, certifications, and/or credentials.
- Faculty interviews verify that personnel receive compensation adjustments.

- g. The institution must provide evidence that it evaluates program personnel regularly and assists and facilitates professional growth. Program personnel should be encouraged and financially supported to be participating members of local, provincial, and national professional associations.**

Rationale: Evaluation of instructors is important for their development and to ensure the delivery of quality education to students. Development is also promoted through participation in professional organizations, attendance at conferences, and participation in other continuing education activities. In addition, it is important that professional development and participation in professional organizations be modeled for students.

Examples of evidence or documentation provided by the program to demonstrate compliance:

- A process exists for ongoing instructor evaluation.
- Evidence that faculty and staff are evaluated with regularity and that their professional growth is supported.
- A sample instructor review.
- Site visit interviews verify that students have input on instructor performance and have seen that their feedback results in improvements.



- The college provides reimbursement or other funds to put toward dues, renewals, and memberships.
 - Professional memberships for program faculty and staff are documented in the self-study.
 - Site visit interviews indicate that the program encourages and supports faculty to be members of provincial and national professional organizations.
- h. For off-campus clinical experiences, students and faculty should seek progressive contemporary facilities that employ graduates of CVMA or AVMA accredited programs in veterinary technology and/or are registered as veterinary technicians to act as professional role models and mentors.**

10. Curriculum

- a. The curriculum must prepare graduates who will be fully capable of performing in a wide variety of professional roles within the veterinary field. At the completion of the curriculum, graduates must have attained entry-level skills needed to support companion animal, equine, and food animal practice, biomedical research, and other veterinary medical activities. The curriculum shall provide a foundation in veterinary technology that will inspire the student to continue life-long learning.**
- b. The specific courses shall teach basic medical science, communication, critical thinking, decision-making, and clinical application skills. Integration of nursing, medical and technical skills within the curriculum must use live animals. Whenever possible, animal nursing skills should be developed in a setting and under conditions that are a reflection of the manner in which graduates will use these skills.**
- c. The curriculum must include general education and specific veterinary technology course content. Required materials can be offered as complete course offerings or be integrated into courses involving more than one area of recommended materials. Course objectives must be clearly communicated to the student through syllabi or other course documents. Course offerings to meet curriculum requirements typically take 2 or 3 years to complete.**
- d. Practical veterinary experience that expands student knowledge and builds proficiency of acquired skills through task-specific exercises is a required portion of the curriculum. These experiences are usually termed preceptorships, practicums, internships, or externships. These experiences are for the purpose of honing skills learned in the more formal instructional settings and should be scheduled to occur following completion of skills acquisition. Practical experiences must be a minimum, cumulative 240 contact hours. These practical experiences must be monitored by the program director or the director's appointee who must be a program faculty or staff member. Prior to the beginning of the practical experience, on-site supervisors must be contacted by the program. Students and faculty should seek contemporary facilities that employ credentialed veterinary technicians to act as professional role models and mentors. During the practical experience, contact must be maintained with students and their one-site supervisors to monitor students' personal and educational experiences. It is highly recommended that such contact take place through personal visits and interviews by the program director or appointee. Specific criteria must be used to assist on-site supervisors in monitoring student progress. The program director or appointee shall review student performance evaluations by on-site supervisors, student evaluation of the experiences, and a final student performance evaluation.**



- e. **Successful completion of all required skills must be evaluated and documented by program personnel using standardized criteria that reflect contemporary veterinary practice. Program personnel should be a credentialed veterinary technician or veterinarian. Program personnel must have a signed agreement with the parent institution, complete training in evaluating essential skills, and regularly communicate with the program director. This agreement is in addition to any facility MOU that exists.**
- f. **The CVMA recognizes that academic institutions may accept credits from other colleges, universities or recognized educational entities. However, if the program accepts veterinary technician-related course credit from institutions not accredited by the CVMA or AVMA, the program must ensure that the rigor of transfer courses meets CVMA/AVMA Standards. Provision of prior learning must include documentation or critical evaluation of these experiences to award college credit or advanced standing. Documentation of the assurance may be requested for review during the program accreditation process.**
- g. **The CVMA recognizes that a program may wish to emphasize certain areas within the curriculum to capitalize on regional variation, institutional strengths, and available job markets. This emphasis should be clearly stated in the mission statement/objectives of the program, and the curriculum shall then reflect that emphasis. A choice to emphasize one aspect of the curriculum must not interfere with the acquisition of all skills listed on the Veterinary Technology Student Essential Skills list.**

Rationale: The curriculum is the core of a veterinary technology program and must include sufficient depth and breadth of subject matter to prepare students for professional success. Having a clear focus on the program's mission, scope, and goals is important. The curriculum should reflect the overall mission statement of the program and include contemporary standards of veterinary care. While programs are responsible for the quality of education delivered by their faculty and staff, they are also responsible for assessing student learning and performance at sites offering practical experience. This requires maintaining channels of communication with off-campus clinical sites.

Examples of evidence or documentation provided by the program to demonstrate compliance:

- Course catalogs, website, and descriptions indicate where in the curriculum required elements are being addressed.
- Curriculum review indicates that:
 - The curriculum aligns with the mission and focus of the program.
 - Course sequencing is logical to build on concepts from each course.
 - The curriculum provides a basis for attaining required skills.
 - The curriculum can be completed sequentially within the published timeframe for diploma completion.
 - Evidence that the program provides standardized criteria for all essential skills.
 - If essential skills are assessed by personnel working outside the parent institution (for example, staff at a clinical site):
 - Signed agreements demonstrate that these individuals are program personnel.
 - There is appropriate training in assessment specific to the program's standardized criteria.
 - There is evidence of ongoing communication with the program director.
- Training materials document how personnel are instructed in the evaluation of essential skills.



- The individual tracking of essential skills includes the signature of the program personnel as well as the date of the attainment of the skill.
- Course credit awarded as transfer credit, credit for prior learning, or credit by exam is evaluated through a verifiable process to ensure that credit is awarded only for coursework that is comparable to program standards and/or for the attainment of skills and knowledge that align with the program's learning objectives and meets expected outcomes.
- The process of awarding credit is free of any potential conflict of interest.
- Evidence of curricular, and co-curricular elements that allow students to develop an understanding of diversity, equity, and inclusion as they intersect with veterinary medicine.
- Evidence of an outcomes assessment loop to assess the learning environment, and make adjustments as required.

11. Outcomes Assessment

- a. The program must develop program-specific outcome assessment instruments that assist in determining attainment of the educational goals. Such instruments shall include, but are not limited to: attrition rates, pass rates and domain scores of the Veterinary Technician National Examination (VTNE) results compared to the national average pass rates, as well as graduate and employer surveys. Outcome assessment results must be used to improve the program.**
- b. The institution should encourage and support the program review and evaluation process for the outcomes of the educational program.**

Rationale: Student outcomes are the ultimate measure of the success of the program. While the VTNE is a key measure of outcomes, a successful program will also have low attrition rates, graduates who are in demand by employers, and students who are satisfied with their education and recommend the program to others. It is expected that programs will solicit feedback from stakeholders, review feedback, and make necessary changes to improve the program as needed.

Examples of evidence or documentation provided by the program to demonstrate compliance:

- Example evaluations for individual courses and instructors.
- Samples of other mechanisms for student feedback.
- Employers and graduates are surveyed via program-specific surveys that are designed to provide feedback to improve a veterinary technology program.
- The program has a process for periodic curriculum review.
- Examples of program improvements made based on VTNE domain scores, pass rates, and feedback from students, employers, and/or advisory committee members.
- If VTNE pass percentages are below the Canadian average are low the program documents:
 - Efforts to ensure students understand the importance of the examination for credentialing and the importance of credentialing for their career and mobility, even if their initial plans do not include credentialing.
 - Efforts to encourage all students to take the exam (for example, some programs include the exam cost in program fees).
 - Availability of exam preparation sessions.
 - Access to practice exams.
- Programs should aim for 100% participation rate on VTNE



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- Input from the advisory committee indicates that the program utilizes outcomes to improve the program.