

BECOMING AN ACAW DIPLOMATE: ROUTE OPTIONS AND THE APPLICATION PROCESS

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Becoming an ACAW Diplomate

Individual veterinarians with an interest in the American College of Animal Welfare (ACAW) are encouraged to go to the www.acaw.org website for current information. For those interested in becoming board certified, the “Becoming Board Certified” tab contains the information that is of importance.

The Applicant’s Packet is a booklet that describes the current information regarding the requirements, including information about the types of training programs that would qualify a person to apply for credentialing. The Forms links (there are 3), has the various forms needed, from registering with ACAW at the beginning of a program, through the forms needed to apply for credentialing and the examination. There are also 2 additional links for other information.

Three Routes for Education

The first determination an individual will need to make is which of the three educational routes is appropriate for them. Each fills slightly different needs.

Provisional Route

The Provisional Route was developed for veterinarians who were out and working in animal welfare at the time ACAW was granted Provisional Recognition by the AVMA. In other words, all their necessary requirements must have been completed no later than August 1, 2012. Requirements would begin with that person registering with ACAW (form is on the website). There is a time limit during which people interested in using this route must complete the process—December 31, 2018.

This means the credentialing material must be submitted no later than November 1, 2017 and pass during that credentialing process. A few tips for credentialing are as follows:

- The credentials should not include what has been done after August, 1, 2012, because the requirements are to be completed by that time.
- Be as complete as possible in the Case Activities Log Form
 - Experience and courses count
 - Experiences should be well described, with inclusive dates provided when appropriate
 - Courses should include a description of materials included within them
 - Experiences and courses must be at the graduate level, others are nice but

- don't count
- Don't put "see CV" in the Case Activities Log even if it is a repeat

Once the credentialing process has been passed, the Application for Examination in time for the next examination is expected. To aid in studying, a reading list has been developed and is in the Applicant's Packet on the website which may be helpful for studying about RDD areas that are not familiar. Ultimately, the examination must be successfully passed before December 31, 2018.

Training Route

The second educational route toward board certification is what ACAW calls the Training Route. This one is what we traditionally think of as a residency program, so the first step is to be accepted into an ACAW approved program, typically at a university setting. As a side note, ACAW Diplomates have been quite busy accommodating individuals interested in the Provisional and Alternate Routes and university funding for new residencies has been poor recently, so development of approved Training Route programs has been slower than desired. Once accepted into an approved program, the individual is expected to register with ACAW very early in that program. They then spend the next two to three years completing it and submit their credentialing materials to ACAW as the training nears completion. When the credentials pass, the person is expected to apply to sit the next available examination. They will have a maximum of three attempts to pass the examination and that must occur within five years of first credentialing.

Alternate Routes

Alternate Route programs can be used when neither of the other two fit the individual's situation. This could include people who have completed some courses or have some work experience, but did not complete what they needed by August 1, 2012. It would also be useful for individuals who are unable to use a Training Route program because one isn't available to them, they are not able to relocate, or there are financial constraints. People interested in doing an Alternate Route program will first need to find an ACAW Diplomat who will agree to serve as their program mentor. They then register with ACAW. With the mentor, the newly registered individual will design and submit their proposed alternate program that is designed to cover the material in the Role Delineation Document. After the proposed program has been approved, the individual will complete it and when completed, they submit their credentialing materials. Once credentialing is passed, the individual will have a maximum of three attempts within the five year period from first credentialing to pass the examination.

ACAW Diplomat Mentors

Individuals who are interested in becoming ACAW Diplomates may or may not need to have an ACAW Diplomat mentor. It is recommended for those in the Provisional Route, but not required. A mentor will be automatic for those in a Training Route program, and is required for those wanting to do an Alternate Route.

While a list of potential mentors is available on the www.acaw.org website, finding

a Diplomat can be difficult for a number of reasons. ACAW Diplomates are already busy people so they will want to be sure that the individual is really committed to see the program through to the end. It is generally easier get the agreement from a mentor if the individuals know each other beforehand, than if the Diplomat gets a call or e-mail "out of the blue."