

I. Exam Committee Report to ACVD Executive Board 2024 (REDACTED FOR PRIVACY PURPOSES)

Examination Committee members 2023-2024

- Dr. Ben Tham (year 5, chairperson)
- Dr. Carine Laporte (year 6)
- Dr. Petra Bizikova (year 4)
- Dr. Tyler Jordan (year 4)
- Dr. Alexandra Gould (year 3)
- Dr. Andrew Simpson (year 3)
- Dr. Allison Inga (year 3)
- Dr. Catherine Milley (year 2)
- Dr. Christoph Klinger (year 2)
- Dr. Ina Herrmann (year 2)
- Dr. Christina Gentry (new member)
- Dr. Teresa Boehm (new member)

A. Candidates

A total of 18 candidates completed the ACVD certifying examination (ACE) this year compared to 23 candidates in 2022.

Twelve (12) of these candidates took the exam for the first time compared to 19 in 2022. Of these candidates, nine passed the examination.

Six (6) candidates repeated the examination which was two (2) more candidates than the number who took the exam in 2022. Three (3) and two (2) candidates were taking the examination for the second and third time, respectively. One (1) candidate was taking the exam for the fourth time. Of these six candidates, four (4) passed the examination; two (2) each were second- and third-time test-takers.

The lowest passing raw score for the examination was 70% (140/199); the highest failing score was 65% (130/199).

The table below summarizes pass rates for the exam since 1981

| Year | # Candidates | # Passing | 1st Time Pass Rate |
|-------------|---------------------|------------------|--------------------------------------|
| 1981 | 2 | 2 (100%) | 2/2 (100%) |
| 1982 | 2 | 1 (50%) | 1/2 (50%) |
| 1983 | 6 | 3 (50%) | 2/5 (40%) |
| 1984 | 6 | 5 (83%) | 3/4 (75%) |
| 1985 | 8 | 3 (38%) | 3/7 (43%) |
| 1986 | 10 | 5 (50%) | 2/5 (40%) |
| 1987 | 6 | 3 (50%) | 2/5 (40%) |

| | | | |
|-------------|---------------------|------------------|---------------------------|
| 1988 | 8 | 2 (25%) | 0/5 (0%) |
| 1989 | 10 | 4 (40%) | 1/5 (20%) |
| 1990 | 11 | 6 (55%) | 1/6 (17%) |
| 1991 | 11 | 9 (82%) | 5/6 (83%) |
| 1992 | 11 | 8 (73%) | 7/10 (70%) |
| 1993 | 16 | 11 (69%) | 9/13 (69%) |
| 1994 | 10 | 7 (70%) | 4/6 (67%) |
| 1995 | 10 | 3 (30%) | 3/8 (38%) |
| 1996 | 17 | 12 (71%) | 7/10 (70%) |
| 1997 | 12 | 9 (75%) | 4/7 (57%) |
| 1998 | 17 | 10 (59%) | 7/13 (54%) |
| 1999 | 13 | 11 (85%) | 7/7 (100%) |
| 2000 | 7 | 6 (86%) | 4/5 (80%) |
| 2001 | 11 | 5 (46%) | 5/10 (50%) |
| 2002 | 9 | 4 (44%) | 0/5 (0%) |
| 2003 | 18 | 6 (33%) | 3/13 (23%) |
| 2004 | 21 | 15 (71%) | 5/10 (50%) |
| 2005 | 16 | 12 (75%) | 8/10 (80%) |
| 2006 | 13 | 10 (77%) | 8/9 (88%) |
| 2007 | 11 | 9 (81%) | 9/11 (81%) |
| 2008 | 13 | 6 (46%) | 5/13 (38%) |
| 2009 | 19 | 9 (47%) | 7/13 (54%) |
| 2010 | 29 | 21 (72%) | 14/21 (67%) |
| 2011 | 19 | 8 (42%) | 5/9 (56%) |
| 2012 | 22 | 12 (55%) | 6/13 (46%) |
| 2013 | 23 | 15 (65%) | 8/13 (61%) |
| 2014 | 23 | 16 (70%) | 11/16 (69%) |
| 2015 | 18 | 15 (83%) | 9/11 (81%) |
| 2016 | 15 | 10 (66.7%) | 9/12 (75%) |
| 2017 | 24 | 14 (58.3%) | 11/19 (57.9%) |
| 2018 | 18 | 11 (61%) | 7/11 (63.6%) |
| 2019 | 24 | 21 (87.5%) | 12/15 (80%) |
| 2020 | 19 | 16 (84.2%) | 13/16 (81.3%) |
| 2021 | 21 | 18 (85.7%) | 17/19 (89.5%) |
| 2022 | 23 | 17 (73.9%) | 16/19 (84.21%) |
| Year | # Candidates | # Passing | 1st Time Pass Rate |
| 2023 | 18 | 13 (72%) | 9/12 (75%) |

The thirteen (13) new ACVD Diplomates are Drs. Kaitlyn Bello, Sara Bancroft, Dylan Logan Burroughs, Hilary Chan, Trenton Ewing, Drew Fleischman, Natalie Gedon, Erica Hess, Julie LeFrancois, Sarah Lewis, Kalie Marshall, Alissa Rexo, and Chi-Yen Wu.

B. Practice (Mock) Examination

There was no new practice examination created for 2023. Dr Ben Tham intends to create a new practice examination for 2024.

C. Administration of the Examination

The 2023 ACE was administered in person at the NYLO Las Colinas, Irving TX between November 3rd and November 4th, 2023. Candidates who required special accommodations (extra time) sat for the ACE on November 3rd and 4th. Drs Ben Tham (ACVD Examination Committee Chairperson) and Catherine Milley (ACVD Examination Committee member), along with Dr. Robert Malinowski (ExamSoft) proctored the examination. Diana Midyett (ACVD Meeting and Event Organizer) was responsible for organizing the examination facilities, meals, and accommodation, and was a “liaison” for the ACVD examination committee members with the hotel management. The examination took place in two separate rooms; one for the regular-time exam takers and the other for those with special accommodations. At least one proctor was in each room at all times during the examination.

Before the ACE, all candidates were required to attend the ExamSoft training sessions conducted by Dr Malinowski via Zoom. During these training sessions, candidates were taught how to utilize the ExamSoft software - an application/program that is used to administer the ACE via a laptop at the examination site. These one-hour training sessions were held on 09/11/2023, 09/19/2023, and 09/26/2023; each candidate was only required to attend one session. All 18 candidates attended these training sessions.

On November 2nd at 6:00 pm, candidates attended the pre-examination overview session conducted by Dr Malinowski and Dr Ben Tham. During this session, the ACE rules were reiterated to the candidates. Candidates also had the opportunity to test their laptops to ensure there were no issues with the ExamSoft application and wireless internet.

The examination was divided into 4 sections. Sections 1 and 2 had 63 questions, whereas sections 3 and 4 had 62 questions. For regular-time exam-takers, each section was allotted a time of two hours. There were two mandatory breaks of 15 minutes between sections 1 and 2 and sections 3 and 4. Lunch break was allotted 1.5 hours.

There were three (3) requests for special accommodations (longer time) during the examination that were verified with medical documentation which was granted. One candidate was allotted a longer break time, whereas two candidates were allotted a longer examination time of 1.5 times (one candidate), and double the time (one candidate). All candidates successfully uploaded all sections of the examination.

Three meals (breakfast, lunch, and dinner) were provided to all the candidates. A separate room where candidates could have their meals was also provided.

D. Examination Content

This year's ACE consisted of a multiple-choice examination. The examination contained 249 multiple choice questions.

The breakdown of the multiple-choice examination was based on the recent job task analysis in that 74% were of general/non-species specific questions, 43% canine, 13% feline, 12% equine and 6% other species. The subject matter breakdown for the examination is as follows:

| Examination Subject Matter | Percentage Breakdown |
|--|-----------------------------|
| Atopy & Hypersensitivity | 18 |
| Otology | 8 |
| Infectious Diseases | 11 |
| Parasitology | 8 |
| Structure, Function, & Disorders of Epidermis, Dermis and Adnexa | 12 |
| Immune Function & Immune-Mediated Diseases | 9 |
| Internal Medicine, Endocrinology, & Oncology | 10 |
| Nutritional & Environmental/Traumatic Disorders | 5 |
| Psychoneurodermatology | 3 |
| Pharmacology | 9 |
| Dermatopathology | 7 |
| Total | 100% |

E. Grading

To ensure anonymity each examinee was identified only by a confirmation code randomly assigned by the ACVD executive secretary/Prometric. The multiple-choice exam this year was computerized through ExamSoft. Answer choices were marked by a computer algorithm and scores were received by ExamSoft. Scores for each section of the examination were recorded by the candidates' identification number. Total scores were sent to Prometric. The pass point was determined at the 2022 standard-setting meeting.

F. Examination Results

See Appendix 1 for the Excel spreadsheet of the complete examination results. Dr Ben Tham requested more information from Prometric to provide candidates with their domain-level performance. Prometric produces domain diagnostic score calculations that establish score range information based on the current overall test cut and domain difficulty for one examination administration period. The diagnostic score calculations result in a table with cuts for three performance levels for each domain: deficient, marginal, and proficient. The cuts are calculated based on the overall test cut and the domain difficulty information. The additional cost for this

analysis is \$4,800 and the ACVD Board of Directors decided not to proceed with this additional analysis.

G. Examination Critiques

Examination reviews were written for five of the candidates who did not pass the exam.

H. Appeals

There were no appeals this year.

I. Post Exam Evaluations

An updated 9-question post-exam survey was given to all 18 candidates, of which 15 candidates responded (response rate: 83%). See Appendix 2 for the survey questions and complete responses. In summary:

- Most exam candidates thought the exam content was fair. Some of the candidates' criticism included:
 - the diversity of the questions was lacking
 - extremely rare diseases were tested
 - some questions were trivial (e.g., the need to know an etiology to the level of the species)
 - questions should be pertinent to diseases or conditions that are commonly referred to a dermatologist
 - questions were skewed heavily towards exotics
 - A few histopathology images were not clear when zoomed in
- All candidates felt they had sufficient time.
- Candidates who required accommodation were appreciative of the extra time received
- For candidate preparedness, the majority felt that an 8-week study period was sufficient. The response for feeling if they had adequate time was diverse; some candidates who were given 3-4 weeks felt it was insufficient, whereas some who worked part-time felt that this allowed more time and flexibility to prepare for the examination.
- Of 5 candidates who took the exam for the second time or more, three candidates felt that the level of difficulty was the same and one candidate (who was a 3rd time exam-taker) felt that the difficulty was consistent year-to-year. One candidate prefers taking the exam in-person compared to remotely because it makes the candidate calmer seeing other candidates taking the exam at the same time.
- Majority of the candidates felt that ExamSoft worked well throughout the examination; some appreciated having Dr Malinowski on-site to assist them when needed.
- There was a mixed response regarding having the ACE at a centralized location not on the university campus or a testing center. Eight of 15 candidates (53%) prefer taking the examination at a localized testing center (similar to NAVLE), citing financial reasons (travel, accommodation,

etc) and exhaustion from traveling, as being the main obstacles. Candidates not living in the US wondered if the ACVD could offer overseas testing centers. Two candidates felt taking the examination in the same location as the other candidates provided a sense of “community” and a positive environment.

- All candidates have a positive review of the hotel rooms. A few commented that the rooms could have brighter lighting.
- Twelve of 15 responders commented that the location of the examination room was unsatisfactory due to its proximity to the lobby and elevators, lack of privacy, and candidates were distracted by the sound of people talking and footsteps.
- One candidate commented that the cost of the ACE (\$3,200) was very disappointing, citing that the cost of Prometric certifying exams for those within the ACVIM in 2023 was approximately \$1000 (for general 2nd-year board examination) and \$1495 (for specialty-specific 3rd-year exam; i.e., neurology, oncology, internal medicine).

J. Expenses

The total expenses for the 2023 ACE was \$15,091.37. Approximately 50% of the expenses were associated with the hotel charges (i.e., examination room rental, meals, occupancy tax, and service charges). Almost \$4000 was used to compensate for the travel, accommodation, and meals expenses of the proctors/event organizer. The remainder of the expenses were associated with the audiovisual and internet facilities.

K. New Advisory Sub-Committee (Update)

This committee aims to aid the examination chairperson and provide consistency, serving as the “memory” for the exam. Our goal is that these members will know the exam well to quickly detect enemies (repeat questions/questions that teach), be able to recall previous exam questions should exam questions need to be swapped, check that the questions reflect the current literature, check for multiple answers, etc. For this year, there will be three members including Drs. Ben Tham Tyler Jordan, and Carine Laporte.

Respectfully,



Dr Ben Tham, DVM, DACVD
ACVD Examination Committee Chairperson 2023-2024