

ANIMAL CHIROPRACTIC  
CERTIFICATION COMMISSION  
*of the American Veterinary Chiropractic Association*

**CERTIFICATION  
EXAMINATION**

CANDIDATE INSTRUCTION  
BOOKLET

***PLEASE READ PRIOR TO EXAM***

**September 10-12, 2026**

[www.animalchiropractic.org](http://www.animalchiropractic.org)

## GENERAL INFORMATION

This booklet contains all essential information candidates need for examination day and is intended to address all questions regarding the examination process and examination site.

On the day of the examinations, ACCC/AVCA staff and proctors will not provide further examination-related information.

- **Contacting the AVCA Office:** Candidates may not contact the AVCA office with questions regarding the examination as doing so would create an unfair advantage for one candidate over others.
  - Candidates should consult the ACCC Examination website (<https://avcaexam.regstep.com/>) for the most current examination information.
- **Professional Conduct:** Candidates are expected to conduct themselves in a professional and courteous manner at all times.
  - If a candidate is suspected of improper conduct, including cheating, he or she must comply with any reasonable request made by a proctor.
- **Examination Environment:** Candidates should be aware that examination environments are not perfect.
  - Noise, distractions, dust, dirt, and temperature variations may occur, and candidates should be prepared for these conditions.
- **Liability:** The ACCC/AVCA is not responsible for any personal injury or for any personal articles that are lost, stolen, or damaged at the examination centers or on the surrounding grounds.
- **Candidate Attire:** Must be free of all identifying information, including personal names, professional degrees, clinic or business logos, and the names, logos, or emblems of any educational institution.
- **Device and Personal Items Policy:** Backpacks, electronics, phones, wearable technology, and similar personal items must be left locked in the candidate's vehicle.
  - Any item capable of vibrating, beeping, ringing, recording, storing information, or transmitting notifications is strictly prohibited in the examination area. This includes, but is not limited to, the following:
    - Wearable technology, including smartwatches, fitness trackers, and any device worn on the body that can store, record, transmit, or receive information
    - Headsets, headphones, earbuds, pods, earplugs, or any device worn in or around the ear
    - Cellular phones, cameras, pagers, smartwatches, tablets, or any device capable of storing or communicating information

Such items may not be brought into the examination area under any circumstances.
- **Late Arrival / No-Show:** Any candidate who arrives after the proctor has begun the pre-test instructions will be recorded as a no-show. No-show candidates forfeit the right to sit for the examination and forfeit all examination fees.
- **Exam Materials / Missing or Removed Items:** At the conclusion of the examinations, all testing materials will be collected.
  - If any material, or any portion of material, is missing, the materials will be considered stolen.
  - The candidate's examination will not be scored, and all examination fees will be forfeited.
- **Footwear Requirement (Practical Examination):** Only closed-heel, closed-toe footwear (i.e., shoes that fully cover the foot) is permitted during the practical examination.
  - Failure to wear proper footwear will be classified as a no-show.
  - The candidate will forfeit the right to sit for the examination and will forfeit all examination fees.

## **EXAMINATION DAY REGISTRATION (DEPENDING ON NUMBER OF CANDIDATES - 15 – 30 MINUTES):**

1. Examinations start promptly at the times stated. Please arrive at the indicated Registration Start Time and identify yourself to the registration desk.
2. Each candidate must sign in on the signature sheet at the registration desk. Candidates **MUST** bring current photo identification.  
Acceptable forms of primary identification include:
  - valid driver's license with photo
  - valid state/province card with photo
  - valid passport or military identification card
3. Candidates will be refused from taking the examination should they not have adequate photo identification.
4. The mailing address with which you registered for the examination is the address where results will be mailed. If correspondence should be sent elsewhere, contact one of the proctors about a Change of Address Form.
5. During registration of the practical examination, please review the list of examiners. It is the candidate's responsibility to review this list.  
If there is anyone on the list who you believe might be negatively biased toward you as a candidate, please inform the proctor at the registration desk.  
Remember, this does NOT include persons with whom you are acquainted, but people you feel may be biased negatively toward you. The merit of such a request will be judged by the Head Proctor and Chief Examiner. Should a legitimate conflict exist, every attempt will be made to remove the conflict. *However, the possibility exists that a request cannot be accommodated. As a result, you may have to take the examination at a different time over the weekend, or possibly at a later date as scheduled by the ACCC.*
6. At registration of the practical examination, candidates will be given a badge with their candidate identification number. This badge must be worn prominently at all times. Candidate numbers are used to protect anonymity and will not change over the examination. This badge must be returned after the practical examinations.
7. During registration for the practical exam, candidates will receive a booklet for note-taking and reference throughout the examination. This booklet is not graded and does not contribute to the exam score.  
**At the conclusion of the exam**, all booklets will be collected. If a booklet is missing or does not contain the correct number of pages, **it will be considered stolen, and the candidate's examination will NOT be scored.**  
Please remember to bring a writing instrument.
8. Device and Personal Items Policy: Backpacks, electronics, phones, wearable technology, and similar personal items must be left locked in the candidate's vehicle.  
Any item capable of vibrating, beeping, ringing, recording, storing information, or transmitting notifications is strictly prohibited in the examination area. This includes, but is not limited to, the following:
  - Wearable technology, including smartwatches, fitness trackers, and any device worn on the body that can store, record, transmit, or receive information
  - Headsets, headphones, earbuds, pods, earplugs, or any device worn in or around the ear
  - Cellular phones, cameras, pagers, smartwatches, tablets, or any device capable of storing or communicating informationSuch items may not be brought into the examination area under any circumstances

9. All study material and notes are to be left outside of the examining room or under the control of the proctor(s).
10. ACCC/AVCA assumes no responsibility for lost, stolen or misplaced property.
11. Candidates will not be permitted to contact individuals outside of the examination site after the registration process has begun unless they are under the direct supervision of a proctor or chief examiner.  
Once candidates have completed the registration process, they **MUST** be accompanied by an ACCC/AVCA representative at all times.
12. During the examinations there are to be **NO** private conversations with other individuals or candidates.
13. Examination Day Logistics: The examination days may be long.  
Examinations are scent free environments (animals excluded).  
If you wish to have water and snacks available during exam, please bring them to the examination site. Water and snacks can be kept in your pocket.  
Rest stations may be added to the examination to accommodate the number of candidates and the time frames available for the examinations. During these breaks, candidates may eat, drink, or attend the washroom (under proctor supervision).
14. *Copyright and Examination Materials Policy: All examinations are the property of the ACCC and are protected by copyright law.*  
*The ACCC/AVCA will take legal action against any individual who steals, reproduces, or removes examination questions or examination materials.*  
*The dissemination of any examination content to any person, organization, company, or other entity in any manner constitutes a breach of professional ethics and theft of examination materials.*  
*Any person found to have violated these policies may have his or her examination score voided.*

### **WRITTEN EXAMINATION**

1. The written examination is two (2) hours in length.
2. Clearly print your name and candidate identification number on the computer score form and the cover page of your examination booklet.
3. Any item capable of vibrating, beeping, ringing, recording, storing information, or transmitting notifications is strictly prohibited in the examination area.
4. Hats with brims may not be worn during the examination.
5. Candidates who believe that there are administrative errors during the examination that significantly impair their performance must **IMMEDIATELY** report such administrative errors to the Head Proctor.
6. No candidate may leave the examination room until sixty (60) minutes after the commencement of the exam.  
When you have completed your examination, stay in your chair and raise your hand.  
Wait until the proctor checks your examination materials and tells you that you may leave.  
Examination materials will not be collected until the sixty (60) minute mark.
7. After the examination booklet and score forms have been picked up, courtesy must be shown to those still writing. Please quietly exit the premises, speaking quietly once outside the room.

8. An announcement will be made when 60 minutes, 30 minutes and 10 minutes remain to complete the examination. When the final time is called candidates must immediately cease writing and close their booklets.
9. Unless otherwise instructed, all questions have one best answer, and have equal marking value. If directed to “select three” or “select up to three” and a candidate chooses more than the stated number, the candidate will receive a score of zero (0).  
If a question directs to “select one or more” and a candidate bubbles in all of the available options - when all options are not correct - the candidate will receive a score of zero (0) for that question. Marks are not removed for incorrect answers (i.e., no question has a score of -1 for a wrong answer).
10. Feedback Forms will be provided upon request. The Feedback Form is for information regarding any exam questions and/or criticisms that will be of a constructive nature. Comments **not specific** to a particular question should be sent to the ACCC/AVCA office at a later date. Additional examination time is not provided for the feedback process.

### **PRACTICAL EXAMINATION**

#### STATIONS:

- Canine History
- Canine Adjusting Techniques
- Canine Adjusting Techniques
- Equine History
- Equine Adjusting Techniques & Saddle Fit
- Equine Adjusting Techniques

Rest stations may be added to the examination to accommodate the number of candidates and the time frames available for the examinations. During the examinations there are to be **NO** private conversations with other individuals or candidates.

The practical examination portion of the certification examinations is approximately three hours in length.

1. Practical is held in a barn/stable/arena that is dirt/sand – wear appropriate clothing and footwear. No logo clothing, emblem or other identifying marks (e.g. degree) is permitted.

**ONLY closed heel and closed toe footwear is allowed** during the practical examination.

**FAILURE to WEAR PROPER FOOTWEAR** will be considered a no-show and candidate **forfeits the right to sit for the examination and will forfeit all examination fees.**

2. Candidates are assigned to a start station. The label on the Candidate Booklet indicates in which station to begin.

3. The Candidate Booklet given at registration is provided to make notes for reference during the examination stations.

The booklet is not graded and does not count towards the exam score.

It will have 2 pages and these pages **MUST** be returned to the proctor and all pages accounted for prior to completion of the sign-out process.

If there are pages missing, the missing material will be considered stolen and the candidate's examination will **not** be scored.

Bring a writing instrument.

4. There will be candidate identification number stickers attached to the front of the Candidate Booklet.

Give one sticker to the examiner of every station as you progress through the stations (you may not need all the stickers).

For each examination station, take the booklet with the sticker sheet with you. Extra time is not allowed if any of these materials are left behind.

5. The examination stations utilize animals or mannequins when appropriate.

In addition to the handlers, examiners will be present in each station assessing candidate performance.

Please ensure that you explain any procedures to the examiner as you would to any client in your office. Candidates should assume that the examiners/clients have no previous knowledge of chiropractic or the scope of chiropractic. All questions should be specific. Examiners will not respond to general questions (e.g., "anything else wrong", or "was that okay").

6. Station Protocol:

- Examination staff will move candidates to their assigned stations.
- Remain with your back to the instructions until the first signal is given. At that time you may turn and read the instructions for the station.
- At the first signal, read the information on the sign outside the station area. The same information is available in the station. **DO NOT ENTER THE EXAMINATION AREA UNTIL INSTRUCTED TO DO SO.**
- At the second signal you may enter the examination area and perform as directed on the station sign.
- If you feel the need to introduce yourself, please do so as: "Hello, I am Dr. "first name only"; or "Hello, I am Candidate #####".
- When you have been in the station 6 minutes, there will be a signal as a warning signal that there are 2 minutes remaining in the station.
- The next signal indicates that the station is completed. You are to immediately exit the station examination area, proceed to the next station, and read the information. You will have two (2) minutes to reach the next station and prepare.
- All conversations in the stations are to be with the handlers/examiners.
  - Examiners should be treated just as a client would in your office.
  - The examiners will not come out of their role at any time during the examination.
  - If you have completed the station, do not engage in small talk with the handlers or examiners.
- **At all times, ensure that the examiner has viewed what you have done.**
  - To assist in this regard, it is recommended that you confirm with the examiner by asking, "Have you completed your evaluation of this setup and may I proceed to the next?" The examiner will respond accordingly or ask that you repeat the setup.**
- **Examiners will not respond to questions about the case or about how you are doing, nor will they engage in small talk. DO NOT CONVERSE OR EXPECT TO CONVERSE WITH THE EXAMINERS.**

7. Examiners will only initiate interaction in the following ways:

- If your activity will place the animal, handler, examiner or candidate at risk or create discomfort to the animal if performed.
- If they have not been able to visually verify your demonstration and may request that you repeat the setup, etc.,
- If they are unable to support the efficacy of a demonstrated setup, request that you perform a different setup. This should not be interpreted by the candidate that the first setup was scored as incorrect, simply that the examiner is providing the candidate a new opportunity to demonstrate competency with the listing.

8. At any one time, the following individuals may be present in the station: the candidate, the handler, the examiner, an observer, a quality assurance examiner.

9. Bales of hay and/or firm styrofoam blocks will be provided for the candidates to use when testing on horses. Personal adjusting bales are not allowed. It is the candidate's responsibility, if he/she needs help to move, position or stabilize the bales, that he/she requests the handler or examiner to assist in bale positioning.

10. Candidates may move the animal to a more comfortable adjusting environment - if appropriate. For example, horses may be moved closer to a fence so that the candidate doesn't have to chase the animal in circles to perform a set-up.

### **STATION DESCRIPTIONS:**

The intent of these stations is to assess your clinical skills when interacting with an animal and a client. Candidates must decide what to do in each station based on the information provided in the station scenario posted outside the station, information posted on a clipboard for your use within the station, and by the responses given by the examiners; all within the time limitations of each station.

- **CANINE OR EQUINE HISTORY STATIONS**

The candidate will be provided with a focused case history and physical examination findings. The candidate must:

- communicate a report of findings as you would to an owner,
- communicate a treatment plan as you would to an owner,
- obtain informed consent as you would from an owner,
- communicate after care instructions as you would to an owner,
- communicate any follow up care to the examiner as you would to an owner, and
- respond to any questions or concerns the owner may have.

**All communication is to be with the examiner as you would talk to an owner.**

- **CANINE OR EQUINE ADJUSTING TECHNIQUE STATION,**

Up to six listings will be provided in these stations. Candidates should respond to each listing separately.

**DO NOT THRUST OR ADJUST THE ANIMAL.**

Please be kind and **USE A LIGHT TOUCH** in demonstrating the set-up. The animals are with us all day and it is important to treat them with respect.

The adjustments to be demonstrated may be spinal or extremity.

Candidates are expected to demonstrate diversified adjusting techniques.

Any adjustment that, in the opinion of the examiner experts, appears to be an effective adjustment may be used.

If performing procedures that are generally uncomfortable for animals, candidates may verbalize, "normally this motion/position would be held for 30 seconds, but for the purpose of this demonstration I will not hold the position any longer".

This is more comfortable for the animals during a long day and is appreciated.

There is no need to hold segments at the pre-stressed point for very long.

As candidates demonstrate the chiropractic adjustments, they will be evaluated on the following points:

1. instructions to handler on where to stand, hold/support the animal, and other safety issues,
2. position of doctor, animal, handler, and the contact,
3. communication of set up to the examiner, and
4. response to examiner concerns or animal reaction.

## **GENERAL SCORING**

When entering the station have an ID sticker ready to give to the examiner. The examiner will place the sticker on the score form.

The practical examinations utilize two different rating scales; a check-list scale, and a global scale. For each station, check-lists reflect the key-features of the station. The rating scale for each checklist item is:

- No: not performed or performed incorrectly
- Yes but: attempted but not done correctly
- Yes: performed correctly

In addition, each examiner completes a global rating scale at the end of each station. The global rating scale for each station is a five-point scale: outright fail, borderline fail, borderline pass, outright pass, and outstanding pass.

Both rating scales are anchored on behaviors. Successful candidates will have been awarded an outright pass on more than half of the stations. For the global rating scale, the behaviours are as listed in the following table:

### **Global Rating Scale**

#### Attributes

<b>Scale</b>	<b>Attributes</b>
Outright Fail	any one of: high likelihood of animal being injured by adjustment, high likelihood of owner/handler being injured by animal handling, and high likelihood of doctor being injured
Borderline Fail	extremely tentative, uncomfortable with animal handling, high likelihood of adjustments being ineffective
Borderline Pass	moderately tentative, may be uncomfortable with animal handling, animal, owner, and doctor are safe, but adjustment might not be effective
Outright Pass	somewhat tentative, animal, owner, and doctor are safe, adjustments are of minimal quality, but probably effective
Outstanding Pass	very confident in animal handling, very confident and knowledgeable in management, good adjusting skills, good communication with owner

## **PRACTICAL EXAMINATION COMPLETION**

There will be a final signal to end the practical portion of the Certification Examinations.

At this time the examination staff will ask candidates before they leave the last station if they have any extraordinary circumstances to report where the administration of the examination affected their ability to perform at their best.

The examination staff will also ask candidates if they want to fill in a Feedback Form and will have the Extraordinary Circumstance and Feedback Forms available should candidates wish to use them.

The examination staff will also make these forms available to any candidates that may be in a rest station at the completion of the examination.

The end of the final 8-minute station will be signalled by a verbal announcement. Examination staff will then direct candidates to the sign-out table.

Extraordinary Circumstance and Feedback Forms will not be given to candidates if they have communicated with any other candidate or a person external to the examination process.

**Candidates must sign-out, and turn-in their identification badges and booklets.  
Failure to do so will result in a no score for the candidate.**

**Exam Materials / Missing or Removed Items:** At the conclusion of the examinations, all testing materials will be collected. If any material, or any portion of material, is missing, the materials will be considered stolen. The candidate's examination will not be scored, and all examination fees will be forfeited.

**At the end of the practical exam, candidates must exit.  
They may not re-enter the arena or arena lobby for any reason.**