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A Department of Homeland Security  
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# Veterinary Assistant Classification & Certification



## I. Veterinary Assistant Classification (VA)

To earn a certificate and classification as a Veterinary Assistant (VA), a student must successfully complete a course of study covering various topics in veterinary science and an apprenticeship at a veterinary practice. Note that completion of the VA certificate program does not automatically qualify the student as a Certified Veterinary Assistant (CVA). The VA certification by examination is offered by the Texas Veterinary Medical Association (TVMA).

### 1. VA Study Course (Curriculum)

The Veterinary Science curriculum offered by the Texas A&M System, a collaboration of the of the National Foreign Animal and Zoonotic Disease Defense Center, and the Texas AgriLife Extension Service, is a nationally recognized veterinary assistant program that prepares students by offering academic training for careers as veterinary assistants. Career tracks in the curriculum include veterinary assisting in clinical practice (pet, livestock, and exotic animal health care); veterinary assisting in laboratory practice (animal health research and diagnostic laboratory); and veterinary assisting in one health practice (regulatory animal health, human health, and environmental health). Secondary and post-secondary students complete the curriculum with teacher instruction in high school and 4-H veterinary science programs and without direct teacher instruction in an independent self-study option. Completion of the curriculum fulfills the requirement of a VA study course.

The educational resources may be found at <http://aevm.tamu.edu>, under the Veterinary Science Curriculum drop-down menu. The resources include *Veterinary Science: Preparatory Training for the Veterinary Assistant*, a book with 75 lessons in basic sciences and 25 in clinical sciences, a teacher key, a curriculum guide, audio presentations of lessons, and slide presentations of lessons. Instructions under the weblink for Online Lessons direct students to the Centra Webconference System to attend online live lessons and play back recorded lessons taught by a teacher in support of the study course. An additional 50 lessons will be available in 2012 to further advance the curriculum in the two non-clinical career tracks for laboratory and one health careers. The Veterinary Science curriculum will be available in 2012 by distance education technology in online modules of 150 lessons (text, slides, audio, video, and tests).

## 2. VA Apprenticeship (Clinical Skills)

To satisfy the required on-the-job clinical work hours and skills apprenticeship training necessary for VA classification and certification, students must volunteer for and be accepted into a VA trainee position, either in a salaried or unpaid trainee role in a veterinary clinic. A minimum of 500 clinical skills hours and the acquisition of the required clinical skills are necessary to complete the VA program for classification by certificate and to qualify for certification through examination by the Texas Veterinary Association.

## II. Veterinary Assistant Certification (CVA)

State certification of graduates from VA programs is an examination process offered by a state certifying entity approved by the state veterinary licensing board to certify VAs for practice in CVA positions in a clinical career field. Presently, state certification is not offered for VAs in the laboratory and one health career fields.

The VA certification by examination is offered by the Texas Veterinary Medical Association (TVMA), which is an approved state certifying entity in Texas. Other states may accept the TVMA certification of VAs. TVMA offers examinations for CVA Level I, Level II, and Level III. Eligibility for Level I examination includes completion of a study course, documentation of 500 minimum clinical skill hours through employment or internship in veterinary clinics, and validation of clinical skills checklist.

Upon completing the required study program and apprenticeship, application is made by the VA for TVMA certification by examination. The information for eligibility for CVA examination for the three levels may be obtained at <http://tvma.org> under the following weblinks:



1. **Description, Training Materials, & Fees**  
[https://secure.tvma.org/RVTs\\_and\\_CVAs/certified\\_vet\\_assistant.phtml](https://secure.tvma.org/RVTs_and_CVAs/certified_vet_assistant.phtml)
2. **Policies & Guidelines**  
[https://secure.tvma.org/RVTs\\_and\\_CVAs/documents/CVAPolicyManual-Final2011.pdf](https://secure.tvma.org/RVTs_and_CVAs/documents/CVAPolicyManual-Final2011.pdf)
3. **Application & Clinical Skills Checklist - Hospital Personnel**  
[https://secure.tvma.org/RVTs\\_and\\_CVAs/documents/CVA Level1ApplicationChecklistHospitalJan2011.pdf](https://secure.tvma.org/RVTs_and_CVAs/documents/CVA Level1ApplicationChecklistHospitalJan2011.pdf)
4. **Application & Clinical Skills Checklist - High School**  
[https://secure.tvma.org/RVTs\\_and\\_CVAs/documents/CVA Level1ApplicationChecklistHSJan2011.pdf](https://secure.tvma.org/RVTs_and_CVAs/documents/CVA Level1ApplicationChecklistHSJan2011.pdf)
5. **Online CVA Training**  
<http://site.4act.com/training-your-staff/online-cva-training>