Recruiting Veterinarians to Participate in the Veterinary Science Certificate Program

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The Veterinary Science Certificate Program is a career-oriented youth educational program for students interested in becoming veterinarian assistants. The program is available through participating high schools, 4-H programs, community colleges, homeschooleds, and through independent study. Students who complete this program (curriculum and apprenticeship) will earn the title of Veterinary Assistant and are then eligible for certification through the Texas Veterinary Medical Association (TVMA).

Program requirements: Student must complete 1) curriculum and 2) apprenticeship.


2. Apprenticeship: 500 hands-on clinical skill hours in a private practice or other venue (e.g., classroom, animal reserve, shelter, zoo, etc.), under the supervision of a veterinarian or licensed veterinary technician (LVT).

- Students use the TVMA CVA Level I Clinical Hands-On Training Checklist (validated by the veterinarian or LVT) to complete the hands-on apprenticeship training. The application/checklist is available on the TVMA website at tvma.org.

- A work hours log sheet is available on the Extension Veterinary Medicine website at aevm.tamu.edu to record daily work hours. The work hours log is also signed by the participating veterinarian or LVT.

- Students completing both curriculum and apprenticeship graduate with the title classification of Veterinary Assistant.

- Graduates may then apply to the TVMA for certification and must pass the CVA Level I Exam. A passing grade earns them the title of Certified Veterinary Assistant (CVA). For more information on the Veterinary Science Certificate Program or the TVMA certification process, please contact Joe W. Mask by email at joe.mask@ag.tamu.edu or by phone at (979) 845-4353.

Veterinarian Participation

- Veterinarians and veterinary technicians are invited to teach lessons at their veterinary clinic, participating school, or other location.

- Veterinarians allow students in the apprenticeship to work as volunteers to the gain hands-on clinical skill hours required to complete the program. Questions regarding liability may be directed to Joe W. Mask at: joe.mask@ag.tamu.edu

- Veterinarian and/or LVT mentor students and validate the clinical skills checklist prior to the certification process.

- Veterinarian and/or LVT may act as the test proctor for the written exam. Prior to the exam, student completes and submits the application form and validated clinical skills checklist to the TVMA. An exam is sent to the designated testing proctor (DVM, LVT, parent, instructor, or 4-H leader) to administer. The test must be administered within a one-week period and then mailed back to the TVMA for grading. Results are mailed to the test proctor. Applicants with a passing grade receive a congratulatory letter, certificate, and patch. Applicants are eligible to re-take the exam as many times as needed at a discounted price if a passing grade is not achieved.

Program Success

- Adopted in 44 states, the Veterinary Science Certificate Program provides a pathway to certification for students interested in becoming a veterinary assistant.

- Provides a sound platform for those interested in pursuing undergraduate, associate, or graduate degrees in veterinary medicine.

- Provides hand-on experience, training, and job opportunities to students in veterinary science.

- Provides veterinary professionals the opportunity to mentor and assist students in achieving their career goals.