



October 16, 2023

Dr. Kim Gemeinhardt, President
American Association of Veterinary State Boards
12101 West 110th Street, Suite 300
Overland Park, Kansas 66211

Dr. Gemeinhardt:

Thank you for allowing our organization to share our thoughts concerning the eligibility criteria for students taking the Veterinary Technician National Examination (VTNE). Given the pressing challenges associated with the workforce shortage in the veterinary field, we recognize the appeal of allowing early access to the VTNE for graduates of accredited veterinary technology programs and individuals with on-the-job training. However, we firmly advocate for maintaining the current requirement, which restricts VTNE eligibility to graduates of accredited programs, and we urge an end to alternative pathways to credentialing.

Our concerns regarding permitting students to sit for the VTNE before completing their educational journey stem from the potential adverse impacts on the students and the accredited programs. Most associate degree veterinary technology programs have a two-year duration, and allowing students to take the VTNE when they have completed only approximately 75% of their education deprives them of the full benefits of their training before they shoulder the financial burden of the examination. Our organization is also concerned that accredited programs may suffer unfair repercussions as a lower percentage of graduates passing the VTNE could imperil their ability to meet accreditation standards, which mandate a minimum 50% first-time pass rate over three years - something we believe that none of us want. There is an appropriate time for testing, which is after the course of study - otherwise, it is only a partial evaluation that does not benefit the student or the community they will eventually serve. In the case of graduates of baccalaureate programs, which follow a four-year curriculum, there may be an opportunity for earlier testing since many accreditation requirements are often fulfilled within the initial two years of the program.

Regarding alternative pathways to VTNE qualification, our organization believes it is time to close that route. While we acknowledge the historical necessity of such pathways before the advent of accredited online programs, it is worth noting that students now have access to 10 accredited distance education programs, rendering the original intent of alternative pathways obsolete. AVTE does not believe that on-the-job training imparts the comprehensive knowledge and depth of skills expected from credentialed technicians, nor does it align with the increased mobility to other jurisdictions, a desirable feature for many candidates. Instead, we recommend that veterinary practices support their current employees in attaining their veterinary technology credentials, which would enhance engagement, retention, patient safety, and public protection.

234 Nicholson Drive, Moorestown NJ 08057
help@AVTE.net | www.AVTE.net | 888-859-8832



Dr. Gemeinhardt
October 17, 2023
Page Two of Two

Rather than altering the eligibility criteria for VTNE candidates, we propose exploring revising the examination schedule with a shift toward continuous testing. If accredited programs provided lists of students expected to graduate in advance, candidates might have the opportunity to take their exams within days of completing their education at a testing center like PSI. In cases where continuous testing may not be immediately feasible, expanding or adjusting the existing testing windows to facilitate earlier access for more graduates would still yield benefits. While some jurisdictions have voiced concerns about graduates being unable to work for months after graduation, it is noteworthy that they could still secure employment as veterinary assistants until they pass the VTNE.

Thank you again for welcoming the AVTE to participate in this significant discussion. Our team remains at your disposal for further discussions as needed.

On behalf of the AVTE Board of Directors

Jennifer Serling, CVT, RVT, BVSc, AAS