

2026

REPORT TO LICENSING BOARDS



25 Years of Excellence in
Veterinary Assessment



NORTH AMERICAN VETERINARY
LICENSING EXAMINATION **NAVLE®**
SPECIES SPECIFIC EXAMS



Vision

The world leader in veterinary assessments.

Mission

Provide world-class examinations and other assessment tools to protect the public, and animal health and welfare.

Provide leadership and facilitate collaboration throughout veterinary medicine.

Values

Transparency

organizationally and in testing procedures, materials and content

Confidentiality

when collecting and reporting personal information, credit card data, and test scores

Reliability

in relevant test design, implementation, and scoring

Service

to candidates, licensing boards, and society at large

Respect, Civility & Collegiality

towards staff, stakeholders, board members, and across veterinary medicine

Integrity

in all actions and business relationships

Fiscal Responsibility

to ensure continuous improvements in our testing products and customer service, as well as a viable future for our organization

Diversity and Inclusion

treat everyone with fairness, respect and dignity, and purposefully act to attract and retain staff and Board members with a broad range of ideas, viewpoints, perspectives, expertise and experiences reflecting the diversity of the populations we serve. We respect and value these differences and encourage opportunities to learn from and be enriched by them as they challenge us to grow and think differently.

CEO & CHAIR LETTER



Dr. Hilari French



Dr. Heather Case

ICVA has been celebrating a huge milestone—25 years of the North American Veterinary Licensing Examination® (NAVLE®). We have come a long way in the past quarter-century, and we are excited to report that test administrations are proceeding successfully, maintaining the world-class standards of our examination process while handling the increasing number of candidates worldwide taking ICVA's examinations.

There were 10,761 test administrations of the NAVLE during the 2025–2026 testing cycle, the first to include three annual testing windows. For comparison, 9,301 test administrations were given during the two testing windows in the 2024–2025 cycle.

During the past few years, we have continued to build our in-house assessment capabilities while also expanding the number of team members working directly in program operations, to keep pace with our expanding number of examinees and test administrations.

The change to three annual NAVLE testing windows has had a positive impact on both candidates and licensing boards for individuals entering the licensure process. The NAVLE will also move to a new test block timing format, beginning with the October–November 2026 testing window. These updates are part of ICVA's ongoing commitment to improving the testing experience and are in response to candidate feedback. The test block timing format updates were made in coordination with our partners at the National Board of Medical Examiners (NBME) and are in alignment with recent changes to other standardized exams. Research on high-stakes testing has shown that shorter testing blocks with more frequent breaks can help reduce fatigue, support more stable performance, and improve the overall testing experience. We have also continued to streamline the logistics for the Species Specific Examinations to assist licensing boards in verifying the competence of individuals who are currently or were previously licensed.

Meanwhile, our volunteer committees are also making headway in the complex process of determining viable ways to assess veterinary communication skills, and meeting with numerous veterinary groups (including representatives from licensing agencies) in the US, Canada, and worldwide to discuss assessment—things we know will reap huge benefits for the veterinary community in the years to come.

ICVA is thankful for the continued efforts of our amazing volunteers, incredible staff, fantastic regulatory and academic colleagues, and dedicated examinees as we all strive to fulfill our mission to provide world-class assessments that protect animals and humans alike. As I begin my time as Board Chair, I am proud of what we have already accomplished, and excited by the prospect of what we can build together for our future.

Hilari French,
DVM, PhD, DACT, DABVP
2026–2027 ICVA Chair

Heather Case,
DVM, MPH, DACVPM, CAE
Chief Executive Officer

10,761

test administrations
of the (NAVLE®) during
the 2025–2026
testing cycle.





North American Veterinary Licensing Examination

Administered since 2000, the North American Veterinary Licensing Examination (NAVLE) is the standard licensure exam for veterinary medicine, consisting of 360 clinically relevant multiple-choice questions—300 scored and 60 pre-test. It is a requirement for licensure to practice veterinary medicine in all licensing jurisdictions across the United States and Canada.

10,761

tests administered
in the 2025–2026
testing cycle

115,028

total candidates have
completed the exam
to date

35.0%

increase in tests
administered in the past
five fiscal years



NAVLE Fees

The 2025–2026 ICVA NAVLE application fee was \$800 (USD) for candidates to take the test. For those who wanted to take the NAVLE at selected Prometric Testing Centers outside of the US or Canada, there was an additional \$380 (USD) international testing fee.

NAVLE Moves to Three Annual Testing Windows

Beginning with the 2025–2026 testing cycle, ICVA has moved to three testing windows each year. This change provides greater accessibility for the increasing number of candidates, allows for quicker turnaround times for those who do not pass or who miss application deadlines, and simplifies scheduling for candidates with non-traditional graduation dates.



Performance on October–November 2025 NAVLE by Examinee Group¹

		Mean Scale Score	SD Scale Score	Number of Examinees Failing	Percent of Examinees Failing	Total Examinees
Seniors from Accredited Schools	First-Time Takers	486	67	890	17.6%	5043
	Repeaters	431	48	26	41.3%	63
	Total ²	466	67	916	17.9%	5106
Graduates from Accredited Schools	First-Time Takers	431	93	42	42.4%	99
	Repeaters	418	48	331	53.7%	616
	Total ²	420	57	373	52.2%	715
All Non-Accredited Schools	First-Time Takers	396	75	290	66.7%	435
	Repeaters	401	59	305	64.2%	475
	Total ²	398	67	595	65.4%	910
Total Group²		467	74	1884	28.0%	6731

Performance on March 2026 NAVLE by Examinee Group¹

		Mean Scale Score	SD Scale Score	Number of Examinees Failing	Percent of Examinees Failing	Total Examinees
Seniors from Accredited Schools	First-Time Takers	486	65	81	26.4%	307
	Repeaters	426	44	375	48.4%	775
	Total ²	437	54	445	17.9%	1082
Graduates from Accredited Schools	First-Time Takers	404	86	55	59.1%	93
	Repeaters	411	46	266	61.1%	435
	Total ²	410	55	321	60.8%	528
All Non-Accredited Schools	First-Time Takers	393	77	184	65.2%	282
	Repeaters	398	54	243	67.3%	361
	Total ²	395	65	427	66.4%	643
Total Group²		419	60	1204	53.4%	2253

(1) Fail rates in this table are based on pre-verified data and may change post verification.

(2) Total group counts do not include examinees marked as withholds, invalidations or partials/projected scores.

Performance on July–August 2026 NAVLE by Examinee Group¹

		Mean Scale Score	SD Scale Score	Number of Examinees Failing	Percent of Examinees Failing	Total Examinees
Seniors from Accredited Schools	First-Time Takers	486	66	66	17.5%	378
	Repeaters	428	38	23	40.4%	57
	Total²	479	66	89	20.5%	435
Graduates from Accredited Schools	First-Time Takers	395	91	39	59.1%	66
	Repeaters	419	47	328	52.6%	624
	Total²	416	53	367	53.2%	690
All Non-Accredited Schools	First-Time Takers	400	73	173	59.9%	289
	Repeaters	403	54	239	65.7%	364
	Total²	402	63	412	63.1%	653
Total Group²		426	67	868	48.8%	1778

(1) Fail rates in this table are based on pre-verified data and may change post verification.

(2) Total group counts do not include examinees marked as withholds, invalidations or partials/projected scores.

NAVLE Approvals

ICVA currently reviews and approves NAVLE applications at the request of 45 licensing boards. This service allows boards to focus resources on other licensing priorities, at no cost to the board (candidates pay an application fee of \$55 to ICVA). Candidates also have an option to be approved directly through ICVA if, at the time of application, they do not want to choose a specific board to receive the candidate's score report.

NAVLE Communications

To manage growing candidate inquiries, ICVA has enhanced the Candidate Dashboard with personalized information and self-service features, including application status, accommodations, testing history, and ordering access. ICVA has also introduced automated emails for each stage of the testing cycle, with links to common questions.

In addition, the team launched a [Pathways to the NAVLE](#) video explaining the process from application to results, beginning with an installment for senior students at AVMA COE-accredited schools. Planned resources for 2026–2027 include videos for additional candidate groups, a centralized NAVLE Support Center with detailed frequently asked questions, and further improvements to the NAVLE application and website.

NAVLE Outreach

To increase awareness of recent developments with the NAVLE, ICVA is providing information to our veterinary partners through multiple channels. Along with the quarterly on-line newsletter, PDFs covering specific NAVLE-related topics (such as the application process or the retake policy) are distributed by targeted e-mails to licensing boards and to veterinary schools.

ICVA staff and volunteers also present at national conferences such as Student American Veterinary Medical Association (SAVMA), Association of American Veterinary Medical Colleges (AAVMC), and American Association of Veterinary State Boards (AAVSB). Later this year, ICVA will launch a quarterly e-mail covering topics of interest specifically for licensing boards.



NAVLE® Practice Analysis

The ICVA is wrapping up the current NAVLE practice analysis, a crucial process that keeps the exam current, relevant, and aligned with the realities of veterinary practice.

Practice analyses are conducted periodically—such as the previous ones completed in 2003, 2010, and 2017—to identify the knowledge and tasks critical for safe and effective veterinary practice. The findings are then used to update the NAVLE blueprint, keeping the assessment aligned with the skills and competencies expected of newly licensed veterinarians.

Once the foundational practice analysis tasks were completed, veterinarians from across the United States and Canada were invited to participate in surveys designed to capture a wide range of perspectives. Input was sought from seasoned practitioners as well as those early in their careers, allowing the exam blueprint to reflect both long-standing professional experience and the evolving realities of new graduates entering the workforce.

ICVA is working with Data Recognition Corporation (DRC) during the practice analysis process, which encompasses three phases.



Late 2025 — Phase I Focused on research and assembling committees, including an Advisory Committee Workshop in October 2025 and Focused Competency Area Workshops in November 2025.

Early to Mid-2026 — Phase II In May and early June 2026, veterinarians from across the United States and Canada were invited to participate in surveys designed to capture a wide range of perspectives. Input was sought from seasoned practitioners as well as those early in their careers, allowing the exam blueprint to reflect both long-standing professional experience and the evolving realities of new graduates entering the workforce. Designed to reflect veterinarians' areas of practice, the survey took about 20 minutes to complete, and captured robust, practice-based insights.

Mid- to Late 2026 — Phase III Focuses on analyzing the results and applying them to an update of the NAVLE blueprint—the framework that guides the assessment's content and structure. This phase is about translating the practice-based insights collected from veterinarians into actionable revisions, keeping the NAVLE aligned with the latest knowledge and skills required for safe and effective veterinary practice. Phase III will conclude by the end of 2026.

OTHER EXAMS



Species Specific Exams

Developed by ICVA in 2000, the Species Specific Examinations evaluate veterinarians' knowledge of companion animal or equine medicine. Licensing boards may require one or both exams, depending on their specific needs.

The exams serve two key purposes: assessing a veterinarian's competency in disciplinary cases and verifying competency for veterinarians licensed in another jurisdiction. Available exclusively to licensing boards, the 100-item exam comes in multiple forms, each with an ICVA-recommended passing standard.

Thanks to flexible scheduling and proctoring options, both US and Canadian licensing boards have used the Species Specific Examinations this year as part of their regulatory processes.

ICVA most recently updated the Species Specific examinations through a standard setting process in 2019, implemented remote proctoring options in 2020 for easier administration, and increased flexibility for scheduling and score reporting in 2024.



State Board Examinations

Since 2016, the Wisconsin Veterinary Examination Board (VEB) has had ICVA handle the administration of their web-based Wisconsin State Laws and Rules Examination for veterinary licensure.

The Wisconsin VEB provides ICVA with a list of eligible candidates, and ICVA then coordinates payment (a \$50 fee), test administration, and score reporting to both the Licensing Board and to the examinee.

In 2024, ICVA implemented increased flexibility for scheduling and score reporting to assist the examinees and the board.

VOLUNTEERS

NAVLE Volunteer Opportunities

Licensing board members, academicians, current practitioners, and other subject matter experts are needed on an ongoing basis as part of ICVA's commitment to assessment quality.

Volunteer opportunities include the following:

NAVLE Item Writing: Writing items for the NAVLE in accordance with the current NAVLE blueprint.

Annual NAVLE Pool Reviews: Older NAVLE items are reviewed for accuracy and relevance.

Annual NAVLE Form Reviews: NAVLE forms are reviewed prior to use in the next testing cycle.



I value the careful discussion required to make each question clinically relevant, current, fair, and focused on decisions that matter in practice. ”

– Dr. Jonathan Yardley



300+ volunteers
Thank you!



If you are interested in learning more about volunteer opportunities with the ICVA, please contact our office or scan the QR code.



Now, being part of the teams involved in item writing and practice analysis, I have gained a deep appreciation for the immense amount of thought, collaboration, and rigor that goes into creating an exam that is fair, relevant, and representative for all candidates—across regions, backgrounds, and practice types. ”

– Dr. Hélène Lardé