



ACT eNews

Fall 2023

A Message From the President

Dear Colleagues,

Happy Fall and welcome to the ACT's newsletter.

I am delighted to start this newsletter by reporting that 20 candidates passed the certifying exam, and 14 candidates fulfilled all requirements and became new ACT Diplomates in 2023. Additionally, 12 candidates approved in previous exams have fulfilled all requirements and became new ACT Diplomates during the last 18 months. Looking at this group of talented professionals, I believe it is safe to say that the future of our organization looks bright.



The ACT Executive Board and Committees have been working diligently on several fronts to carry out the college's mission. We have recently completed a new job task analysis, updated the certifying exam blueprint, and started supporting training from the National Board of Medical Examiners for members of the Exam and Angoff Scoring committees. We have appointed a new committee to design proposals for a two-phase certification process and started facilitating access to an online course on reproductive physiology for all ACT trainees. Changes have been introduced to the training policies and procedures and the new Maintenance of Certification platform is now available.

Whereas the ACT continues to be under probationary recognition status, we have submitted a request to the American Board of Veterinary Specialties to reinstate the ACT to full recognition status. We expect a response before the end of the year.

As we enter the final months of 2023, I hope that you will renew your ACT membership for the upcoming year. Our organization is built on membership, and it is important that we have a strong base of engaged Diplomates. And do not forget to submit your [**nominations for the Theriogenologist of the Year Award!**](#) The deadline for nominations is **November 15**.

I would like to give a huge 'thank you' to all Diplomates who volunteer their time on the Executive Board, Committees, and as AVMA Representatives – your dedication to the College is very much appreciated. Finally, I would like to encourage all to 'answer the call' to volunteer when opportunities are presented – our organization's success is in our hands.

Sincerely,

Leo Brito
ACT President 2023 – 2024

RENEW YOUR ACT MEMBERSHIP TODAY!

WWW.THERIOGENOLOGY.ORG

How To Renew Your

ACT Membership

- Sign in to the **ACT Website**
- If you don't remember your password, you may use the automated password reset request
- Click on **Renew Your Membership Now**
- You will be prompted to update the information in your member profile
- If you have any difficulty signing in or with the renewal process, please contact us at info@theriogenology.org or **(334) 395-4666**.

Thank you for your continued support and membership in the American College of Theriogenology!

2023 Certifying Examination

Thirty-nine candidates sat for the certifying exam in 2023 (24 candidates sat for the exam for the first time and fifteen candidates had sat for the exam at least once before). Twenty candidates passed the exam (51%). The number of candidates according to different species-specific exam is described in the table below.

Unsuccessful candidates received a document highlighting the areas of improvement for each knowledge domain that they underperformed. In addition, these candidates were also offered the opportunity to meet with a member of the Exam Committee to answer any questions or concerns.

Exam Type	Total # of Candidates	Passed	%
Bovine	1	1	100
Equine	5	1	20
Multispecies	33	18	54.5
Companion	0	—	—
Combined (Total)	39	20	51.3

In the last 18 months, an additional 12 candidates who had passed the certifying exam in previous years completed all requirements and also became full ACT Diplomates.



Congratulations to all new Diplomates and welcome to the College!

Candidates Passing the Exam and Achieving Full Diplomate Status in 2023

Dr. Ahmed Anum, University of Florida
 Dr. Eduardo Arroyo, Washington State University
 Dr. Giovana Catandi, alternate route, mentor Dr. James Gregory Burns
 Dr. Jessica Cowley, Auburn University
 Dr. Fiona Herzog, Louisiana State University
 Dr. Sheila Megehee, Oklahoma State University
 Dr. Osvaldo Pascottini, alternate route, mentor Dr. Peter Daels
 Dr. Mariah Pearson, Texas A&M University
 Dr. Soledad Pelaez, University of California, Davis
 Dr. Fabio Pinaffi, Auburn University
 Dr. Darcie Sidelinger, Mississippi State University
 Dr. Nicole Sugai, Virginia-Maryland College of Veterinary Medicine
 Dr. Riley Thompson, Colorado State University
 Dr. Muhammed Waqas, Washington State University

Candidates Passing the 2023 Exam

Dr. Christian Bisiau, Colorado State University
 Dr. Luke Duckworth, alternate route, mentor Dr. Stan Bychawski
 Dr. Joanna Koilpillai, The Ohio State University

Dr. Amber Nebel, North Carolina State University
Dr. Natalie Orner, North Carolina State University
Dr. Joaquin Osorio, University of Guelph

Job Task Analysis Results Now Available

The ACT has completed a job task analysis (JTA) that describes the knowledge requirements of competent Diplomates. The results were used to formulate the new certifying examination specifications or blueprint. Training advisors and trainees can access the [JTA results and new exam blueprint](#) on the ACT website.

National Board of Medical Examiners Training

As a continuous improvement initiative, the ACT Executive Board has allocated funds to offer members of the Exam Committee and Angoff Scoring Committee training by the National Board of Medical Examiners (NBME) to maintain the quality of questions used in the ACT certifying exam. The training involves 1.5 hours of pre-workshop work (microlearning videos, completion of structured activities, and writing or reviewing questions). A 2.5-hour workshop is conducted by NBME professionals via video conferencing and includes small group review/revision of questions, large group review, and time for discussion.

[LEARN MORE HERE](#)

Certification Examination Process

Two-Phase Certification Process

Over the last two years, the ACT Executive Board has considered potential changes to the certification examination process. One of the perceived challenges with the current process is the volume and depth of information successful candidates are expected to master in a single exam. One option to address this challenge would be the implementation of a two-phase certification process with tested material divided into separate exams.

After gauging support from the membership for this option through an online survey, the Executive Board has appointed an Examination Process Committee to define the policies and procedures for the possible implementation of a two-step examination process for certification. Members of the committee include Drs. John Kastelic (Chair), Etta Bradecamp, Julie Cecere, Sarah Eaton, Cynthia O'Connor, Christopher Premanandan, and Jack Smith. The committee will use the current General Information Guide as reference and propose modifications for certification to require successful completion of separate (i) Qualifying (basic) and (ii) Certifying (clinical) exams.

The committee is expected to present a draft proposal to the Executive Board in June 2024. After

proposal refinement, which will likely include further consultation of the membership, a final proposal is expected to be submitted for approval by vote from a majority of the Diplomates following the 2025 annual business meeting.

Remote Certifying Examination

Review of answers from an online survey revealed that Diplomates mostly supported the reinstatement of in person examination to promote greater social interaction, networking, and collegiality among Diplomates and candidates. The rationale presented by Diplomates supporting remote examination were more directly associated with the examination process itself and included reduced candidate stress associated with travel and unfamiliar environment, greater exam administration flexibility, and reduced cost to both candidates and the college. After much deliberation, the ACT Executive Board has voted to maintain the remote certifying examination and work on initiatives to increase the participation of all trainees, candidates (trainees registered to sit the exam on the year of the conference), and new Diplomates (attending first conference after attaining Diplomate status) in the annual conference.

The ACT is planning to reinstitute the dinner candidates previously had with members of the Executive Board and Exam Committee and to promote a morning meet-and-greet session for interaction with other Diplomates, which might also include short presentations (e.g., career paths, financial advice, work-life balance) and some form of job-fair. Suggestions for different types of activities are welcomed!

The ACT has petitioned the Society of Theriogenology to extend conference registration discounts to trainees enrolled in all types of programs (i.e., residency, alternate route, and graduate route) and to new Diplomates, and to use name tag ribbons to identify these colleagues during the conference. We have also petitioned the Theriogenology Foundation to extend travel grants to trainees enrolled in all types of programs and are studying ways for Diplomates to ‘sponsor’ a candidate for the annual Awards Dinner.

Certifying Examination Security

Other concerns related to remote certifying examinations revealed through the survey revolved around security of the exam question bank and cheating during the examination. The ACT Executive Board believes that these concerns are related to the lack of information available to the membership about the extraordinary measures taken to ensure remote examination integrity. The following is an overview of some of these measures.

The ACT utilizes [ExamSoft](#) as its testing platform. ExamSoft Worldwide, Inc. is a computer-based testing solutions company founded in 1998 that serves over 2,200 state governments, licensing and certification bodies, and leading university systems. The ACT also utilizes the services of Veterinary Specialty Exams, LLC and Dr. Robert Malinowski (DVM, MA, PhD, psychometrician) for exam administration.

ExamSoft utilizes state of the art hardware and software technology to guarantee database integrity and provide secure web-based content, in addition to having in place comprehensive business continuity and disaster recovery plans. An array of security measures is employed around protection of data on servers and the process around exam creation, delivery, and scoring. Periodic third-party audits of the entire solution are carried out to ensure that the security procedures in place remain effective, and that all traffic that is publicly transmitted is encrypted. ExamSoft is used by several Veterinary Specialty Organizations, including Anesthesia and Analgesia (ACVAA), Animal Welfare (ACAW), Behavior (ACVB), Clinical Pharmacology (ACVCP), Dentistry (AVDC), Dermatology (ACVD), Emergency and Critical Care (ACVECC), Microbiologists (ACVM), Ophthalmology (ACVO), Poultry (ACPV), Preventive Medicine (ACVPM), Radiology (ACVR), Sports Medicine and Rehabilitation (ACVSMR), Toxicology (ABVT), and Zoological Medicine (ACZM).

Approximately one month prior to the exam, candidates are required to download exam security software to their computers and allow access to their webcam and microphone. They are also required to register their identity using facial recognition and biometric information. Candidates are

then required to attend a training session during which their identity is verified by the exam administrator using an approved form of photo ID.

Candidates can choose in-person or remote proctoring for the examination. For in-person proctoring, a Diplomate must remain in the same room as the candidate during all sessions of the exam. The Diplomate signs a nondisclosure/confidentiality agreement prior to the exam. The Diplomate also receives the codes to access each section of the exam and supply those directly to the candidate. The remote proctoring system captures audio and video recordings of the exam taker using webcam, microphone, and screen capture through every moment of their exam, creating a detailed record of their actions. Artificial intelligence enabled analysis is used to flag any unusual behavior and the data is reviewed by the exam administrator and members of the Exam Committee to detect attempts at academic dishonesty.

On the day of the examination, candidates download encrypted files for each section of the exam onto their computer. The exam administrator then releases the passwords that allow candidates to access the exam. Each section is administered at specific times for all candidates. When the exam file is opened, the candidate's computer is locked down, meaning all unauthorized applications (including the internet) are blocked and nothing else on the computer can be accessed while the exam file is open. Once identification is confirmed, candidates can proceed to take the exam. When the exam is completed and closed, the candidate reconnects to the internet and the encrypted answer file is uploaded directly back to the database.

ACT Introduces Online Reproductive Physiology Course

The ACT is happy to introduce a supplemental educational opportunity for its trainees. An online reproductive physiology course is now available through Auburn University, with access facilitated by the ACT. This course is designed to provide a basis in reproductive physiology and can be taken at the trainee's own pace within one year. There is an opportunity to chat with fellow classmates and a designated ACT monitor (Dr. Aime Johnson).

The cost of registration for the course is \$125 for a year of access. The course will open for study on **November 1, 2023**.

[REGISTER FOR THE COURSE](#)

Changes to the General Information Guide (GIG) – Attention Program Directors and Training Advisors!

Changes have been introduced to the [General Information Guide](#) to address concerns from the American Board of Veterinary Specialties. Program Directors and Training Advisors should familiarize themselves with the changes to ensure compliance. In summary, these include:

- Training Program Directors must provide an annual training program report to verify compliance with training program requirements (B.2.b.iii).
- Residency Training Program Directors must have at least a 50% clinical service appointment (C.4.a.ii).

- Residency Training Programs must employ at least one full-time and one half-time, qualified Training Advisors (C.3.a).
- Training Advisors and Trainees must provide a combined annual report to verify adequate interaction and training oversight (C.2.e.iii).
- Training Advisors and Trainees must also provide separate annual reports so that the ACT can address deficiencies in interaction and training oversight that might not be apparent from combined reports (C.2.e.ii and C.2.e.iv).
- Training Advisors must sign all documentation submitted by trainees (C.4.b.i).

New reporting forms and submission calendars will be posted on the website in early 2024.

Maintenance of Certification (MOC) for All Receiving Diplomate Status in 2016 or After

All members of the College who achieved Diplomate status in 2016 or after are required to maintain certification every 10 years, or they will forfeit Diplomate status and no longer be eligible to claim ACT Diplomate certification. The policies and procedures for MOC are described in the '[Maintenance of Certification Guide](#).' Each Diplomate is responsible for being aware, keeping up with the status, and maintaining current certification.

Certification is maintained by an accumulation of credits from qualified activities that must be entered into the [MOC platform](#). These activities might be entered at any time during the 10-year MOC period. It is strongly recommended to enter activities as they are completed!

Call for Nominations: 2024 Theriogenologist of the Year Award



The deadline for nominations is **November 15, 2023**. The award recognizes a theriogenologist for recent (typically past 5 years), outstanding contributions to the discipline. Contributions may take on many forms and will be judged in part on furthering awareness and understanding of the discipline of Theriogenology and Theriogenologists, including mentorship and training. This award is not intended to recognize career achievement.

Nominations must include the following:

- Narrative justifying the nomination and describing in detail the nominee's contributions to the discipline.
- Two letters of support.
- Documents (if necessary) or references to documentation validating the nominee's contributions.
- Current curriculum vitae from nominee.

[SUBMIT NOMINATION](#)

Support the Theriogenology Foundation

The Theriogenology Foundation (TF) is the non-profit that supports SFT Student Chapter grants, faculty & student research grants, student travel grants, ACT approved Theriogenology residency programs, the Nandi Scholars Program, and more.



TF relies on tax deductible donations from SFT/ACT members or their practices and businesses at time of membership dues payments. Your donations support TF's programs which, in turn, support Theriogenology education and research.

Our goal at dues payment time is for each member to donate at least \$50 to support TF's work on your behalf. Please donate: BY CREDIT CARD At the [TF Website](#).

Click on the  button.

Thank you!

The Theriogenology Foundation Board

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