

STATE OF NEVADA



COMMITTEE

Minutes

The LVT/VTIT Alternate Credential Ad Hoc Committee will conduct a meeting on

**September 14, 2021, at 10:00AM at
4600 Kietzke Ln. Suite O-265
Reno, NV 89502
and
at the following conference number:
1-857-799-9907**

Board Members Present

James O'Dea, DVM
Michael Knehr, DVM
Melissa Schalles, LVT

Board Staff Present

Jennifer Pedigo, Executive Director

The meeting was called to order at 10:03AM on Tuesday, September 14, 2021.

(The following text is a summary of comments made by members of the committee and staff and is not exhaustive of comments or statements made by individual members or intended as a transcription of the meeting.)

Public Comment: None

1. Review & discussion of system of evaluation for education and applications for those applying as Veterinary Technicians-in-Training (VTIT) and/or Licensed Veterinary Technicians (LVT). (For Possible Action)

Jennifer Pedigo (Executive Director) gave an overview of the purpose of the committee, which is to streamline the process by which those seeking VTIT/LVT registration or licensure may appeal to the Board for approval of alternate education submissions. Applicants submit a myriad of education components, and the Board is interested in creating a more fair and consistent process.

Michael Knehr, DVM: There is a high demand for the LVT/VTIT positions. The Board needs to respond and evaluate what is a barrier to entry. The number of support staff statistics are not great. Certainly, do not want to take away from the credential quality but this may open alternate routes that would be more accessible than other programs. We need to be more inclusive and create more opportunity. There is so much competition to hiring, and we need to expand the base of education base. Penn Foster/ in-person programs are not graduating enough to cover the need.

Ms. Pedigo: The system that you have been provided documentation on is from California (CA) and we can use their evaluation as a model and starting point. It also makes sense in that we get the most application and licensure transfer traffic between Nevada and California. The California alternate track is a rubric that balances CE, formal education, on-the-job training. I would suggest as a committee that we have parallel goals. We can create a rubric by I would ask to investigate information on the PAVE for LVT evaluation program. Currently an RVT application is \$375 for application in CA, and it is \$75 in NV. It stands that their evaluation system might be more expensive to administer, so I would just ask that we look at both structures as we move forward.

James O'Dea, DVM: [after being asked how the emergency field is currently by Dr. Knehr] Emergency is tough and has been tough for a long time. We could use more techs. Pay for techs is going up and is helpful, but if they are being hamstrung coming from another state, we want to make it easier for them to get licensed when they have lots of experience and education.

Melissa Schalles, LVT: I am not sure that it is fully a production issue. The lifespan of the technician is 4-7 years because of burnout and the amount of work that they are doing. I have concerns that with on-the-job training, I would not want to have that individual monitoring anesthesia or place a catheter.

Ms. Pedigo: I did want to comment that California does not have a VTIT registration. The OJT is as a VA [or what would be a VA in Nevada] and there are some areas that have significant differences in scope. Techs can do extractions, for example.

Dr. Knehr: Anesthesia is one of the biggest skills that we use techs for and building those skills come with practice as well. In my practice we are training at all levels, all the time.

Ms. Schalles: I just want to make sure we are preparing professionals and preparing them for a career that includes long-term success. We need to be careful not to demean the education. We need them in the practices, but we want to be careful about reducing the requirements too much. OJT only as a qualification is not something that would be comfortable.

Dr. Knehr: We may have two different steps. VTIT training point at a point and don't take down the responsibility. We need to broaden the basics to get people into the training. Then have them moving through their program and what then at some point they can come in and do the more complicated or high skill scope.

Ms. Schalles: Some of the applications are just a couple of classes. We need to figure out the point-based system- a combination of formal education and CE and OJT. Those with experience we have not turned away, it's more the education that is the question.

Ms. Pedigo: We could make the parameters of the education centered around accredited colleges. We can have them turn in information-like the three hundred hours in California. So, say three hundred hours of coursework, CE hours or decide whether we want to accept CE as coursework. It would have to RACE approved, AVMA accredited, or we could make that narrower a list. Something like the three hundred hours of instruction, then also need the 4000 hours. The three hundred hours would get you the VTIT.

Dr. Knehr: Could we define the groups a bit more. Just education, no experience?

Ms. Pedigo: We would need to define the education and the experience.

Dr. Knehr: Say if you have an animal science degree, you could jump in to VTIT without any practical experience hours before you go into a clinic as a VTIT. If you graduate with a Bachelor of Science (BS) in animal science, you get VTIT without having worked in the facility. You can have zero hands on experience, just education, but you could do anesthesia day one because you have an animal science degree versus having worked at a facility for 2 years but then you must go in and do an online program until you get the education. That is where the disconnect is and the barrier. We have someone with straight education, but they can go right in and work, whereas you have someone who may know how to do it, but the education may be a barrier. Can we come up with parameters for the education and have the work experience count for something.

Ms. Pedigo: If we establish a basis with the education and what the minimum education for what a VTIT would be- like the three hundred hours- then they have the experience in addition. They would be working in a clinic and already have the 4000 hours so they can already go to the VTNE and study.

Dr. Knehr: Can we move something forward with the hands on?

Ms. Schalles: I think it will destroy the colleges. Why should I have formal education at all?

Ms. Pedigo: We will need to clarify.

Dr. Knehr: Can they do VTIT earlier if they have OJT? You can have no OJT and be able to jump into VTIT, but you can't jump in at an earlier point. Not trying to shut down the colleges.

Ms. Pedigo: For the earlier VTIT registration, they will need formal education but maybe we can structure it so that after 1 year or 1000 hours of clinical experience they can register. Or we could create a VTIT checklist- have a list and have it signed off by supervisor. Then you can be granted 1 year of VTIT registration, with no extension, then be able to prove the coursework. Then it wouldn't be solely on OJT.

Ms. Schalles: I think this is going to kill the 2-year programs. People are going to say I can go work for a facility and then all I have to do is take CE or go to WVC or go to any CE and make up those hours. But they aren't learning the basics (anatomy or pharmacology) in a formal setting.

Dr. Knehr: We would still require the enrollment in a program and meet benchmarks and we don't want to do that, so they stay forever in that role or take the VTNE 5 times. We don't want 10 years later you're still an VTIT, that is not the goal. We need check points. But need more people to get into the system, have checkpoints, and push them. This should not be a system where you don't get the work done and never actually make the jump to LVT or meeting the requirements.

Ms. Schalles: For those that have the initiative, take Penn foster and get it done. All we are doing is saying you have 4 years to complete the program.

Ms. Pedigo: It sounds like we may only want to use this rubric to evaluate non-AS related field. We can then give them idea of what they are missing. We can limit the degree to a hard science where you have a Bachelor of Science (BS) in non-animal related field, but not political science for example. We can then apply rubric. And if you are in the process of an associates with 4000 hours you can apply as a VTIT early? Or we could allow them to work earlier?

We will also want to hear from the educators' stakeholders and do not want to take away from this. There other potential risk is supervision. The Board has been consistent with applicants that have out of state licensure, work experience, and have or will sit for the VTIT. We have been consistent in granting those licenses. People with some formal education and out of state licensure, or the Board gives the VTIT to sit for VTNE.

Ms. Schalles: Those with OJT, they would still have to complete the AA?

Ms. Pedigo: We could have it so that if they're enrolled in AA program (first semester VT program), if they've already worked 4000 hours, they can sit for VTIT? The length of registration is currently 18-24 months for the VTIT registration while completing the AA program. VTIT early to start work on practical skills? If you have a BS in a non-animal science related field, we could evaluate the courses you have, recommend courses that you're missing. We can limit CE hours or if we decide the give at all.

I'll put the information together and draw up using the California model to plug in numbers where the rubric would line up. Is there anything in the rubric that should be added in terms of categories? Anesthesia, general science, chem, math, anything specific in the Nevada scope that should be added? I can modify the NAC scope to this rubric and cover the basics that way.

Dr. Knehr: I'm not advocating for a first semester BS student to just go in and learn intubation without experience or learning the proper technique. Not in lieu of education. It might be more complex, not looking to have inexperienced persons working on pets and endangering patients.

Ms. Schalles: If the vet isn't comfortable with the person doing the task, the supervisor can say 'no, you can't do that.'

Ms. Pedigo: We may have to create a new licensing scope, but we may want to avoid if possible as it could cause confusion. The timeline for VTIT is for 18-24 months. Increased time, or earlier registration, and find out where they would fall for the completion of the program.

Dr. O'Dea: We want to look at the weight of value for courses in animal science classes. We need an objective measurement for coursework that they have earned.

Dr. Knehr: What about AP Courses? Physics, math, environmental science, biology.

Ms. Pedigo: There's a minimum of General Science and then more points for specific animal science related courses. AP courses show as transfer credits on AP scores.

Ms. Schalles: We will want to check with the educators

Ms. Pedigo: I will send out what the scope looks like and get input once the Board has more structure to the system that we have discussed. Any other questions, comments, or things for me to gather information in the future?

Public comment: None

The meeting was adjourned at 10:57AM.