



ACVS Fellowship Programs

Background:

The ACVS recognizes that many of its members have achieved, or may wish to achieve, a level of expertise in a specific field (e.g., Minimally Invasive Surgery, Surgical Oncology, Sports Medicine Surgery, Orthopedics, Neurosurgery, Farm Animal Surgery). This expertise allows ACVS Diplomates to interact with other surgeons, related non-surgical experts and the lay community in such a way as to provide a leadership role in matters pertaining to surgery in their focused field. In order to fulfill this membership need, ACVS established ACVS Fellowship Programs. Fellows of these programs have or would have specific expertise and knowledge in their specialized disciplines beyond what can be mastered within a 3-year ACVS Veterinary Surgery Residency Program. The ACVS recognizes this expertise within its own ranks and wishes to formally acknowledge this achievement, as well as provide assistance in formalizing training programs to continue discipline-specific expertise under the ACVS umbrella.

Overview:

The ACVS Fellowship Programs are not for the purpose of developing subspecialties, and ACVS Diplomates concluding these programs will not be recognized as subspecialists. Rather, these programs will be recognized by ACVS as ACVS Fellowship Programs, and individuals successfully completing one of these programs will be awarded the title of “ACVS Fellow” in the specific field. The objective of a Fellowship Program is to expand upon the surgical knowledge and experience obtained during the ACVS veterinary surgery residency. Thus, individuals participating in these programs must have completed all requirements of an ACVS veterinary surgery residency and have had their credentials approved by the ACVS. The title of ACVS Fellow is not conferred until achieving ACVS Diplomate status. The ACVS Fellowship Programs serve to develop highly skilled surgeons who, in turn, will become recognized experts in a specific surgical field.

Program Development:

The ACVS Fellowship Oversight Committee reviews each proposed ACVS Fellowship Program and makes recommendations to the ACVS Board of Regents (BOR) regarding approval. Each approved ACVS Fellowship Program develops its own specific guidelines as to what is required for a candidate to obtain the title of ACVS Fellow in the specific field. These requirements are structured around an ACVS core of essential components. The individual ACVS Fellowship Programs are required to establish specific components to the training program and ensure that they met these minimum standards.

The following are the core components required of an ACVS Fellowship Program:

1. Fellowship Programs must be structured with robust instruction in a focused field of study but are not expected to conduct specific testing by examination.
2. The duration of Fellowship Programs may be variable based on the area of focus. A 52-week framework is anticipated. Deviations from this timeline should be documented and justified in writing to the ACVS Fellowship Oversight Committee.

3. ACVS Fellowship Programs are encouraged to utilize specialists in other fields, including American Board of Veterinary Specialties recognized specialty organizations, international specialty organizations such as the European College of Veterinary Surgery and counterparts in human medicine, for training of Fellows.
4. Fellowship Programs must have measurable outcomes for the successful completion of these programs and mastery of the field of surgical study such as:
 - a. Publication requirements
 - b. Research project completion
 - c. Presentation requirements
 - d. Successful completion of a defined number of surgical and related non-surgical rotations
 - e. Attendance at specified seminars, conferences, lectures, etc.
 - f. Competency assessment by supervisor evaluation, module completion and/or examination
 - g. Maintenance of Activity and Case Logs to document required clinical and non-clinical experience.

General Guidelines for Establishing an ACVS Fellowship Training Program:

Requests for approval of a Fellowship Program should include a:

- a. Justification for development of the Fellowship Program, including:
 - i. Evidence of a critical mass of Diplomates within the field who desire to establish the program. A minimum of five ACVS Diplomates is required.
 - ii. A description of the specific knowledge base or practice area that exists to merit an ACVS Fellowship Program.
- b. Description of the proposed training program for the Fellowship. This should include case type and number, activities, seminars, rounds, scholarly activities and any pertinent training timelines.
- c. List and description of any facility or instructional requirements for programs providing training within the Fellowship.
- d. Proposed procedure for recognition of Fellows completing the program, including a description of the proposed method for determination of mastery within the field.
- e. Plan for organization and administration of the Fellowship, such as the selection and duties of officers, board members or committee members.
- f. Mechanism for demonstrating continuing professional development in the field.

Becoming an ACVS Fellow in an ACVS Fellowship Program:

• **ACVS Founding Fellows:**

Existing ACVS Diplomates may qualify as ACVS Founding Fellows for the purposes of establishing a critical mass for Fellowship Programs. ACVS Diplomates:

1. Would have the opportunity to respond to an “open call” to the membership upon the application for establishment of a Fellowship Program.
2. Would be approved if they can fulfill minimum requirements such as:

- a. Have an established reputation of excellence in the field as documented by three letters of reference
- b. Have an established record of publication and/or presentation in the Fellowship topic area
- c. Have sufficient experience so as to establish an area of expertise (e.g., >5 years experience as an ACVS Diplomate)
- d. Can meet these requirements within a finite period (e.g., three years from announcement of the intent to form a Fellowship Program).

ACVS Diplomates who meet the minimum requirements would be granted the title of “ACVS Founding Fellow” in the specific field.

- **New ACVS Fellows:**

1. Candidates enrolling in an ACVS Fellowship Program must have successfully completed all requirements of an ACVS Veterinary Surgery Residency Program and have had their credentials approved by the ACVS.
2. Candidates must successfully complete the Fellowship Program.
3. The title of ACVS Fellow is not conferred and may not be used until ACVS Diplomate status has been achieved.
4. ACVS Fellowship Programs are not subspecialties and the title of ACVS Fellow shall not be referred to as a subspecialist.

ACVS members interested in establishing a Fellowship Program in their specialized discipline at their institution and would like further information are encouraged to contact the ACVS office (acvs@acvs.org) or Dr. Cheryl Hedlund (chedlund@iastate.edu).

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